

The Island Project School

Diddington Hall, Diddington Lane, Meriden CV7 7HQ

Inspection date

2 October 2015

Overall outcome

Unmet independent school standards identified

Reason for the inspection

- This unannounced emergency inspection was conducted at the request of the Department for Education to advise on the school's continuing compliance with independent school regulations.
- The main focus of the inspection was the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

Main findings

- None of the requirements for the leadership and management of the school are met. This is because the school's leaders have not ensured that they have kept up to date with statutory requirements for safeguarding children, dealing with complaints and providing all the required information to local authorities and the Secretary of State.
- While staff ensure that the day-to-day welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school are given high priority, there are regulatory failings in the leadership's management of this aspect of the school's work.
- The school's safeguarding procedures do not reflect the latest statutory guidance from the Secretary of State, as published in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015)*. The school's safeguarding policy has not been revised nor staff provided with the required information. The safeguarding policy published on the school's website is not compliant.
- The proprietorial body ensures that all staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. There are suitable arrangements in place, in line with requirements, to supervise new staff who await the outcome of such checks. Scrutiny of the school's single central record indicates that not all the required information is systematically ratified and recorded in a timely manner before a new member of staff takes up their appointment.
- The school's health and safety policy meets requirements and is supported by a range of risk assessments. Staff know the pupils well and respond well when pupils put themselves at risk. There are suitable arrangements for the personal care of pupils.
- The deployment of staff is effective and incidents are recorded in bound books.
- The school's latest fire risk assessment was undertaken in March 2015. There are appropriate arrangements made for first aid. Pupils' attendance is recorded in line with requirements.
- Not all the requirements for the provision of information to parents and others are met. The school's website includes the required information about the school and the proprietorial body. Policies are either included on the website or signposted. However, the school's safeguarding policy published on the website at the start of this inspection did not reflect the latest guidance from the Secretary of State.
- Although requested at the start of this inspection visit, the school did not provide copies of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of pupils funded by their local authority.
- The school's complaints policy does not reflect the latest regulatory requirements. The school's records show that no complaints have been received in the past two academic years.

- All of the requirements for the curriculum, teaching and assessment are met. Pupils follow an individual programme of learning appropriate to their needs and interests. All the areas of learning are covered, often through a thematic approach which reflects pupils' preferred styles of learning.
- Some pupils prefer to work outside rather than in classrooms and the school supports this. Staff make use of a wide range of visual and tactile resources to engage and maintain pupils' interest. They manage pupils' behaviour well and regularly check how well pupils are making progress. Pupils indicate that they enjoy learning.
- Staff support pupils' social development well through effectively modelling skills. Pupils are taught to take account of, and respect, the views and beliefs of others.
- Pupils' moral development is promoted through consistent expectations of good behaviour, together with a system of rewards and sanctions which are appropriate to pupils' needs.
- Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is effectively promoted through art, music and an appreciation of the natural world. The school grounds are used well to provide pupils with opportunities to express themselves in different ways, including play and the use of fixed equipment.
- The school promotes pupils' understanding of different religions and cultures effectively. British values are promoted appropriately and the proprietorial body ensures that balanced viewpoints are consistently expressed.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs 18(2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment (paragraph 18(3)).
- The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's website; and where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(c) and 32(1)(h)).
- The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which:
 - provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher
 - provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and the action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) (paragraphs 33, 33(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i) and 33(j)(ii)).
- The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently

- actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

Inspection team

Michael Best, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Information about this school

- The Island Project is an independent special day school for pupils who are on the autistic spectrum and often have additional communication difficulties. Currently there are 31 pupils on roll aged between six and 19 years, eight of whom are in the sixth form.
- The school is located in a large country house and grounds near Solihull in the West Midlands. The school opened in 2007 and was last inspected in January 2015 when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school draws pupils from five local authorities within the region.
- The school opened an off-site sixth form provision near Birmingham in January 2015, following approval from Ofsted in September 2014.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers.
- The school's ethos is broadly based on the principles of applied behavioural analysis (ABA). It aims to 'teach children the knowledge and skills to give confidence that will enable them to reach their full potential and lead a more independent life' and 'to foster the ability to make relationships, to better communicate with a wide range of people and to encourage the ability to make personal choices.'

School details

Unique reference number	135453
Inspection number	10007671
DfE registration number	334/6010

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Type of school	Day special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	8
Proprietors	Carol Howe and Jacqui Walters-Hutton
Chair	Jacqui Walters-Hutton
Principal	Sarah Gallagher
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2015
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,500–£67,000
Telephone number	01675 442588
Fax number	N/A
Email address	j.walters-hutton@theislandproject.co.uk

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