

Magdalen Court School

Victoria Park Road, Exeter EX2 4NU

Inspection date

17 November 2015

Overall outcome

Independent school standards not met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was undertaken 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 inspection was conducted without notice.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the school's full inspection was completed in November 2014.
- Following the full inspection, the school submitted an action plan to the Department for Education (DfE). The proposed action plan was accepted by the DfE in June 2015.

Main findings

- The checks on the suitability of all adults who have access to the school site are not complete and do not meet requirements. The proprietors have not received written notification that contracted staff employed to make improvements and modifications to buildings on the school's premises have had the required checks.
- Recruitment checks on all teaching and support staff are better organised and procedures have improved since the inspection. Recruitment records show that suitable references are obtained and that required checks on the identity, qualifications, right to work and declarations of medical fitness for teaching and support staff have been completed. Each individual file now includes a cover sheet and provides senior leaders with a quick indication of the completion of checks. Staff files are better organised, containing separate sections that match the different requirements.
- The single central record does not contain evidence that the school has received written notification confirming that contracted staff employed to renovate premises on the school's grounds have been checked for their suitability. The proprietors have ensured that all of the required checks on all teaching and support staff and members of the proprietorial board are recorded.
- The school's admission register does not comply with statutory requirements. At the time of the inspection, a small number of pupils currently educated at the school were not recorded on the register. Where pupils have been entered, the admissions register does now include the date each pupil started at the school, their family contact details in case of emergency and pupils' previous school.
- Procedures to record pupils' attendance have improved since the inspection. Registers are recorded electronically and provide a more accurate view of pupils' punctuality and attendance. Pupils are checked in when they first arrive at the school and their attendance recorded promptly at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.
- Senior leaders are more frequently observing the quality of teaching and learning and scrutinising pupils' books to check the quality and quantity of pupils' work. However, senior leaders are not paying sufficient attention to ensure that standards of pupils' work are appropriate for their age. Monitoring does not yet result in the setting of clear targets to help staff to improve their practice and develop the quality of teaching and learning.

- Newly appointed staff have begun to improve the quality of teaching and learning for younger pupils and have helped to address pupils' underachievement. Planning for younger pupils has improved and shows a better understanding of pupils' aptitudes and abilities. Teachers demonstrate their knowledge of subject matter and have produced schemes of work that draw on new national curriculum frameworks.
- Resources for younger pupils are appropriate to their age and ability. Younger pupils used computers to research the habitat and diet of different animals in order to classify them as carnivore or herbivore. Their classrooms are well organised so that resources are stored within easy access and clearly labelled.
- Work in younger pupils' books confirms that they are able to sequence numbers, use place value to three digits and solve simple calculations and that they are being helped to improve their mathematical skills and knowledge. Similarly the quality of younger pupils' writing is improving, but they are not currently provided with enough opportunities to fully develop their writing and complete longer pieces of written work.
- Senior leaders have established clear procedures to follow up promptly on any unauthorised absence. Staff complete phone calls on the first day of absence and share information on pupils' absence appropriately where there are any concerns.
- Records of incidents and accidents are recorded by staff. Accidents on site or during educational trips and visits are logged and signed off by the school's qualified first aiders and shared and signed by parents.
- The school provides for a small number of pupils with higher levels of need. Incidents of challenging behaviour are uncommon but are routinely logged and recorded by staff. Staff respond appropriately to intervene during occasional disputes and to calm situations with humour. However, recently when staff have had to intervene to physically separate pupils, the logs of the incident did not record the hold used by staff nor the duration of the hold. Additionally, staff have not received training on the use of physical restraint.
- An annual review of the school's safeguarding arrangements has been completed by proprietors. The school's child protection policy is up to date, available on the school's website and includes contact information of staff members responsible for safeguarding and of local authority safeguarding personnel. The policy provides parents, staff and pupils with a clear indication of the school's approach and the steps to take to share any concerns.
- Staff have been suitably trained in safeguarding, including training to raise staff awareness of protecting children from the risk of radicalisation. The school's induction procedures have been improved since the inspection to ensure that new members of staff are provided with key policies and procedures on arrival.
- The senior leader with designated responsibility for safeguarding attends regular local authority training and meetings. Records of any concerns are maintained appropriately by senior leaders and confirm that the school shares information with other agencies where necessary. Staff are aware of the procedures and share concerns with senior leaders, but currently the system is over-reliant on staff orally transferring information rather than completing individual records.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

