

Crookhey Hall School

Crookhey Hall, Garstang Road, Cockerham, Lancaster, Lancashire LA2 0HA

Inspection dates

3 December 2015

Overall outcome

Independent school standards not met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was conducted 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.
- The school received an independent school standard inspection in October 2014. The overall effectiveness of the school was judged to be good with no unmet standards.
- The school received an unannounced emergency inspection in April 2015 at the request of the registration authority for independent schools to advise on the school's compliance with Part 3 (the welfare, health and safety of pupils) and Part 8 (the quality of the leadership and management of the school). A number of standards relating to Part 3 and Part 8 were not met.
- The school produced an action plan, which details the actions to be taken to meet the unmet standards, in July 2015.
- This is the first monitoring inspection.
- The school was given no notice of this inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, pupils and a representative of the proprietorial body. The inspector also toured the school, accompanied by the headteacher, to observe learning and to speak with pupils and other adults.
- The inspector scrutinised and discussed the school's procedures for the promotion of pupils' welfare, health and safety. This included the school's safeguarding policy, records of accidents and incidents, the school's single central record of checks on staff, and records of staff training in keeping children safe. The inspector also scrutinised leaders' own analysis of their records of incidents of physical intervention.
- The focus of the inspection was the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school.

Main findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- Some of the independent school standards for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are not met.
- The inspection in April 2015 found that the school's safeguarding policy was out of date. It has now been updated. Although teachers and other adults have received training in the implementation of the school's safeguarding policy, leaders have not ensured that teachers and other adults have received training in several of the specific safeguarding issues listed in the latest statutory guidance. For example, teachers and other adults have not received bespoke training in preventing radicalisation, sexting, gender-based violence, domestic violence, teenage relationship abuse or faith abuse. Leaders' records show that staff have received training in adolescent mental health and child sexual exploitation. However, gaps in adults' knowledge of specific safeguarding issues mean that some pupils are at a greater risk of harm than they might otherwise be.
- Proprietors have not made sure that all statutory requirements in *Keeping Children Safe in*

Education (July 2015) have been implemented. For example, they have not ensured that all staff in the school have read at least part one of this guidance.

- Leaders have reviewed the school's safeguarding policy. The policy shown to the inspector during the inspection included references to the latest statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (July 2015). This version of the policy meets requirements.
- The safeguarding policy published on the school's website has also been updated and now includes an internet link to the latest statutory guidance. However, several references to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (March 2015) still remained in the policy's text at the end of the inspection. Consequently, this version of the policy does not meet requirements.
- Other actions, identified in the school's action plan, to bolster the safeguarding of pupils, have taken place. The inspection of April 2015 found that refresher training in the application of 'restrictive physical intervention' (restraint) in response to serious incidents of pupils' misbehaviour had not been provided for all staff within the timescale recommended on the original training certificates. All teachers and other adults working with pupils have now received refresher training in the application of restrictive physical intervention and the use of de-escalation methods, in line with the school's behaviour policy. Twelve staff have been trained to be fire marshals in the event of a fire.
- The April 2015 inspection found that the school's risk assessment policy was not effectively implemented. The school's risk assessment policy is succinct. The policy gives a precise definition of what a risk assessment is and when a risk assessment will be made; this is an effective document. For example, leaders have acted appropriately to ensure a risk assessment of each pupil's specific needs is drawn up. Scrutiny of examples of pupils' risk assessments showed that these documents are planned well and easy to understand because they include clear descriptions of specific risks and give sharp strategies to minimise each identified risk.
- The school's own records show that the effective use of pupils' risk assessments is leading to improvements in behaviour. Pupils' risk assessments are discussed at a weekly staff meeting and amended when necessary. Records of these meetings show that the frequency of pupils leaving classrooms without permission has reduced significantly compared to before the introduction of individual pupil risk assessments. This is because teachers and other adults act quickly to implement the strategies, identified in pupils' risk assessments, to deal effectively with potentially disruptive behaviour. Although it is too early to use the school's online recording system to judge the impact of this action on leaders' intention to reduce the use of restrictive physical intervention, the improvements already seen contribute well to improvements in pupils' behaviour and also to keeping pupils safe.
- Pupils spoken to by the inspector during this inspection say that they feel safe while in school. Pupils have access to a wide range of adults, along with an independent counsellor and a peer support group, to which they can report any concerns.

■ **Part 6. Provision of information**

- Some of the independent school standards for the provision of information are not met.
- During the inspection, the inspector identified that the school's safeguarding policy, published on the school's website, contained several references to statutory guidance which has since been amended. References were made to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (March 2015), rather than the latest version *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (July 2015).

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- The proprietorial body has not fulfilled its statutory duty, as described in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (July 2015), to ensure that all staff read at least part one of this guidance.
- Leaders have not ensured all versions of the school's safeguarding policy identify accurately the latest statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (July 2015).
- Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to ensure that staff are trained well in the specific areas of safeguarding, identified in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (July 2015), which are

pertinent to the circumstances of the school. For example, staff have yet to receive training, provided by a suitably experienced professional, in the prevention of radicalisation (Prevent). Leaders are, therefore, not actively promoting the well-being of pupils.

- At the beginning of the inspection, the inspector identified shortfalls in the school's recording of suitability checks in the single central record. Leaders took swift action to ensure that teacher prohibition checks on all those teaching at the school were carried out and recorded appropriately by the end of the inspection. The school's recording of the suitability checks carried out on all staff working at the school meets requirements.
- Leaders have acted appropriately to ensure that the school's behaviour policy is up to date and also to ensure all staff are trained adequately in the use of restrictive physical intervention and de-escalation methods. Leaders' introduction of individual pupil risk assessments has been embraced quickly and effectively by staff. The school's use of individual pupil risk assessments is a strength of the school.

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 such arrangements (made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school) have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(b)).
- 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 internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(c)).
- 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; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).

Inspection team

Drew Crawshaw, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Crookhey Hall School is an independent day special school for boys and girls. The school is located in a Victorian country house with extensive grounds, near Garstang in Lancashire. It is owned and operated by Acorn Care and Education.
- Pupils are admitted to full-time education at the school as a result of their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All have been excluded from at least one previous school.
- The school is registered to admit up to 68 boys and girls in the age range 10 to 17 years. There are currently 30 boys and girls on roll, aged 13 to 17 years. All pupils on roll have a statement of special educational needs or an education, care and health plan.
- The school aims to provide 'boys and girls with an educational experience that will not only extend their academic and vocational social skills and abilities, but will also promote personal growth and help to build self-esteem'.
- In addition to the academic and vocational provision on-site, the school makes additional provision, through 4Techmoto in Preston, and at Lancaster and Morecambe College, of courses in motor vehicle maintenance and welding.
- The school's last standard inspection was in October 2014.

School details

Unique reference number	119849
Inspection number	10007953
DfE registration number	888/6022

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 for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	10–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	0
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Group
Chair	Julie Taylor
Headteacher	Peter O'Connell
Date of previous school inspection	21–23 October 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,000–£30,000
Telephone number	01524 792618
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