

Crowstone School

121 Crowstone Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 8LH

Inspection dates

12 November 2015

Overall outcome

Independent school standards not met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan.
- This is the first monitoring inspection.
- The previous inspection was conducted by the Independent Schools Inspectorate on 17–20 June 2014. The inspection found that the proprietor did not meet all of the independent school standards in relation to the welfare, health and safety of pupils; the premises and accommodation of schools; and the manner in which complaints are handled.
- Following the June 2014 inspection, the Department for Education issued the proprietor with a Notice.
- The Independent Schools Inspectorate evaluated the school's action plan and judged that the action plan provided insufficient information regarding how the proprietor would meet the independent school standards.
- The school was given no notice of this inspection.
- The HMI met with the proprietor, who is also the bursar; the headteacher; the deputy headteacher; and the administrative officer.
- The HMI scrutinised and discussed the school's procedures for promoting pupils' welfare, health and safety. This included school policies and records of accidents, incidents and risk assessments. The single central register of checks on staff was scrutinised.
- The HMI toured the premises and accommodation.
- The focus of the inspection was the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school, the checks on staff's suitability to work with children, and the premises and accommodation.

Main findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- At the June 2014 inspection, the proprietor's arrangements for welfare, health and safety were unsatisfactory because staff did not have sufficient training in or knowledge of child protection. In addition, there were some inadequate security arrangements.
- In addition to the independent school standard for the arrangements to safeguard pupils, this inspection found that other standards are not met with regard to pupils' welfare, health and safety in parts 3, 4 and 5 of the independent school standards. It remains the case that pupils are at risk of harm because procedures and practices are not sufficiently thorough.
- In the school's action plan, the proprietor undertook to review the safeguarding policy and to make sure that staff were sufficiently trained in child protection.
- The proprietor sensibly used a model policy as the basis for a draft policy for safeguarding, and has diligently researched the relevant current legislation and guidance, and these documents are available to staff and parents on the school's website. But the policy is not complete.
- In October 2014, three senior members of staff completed training at the required level for designated teachers for child protection. Some, but not all, staff have completed online training in basic awareness for child protection and senior staff have not checked staff's knowledge of safeguarding children or their understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

- Child protection is now the first item on the agenda at staff meetings. This helps to raise staff's awareness of any pupils who may be vulnerable, but the written records of child protection concerns are of poor quality. Too little information is recorded and it is not clear how issues are followed up. The written records are not logged or collated systematically.
- Staff have worked collaboratively to redraft the behaviour policy, which reflects the recent changes to the reward system. The previous policy appropriately set out rewards, sanctions and reporting arrangements. But the policy was not followed sufficiently. There is no systematic approach to recording incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Written records do not provide sufficient details of what happened or how issues were followed up. In addition, the written records of pupils' inappropriate behaviour are not logged or collated systematically.
- The school's anti-bullying strategy is not clear. There is a draft policy but it does not reflect the practice in the school.
- There is a written health and safety policy but it is very out of date. The policy does not provide sufficient guidance to make sure that all relevant aspects of health and safety are identified and addressed.
- There is no written risk assessment policy and the identification of risks relies too heavily on informal checks and arrangements. There are no risk assessments for the accommodation, site security or curriculum subjects. The annual audit for compliance with fire regulations is out of date.
- Risk assessments for school trips are carried out but are not completed entirely according to the policy for educational visits. Checks on electrical equipment and fire extinguishers are up to date.
- There is no first aid policy. Accidents are recorded systematically and with appropriate details but some entries are inappropriately written in pencil.
- The admissions register contains too many omissions and some entries are recorded inappropriately in pencil. The school did not fulfil the duty to inform the local authority when a pupil left the school to be educated at home or when pupils' next school is unknown.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- The single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children is incomplete and some of the required checks have not taken place. Evidence to support the checks that have taken place is documented well but it is not clear on the register whether all of the relevant checks for each individual member of staff were made. The proprietor has not undertaken checks for whether each member of staff is barred from working with children.

Part 5. Premises and accommodation of schools

- At the June 2014 inspection, the proprietor's arrangements to ensure pupils' health, welfare and safety in regard to the security of the school's site were unsatisfactory.
- This inspection found that most of the weaknesses have been addressed but some inadequate security arrangements remain.
- In the school's action plan, the proprietor undertook to improve security arrangements and supervision around the perimeter of the site, and to inform parents of the changes. Additional, good quality fencing is in place. Access to the school site is appropriately restricted by having one dedicated gate for entry. However, the proprietor has not considered all of the risks regarding entry to the site.
- Female staff sometimes use the same toilet and washing facilities as the female pupils. This is not appropriate.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- At the June 2014 inspection, the proprietor's complaint policy did not set out clear timescales for the formal panel hearing of a complaint.
- In the school's action plan, the proprietor undertook to revise the policy. The arrangements for the formal panel hearing are now clear and suitable.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- At the June 2014 inspection, the leadership and governance of the school, including the leadership of the early years, was unsatisfactory.
- Given the number of independent school standards not met during this monitoring inspection, the proprietor does not meet the standard for the quality of leadership in and management of schools, which was introduced subsequently to the previous inspection.
- The proprietor acknowledges the weaknesses identified in the previous report and from this monitoring inspection and, together with staff, is keen to meet the independent school standards.
- Improvements in some aspects of the school's work since the June 2014 inspection are evident. The proprietor has appropriately prioritised the policies and procedures that require the most attention and is systematically working through these with staff. The proprietor knows that there is much work to do and is mindful that staff must take on some additional responsibilities for school improvement.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- At the June 2014 inspection, the proprietor had not developed a suitable three-year plan to improve accessibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The action plan did not set out how the proprietor would develop a suitable three-year accessibility plan.
- It remains the case that the proprietor does not fulfil his duties under schedule 10 of the Equalities Act 2012.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to promote the welfare of pupils at the school and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
- The proprietor must promote good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that the behaviour policy is implemented effectively and a record is kept of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour (Paragraph 9, 9(b), 9(c)).
- The proprietor must ensure that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as is reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy (Paragraph 10).
- The proprietor must ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (Paragraph 11).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (Paragraph 12).
- The proprietor must draw up and effectively implement a written first aid policy (Paragraph 13).
- The proprietor must ensure that the admissions register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Paragraph 15).
- The proprietor must ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (Paragraph 16).
- The proprietor must make sure that no member of staff is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act (Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a)).
- The proprietor must keep a register which shows in relation to each member of staff appointed whether a check was made to establish if each member of staff
 - is barred from regulated activity in relation to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act

- is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction
and
further checks as the proprietor considers appropriate in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining the above checks is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order
(Paragraph 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii)).
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of the pupils (Paragraph 23(1), 23(1) (a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of the pupils are ensured (Paragraph 25).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and actively promote the well-being of pupils (Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to meet the requirements of Paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Inspection team

Heather Yaxley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- This is the school's first inspection by Ofsted. The school was founded in 1946 and was registered with the Department for Education in 1957.
- The school was previously inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. The most recent inspection was in June 2014.
- The school is registered with the Department for Education to admit up to 203 pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	115404
Inspection number	10007510
DfE registration number	882/6003

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	Preparatory
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Proprietor	Simon Alexander Thayer
Headteacher	John Thayer
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected by Ofsted
Annual fees	£3,504–£10,095
Telephone number	01702 346758
Email address	info@crowstoneprepschool.com

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