

Inaura

Moorview, Riverside, Burrowbridge, Somerset TA7 0RB

Inspection dates

26–28 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Sixth form provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership, management and governance of the school are inadequate because the independent school standards are not met in full.
- The trustees have not challenged leaders robustly enough to improve the school and, as a result, standards of teaching and pupils' achievement have declined.
- The trustees do not monitor the work of leaders rigorously or frequently enough. They do not check whether their actions are having the impact planned, including in the sixth form.
- The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have not been successfully dealt with. Many of the issues remain unresolved.
- Teaching is typically inadequate. Pupils make too little progress from their starting points, particularly in English and mathematics. As a result, their chances of succeeding in the next stage of their education, training or employment are compromised.
- Not all teachers challenge and inspire pupils to learn well. This limits the academic progress pupils make.
- Leaders do not implement their planned curriculum effectively. There are inconsistencies across the school in the planning and delivery of subjects and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Leaders do not check pupils' academic progress carefully or often enough. The school's assessment systems do not provide teachers with the precise information they need to plan lessons that enable pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers lack sufficient guidance and direction on how to improve the quality of their teaching and the learning of their pupils. Training is not sharply focused on improving their practice to maximise learning in every lesson.
- Pupils do not receive the feedback they need to know how to improve their work.
- Teachers do not always ensure pupils make good use of their time in lessons. They do not encourage pupils to persevere and develop personal resilience.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff develop positive relationships with pupils. This helps to build pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The school provides a wide range of activities such as rock climbing and ceramics to develop pupils' interests and self-esteem.
- The school's focus on developing pupils' personal and social skills helps them to overcome the traumas they have suffered.
- The standard of art work is good. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The detail are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teaching is planned effectively to capture pupils' interests and help them to make faster academic progress, particularly in English and mathematics
 - teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve so that they consistently produce high-quality work and develop perseverance and personal resilience
 - lessons start promptly to maximise learning time in lessons
 - pupils know how to improve their work.

- Raise achievement and improve pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring teachers effectively use the detailed information kept by the school to plan lessons which systematically build on what pupils already know, can do and understand
 - providing more training and guidance for teachers on the teaching of writing to help pupils produce work of a high quality
 - planning activities that challenge and develop pupils' thinking in mathematics.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - implementing a sharply focused action plan to address the weaknesses identified by the school and in this inspection
 - ensuring school leaders rigorously and frequently check and take action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the sixth form
 - providing teachers with the training they need to deliver high-quality lessons which build pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in English and mathematics
 - checking all teachers respond to the training and advice they receive
 - checking teachers consistently deliver the school's curriculum effectively so that it fully meets the needs of pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of their education, training or employment
 - develop trustees' strategic oversight of the school so that they rigorously hold leaders to account for the improvement of the school's performance.

- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
 - Ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively. Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a)
 - Ensure that the teaching at the school is effective. Paragraph 3
 - Ensure pupils acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. 3(a)
 - Ensure the teaching at the school fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves. 3(b)
 - Ensure the teaching at the school involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time. 3(c)
 - Ensure the teaching at the school shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons. 3(d)
 - Ensure the teaching at the school demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught. 3(e)

- Ensure the teaching at the school demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress. 3(g)
(Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), and 3(g).)
- Ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils. Paragraph 24(1)
- Ensure suitable accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils. 24(1)(a)
- Ensure suitable accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility. 24(1)(b)
(Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b).)
- Ensure that external lighting is provided so that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.
(Paragraph 27, 27(b).)
- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfil their responsibilities effectively, consistently meet the independent school standards, and actively promote the well-being of students.
(Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c).)