The school must ensure that:

- arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and comply with regulations (paragraph 7(a))
- safeguarding arrangements have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7(b))
- an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 15)
- any person offered by an employment business to the school only begins to work at the school

if the proprietor has received written notification from the employment business in relation to that person (paragraph 19(2)(a))

- the proprietor has received written notification that the checks referred to in paragraph 21(3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vii) and (b) have been made to the extent relevant to that person (paragraph 19(2)(a)(i)(aa))
- the proprietor has received written notification that, where relevant to that person, an enhanced criminal record check has been made and that it or another employment business has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate in response to such a check (paragraph 19(2)(a)(i)(bb))
- the proprietor has received written notification that if the employment business has obtained such a certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school, whether it disclosed any matter of information (paragraph 19(2)(a)(i)(cc))
- the proprietor has received a copy of any enhanced criminal record certificate obtained by the employment business before the person is due to begin work at the school (paragraph 19(2)(a)(ii))
- a person offered for supply by an employment business only begins work at the school if the proprietor considers that the person is suitable for the work for which the person is supplied (paragraph 19(2)(b))
- before a person offered for supply by an employment business begins work at the school the person's identity is checked by the proprietor of the school (irrespective of any such check carried out by the employment business before the person was offered for supply) (paragraph 19(2)(c))
- the proprietor, in the contract or other arrangements which the proprietor makes with any employment business, requires the employment business to provide written notification that the required checks referred to in paragraph 21(3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vii) and (b) have been made to the extent relevant to those persons (paragraph 19(2)(d)(i))
- the proprietor, in the contract or other arrangements which the proprietor makes with any employment business, requires the employment business to provide a copy of any enhanced criminal record certificate which the employment business obtains (paragraph 19(2)(d)(ii))
- in relation to each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007, the proprietor keeps a register which shows that:
 - their identity was checked
 - an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained
 - a check of their right to work in the United Kingdom was made
 - in the case of any person for whom living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 21(3)(a)(i) to (vii), (viii) and (b))
- the proprietor keeps a register which shows that written notification has been received from the employment business in accordance with a contract or other arrangements that it has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate and whether the employment business supplied a copy of the certificate to the school (paragraph 21(5)(c))
- the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(a))
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(b))
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34 (1)(c)).

Inspection team

Mark Lindfield, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Magdalen Court School is a small co-educational day school for children aged five to 18. It occupies purpose-built premises located in the centre of Exeter.
- The school was established in 1991 and is in the ownership of the Jenner Family Trust.
- The school was previously inspected in November 2014 by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The ISI is the body approved by the Department of Education for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council.
- The school ceased its membership of the Independent Schools Council in July 2014.
- The school provides for 12 pupils with statements of special educational needs. Most of those pupils are placed at the school by a local authority.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- There is a separate registered nursery on the school site, which was inspected in April 2014.
- The school aims 'to create a secure, happy and active learning environment which celebrates every individual'. It also seeks to 'inspire and challenge pupils through wide ranging extra-curricular opportunities'.

School details

Unique reference number	113623
Inspection number	10007961
DfE registration number	878/6045

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	Independent co-educational day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs J Jenner
Principal	Jeremy Jenner junior
Headteacher	Jeremy Bushrod
Date of previous school inspection	25–28 November 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,900–9,450
Telephone number	01392 494919
Email address	Admin@MagdaleneCourtSchool.co.uk

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