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The trustees and proprietors have not tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection with urgency or rigour. Many remain unresolved. The trustees have not ensured all independent school standards are met, particularly those relating to the curriculum and the quality of teaching. As a result, the school's effectiveness has declined since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher and trustees do not systematically and rigorously monitor the effectiveness of their planned actions. In particular, their assessments of teachers' work are not focused sharply on pupils' learning and achievement and do not take sufficient account of the progress pupils make. Consequently, the headteacher has an overly generous view of the school's performance.
- Leaders have not helped teachers to improve the quality and effectiveness of their teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers are unclear about what it is they need to do to improve and they are not receiving the guidance they need. The school has recently appointed a development manager to tackle these weaknesses. However, the capacity of the leadership to bring about sustained improvement has not yet been demonstrated.
- The school has procedures in place for managing staff performance. However, leaders do not hold staff fully to account for the progress of their pupils. As a result, leaders are unclear if pupils are making good progress and where teaching is having the greatest impact.
- Leaders gather a wide range of detailed information about pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour. This wealth of information is not organised, analysed or used strategically. Teachers cannot easily access the information they need to plan lessons that ensure pupils make good progress. Consequently, pupils' progress over time is too slow.
- Leaders do not strategically plan improvement actions with achievable timescales where they are most needed; for example, raising pupils' academic achievement in English and mathematics. This lack of direction is not enabling the school to improve at the speed needed.
- Leaders do not check that their planned curriculum is being implemented effectively by all staff. Leaders plan the curriculum to ensure a broad range of subjects are taught. However, teachers' expectations and aspirations for their pupils vary considerably. Too often, subjects do not spark pupils' interests and help them learn well. In addition, work in books confirms that the curriculum is not supporting pupils to develop their skills in English and mathematics.
- The school offers a range of accredited courses to support pupils' career aspirations. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are typically too low. Despite appropriate and relevant careers advice, too many pupils are not on track to achieve the qualifications needed for their chosen destination. This limits equality of opportunity.
- The school's ethos of providing 'kindness, care and comfort' is embedded in all aspects of their work. Staff confirm that they enjoy working at the school and that they strive to do the best for the pupils. However, the school's approach to behaviour management is not fully understood by all staff. Leaders have not clearly communicated the school's procedures and policies. Too often, pupils are allowed to give up too easily. Consequently, they are not learning to persevere and develop personal resilience.
- The headteacher regularly checks procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Risk assessments for individual pupils and for the many sites managed by the school are regularly checked and monitored. Despite this, the trustees have not ensured all the relevant standards are met.
- Leaders give detailed information about pupils' academic and personal development to parents and local authorities who place pupils at the school. The school is proactive in contacting parents to ensure information is received and understood. Parents say that their children are well supported and safe in this school.
- Pupils' art work is good. Displays of their work confirm that an increasing number of pupils are on track to achieve a GCSE in this subject. This work supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Discussions with pupils confirm that they learn about other faiths and are developing an awareness and understanding of other cultures. Work in books in personal, social, health and citizenship lessons confirms that pupils have an understanding of life in modern, democratic Britain and the rule of law. During their time at the school, pupils slowly develop respect and tolerance for other points of view, cultures and religions.
- Leaders plan the use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils. This is having a positive effect in supporting pupils' specific needs, particularly in providing a nurturing environment for the youngest pupils.

- Leaders ensure pupils are supervised appropriately when attending off-site provision and that staff check for potential risks. Attendance and pupils' behaviour are carefully recorded and monitored.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The trustees and proprietors do not have a good understanding of the requirements of the independent school standards and their role in ensuring the standards are met. Consequently, they have not challenged the headteacher and school leaders robustly enough about the impact of their work. Recent improvements have yet to be secured and embedded in the school's work. For example, trustees are not checking that the agreed whole-school approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are used effectively throughout the school.
 - The trustees have not set a clear strategic direction for the school. The school's development plan is out of date, with insufficient evaluation of the most recent actions taken to improve the school.
 - The proprietors and trustees have provided accommodation on a range of sites that is of good quality. However, no site has a medical room to support pupils when they are unwell.
 - All staffing decisions are taken by the headteacher in discussions with the trustees. This includes decisions about teachers' salaries and pay awards. However, trustees have not held the headteacher to account for teachers' performance and the progress of pupils. They have not ensured that all standards are met.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff receive regular training in all aspects of child protection. They know how to recognise and act on signs of risk and harm. The proprietors and trustees ensure that they follow safer recruitment guidelines. New staff are thoroughly and properly checked. Leaders have recently updated their safeguarding policies, which meet current statutory guidelines. This includes training in 'Prevent' duty (government advice to schools to have regard to the need to identify signs of extremism and radicalisation) and also to identify possible signs of child sexual exploitation. The school's plans to teach personal, social, health and citizenship education are having a positive impact on teaching pupils to keep safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Over time, the quality of teaching has been inadequate. The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is ineffective and is not leading to improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes. As a result, pupils are not making fast enough progress and achieving well, especially in English and mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations and academic aspirations for their pupils are often too low. They do not consistently challenge pupils to work hard and inspire them with engaging and interesting lessons. Pupils then choose to opt out and disengage from their learning.
- Lessons do not always start promptly and purposefully. Despite their challenging and anxious behaviours, pupils are often keen to learn. However, teachers do not grasp these occasions to extend learning and support pupils to achieve a next step or consolidate previous learning.
- Leaders ensure each pupil has a personalised timetable and learning programme, carefully planned to address their complex needs. However, teachers are not given sufficient guidance on how to use the school's detailed information about what pupils already know, can do and understand to plan pupils' future learning. This is limiting the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning.
- Teachers are unsure how to break down the learning into small steps when teaching a particular genre of writing. Also, planned opportunities do not build on pupils' understanding of number and help them to use and think about the skills they learn in other aspects of mathematics. As a result, pupils are not building their skills in reading, writing and mathematics systematically.
- The school has a policy on giving feedback, but not all teachers follow it. Therefore, many pupils do not receive meaningful feedback on completion of their work. This means that they are unsure how to improve their learning and often work is left unfinished from one session to another.
- The school has recently introduced a new reading programme. Although it is too early to see the impact of this approach on pupils' achievement, inspectors observed pupils successfully using their developing phonics knowledge to read unknown words. The most-able pupils enjoyed the opportunity to examine and read more complex texts.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is more effective than in other years. This is because the experienced teachers are skilled in effectively planning small steps of learning. Work in pupils' books confirms that these pupils are making faster progress from their starting points.

- Learning support assistants provide high-quality care and support for their pupils. This is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development. However, these staff also take on teaching responsibilities without the training they need to carry out this role effectively. Over time, this is not helping pupils to make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils build trusting relationships with staff. Although pupils display extremely challenging behaviours, staff support pupils well and help them to settle and learn to manage extreme episodes, when they occur. However, despite a kind and caring approach, staff are not helping pupils to develop pride in their own achievements and an eagerness to learn.
- The school's approach to providing strong pastoral care for each pupil supports their personal and emotional development. Pupils gradually learn to develop tolerance and show respect to adults and each other. In time, they learn to develop positive strategies to deal with the significant challenges they face and begin their journey to re-engage with education and learning.
- Staff are trained in managing challenging behaviour. Restraint is used as a last resort. Records show incidents reduce in frequency over time as pupils settle.
- The school places a high priority on teaching pupils to keep safe online. Posters around the school and a forthcoming e-safety day remind pupils how to keep safe on the internet.
- Leaders prioritise pupils' safety and their welfare. All staff use the school's online recording system to log accidents, behaviour and attendance. This information is checked daily by the headteacher and incidents, such as bullying, are followed up quickly. Records also confirm that the school carries out regular fire drills and health and safety audits of the premises. However, some irregularities, such as broken external lighting, were found during the inspection. In addition, the trustees have not provided suitable medical facilities on each site.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school to improve procedures to monitor and check pupils' attendance. Although attending regularly remains a concern for a number of pupils, the school's procedures have tightened considerably. Staff go 'the extra mile' to encourage pupils to attend, visiting them at home and providing work when needed. Despite this, pupils often arrive late or are absent on a regular basis.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The headteacher monitors staff records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance daily to identify patterns over time. The school's records show that pupils are making faster progress in their personal development than in their academic work.
- Pupils behave appropriately in lessons when they feel settled and teachers inspire and challenge them to work hard. At these times, pupils display positive attitudes to learning and sustained concentration. However, pupils are allowed to 'opt out' of their learning too frequently and, as a result, are not developing the resilience needed to be successful in the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Pupils typically appreciate the opportunities to achieve incentive rewards that develop self-esteem. Nevertheless, some pupils are unclear of their boundaries. Some staff allow pupils to choose when to leave lessons, arrive late or use derogatory language too readily. As a result, pupils' learning is compromised.
- Breaktimes and lunchtimes are sociable occasions. During the inspection, pupils sat together at lunchtime and chatted with their friends and staff. Pupils told inspectors, 'I like school. It is helping me get a quality education.' Most pupils who spoke to inspectors were polite and, with encouragement, responded courteously. This represents good progress in their social skills.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision are well supervised by staff from the school. They mostly behave appropriately and work towards achieving accredited awards, if offered, for the activity.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Pupils join the school with skills and knowledge which are typically well below average for their age. Many have missed large parts of their schooling and are extremely reluctant to re-engage with education and learning. As a result of strong pastoral support, pupils are carefully nurtured and begin to settle in this school. The school's strong pastoral and therapeutic ethos provides well for these pupils. However, pupils' academic progress from their starting points is inadequate. Teachers are not challenging pupils, particularly the most-able, to achieve well.
- Work in pupils' books, across a range of subjects, confirms that teachers' expectations vary considerably. Some pupils have completed work in all subjects across the curriculum, for example in science and humanities. Others have completed very little. In addition, pupils are not being challenged to develop and apply their basic skills in English and mathematics in other subjects. As a result, work in books confirms that pupils struggle to access the curriculum and achieve well, particularly in Years 7 to 13.
- The school's assessment records confirm that pupils are not making good progress in English and mathematics. Some have 'stood still' or 'gone backwards'. Therefore, although pupils are achieving positive personal development outcomes, this is not matched in their academic achievements.
- The funding for disadvantaged pupils is used wisely and provides opportunities such as horse riding and music lessons to extend pupils' learning and interests. Although these pupils do make better progress academically as a result of these activities, the impact is more evident in their personal and social development.
- The achievement of pupils taking art is good. A higher proportion of pupils are on track to achieve a GCSE in this subject than in other subjects. This is a result of good teaching and teachers' higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is having a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Until recently, leaders did not focus sufficiently on the teaching of reading. Since the introduction of their new approach, teachers have a renewed focus on the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make). Early indications are that pupils are building their skills to be able to read well. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work in supporting pupils to make up lost ground.

Sixth form provision

is inadequate

- The sixth form is inadequate. The independent school standards that are not met in relation to the curriculum and teaching have a negative impact on the academic progress of learners. Leadership of the sixth form is inadequate. Leaders do not check sufficiently on the quality of teaching and learning or the curriculum. They do not plan improvements and monitor their impact effectively.
- Outcomes for learners in the sixth form are often limited by the gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills that have accumulated over their academic careers, including during their time at Inaura.
- Learners who do not have a good GCSE in English or mathematics usually continue to study these subjects in the sixth form. Over time, however, many have not been able to achieve a grade C in either subject.
- School leaders recognise that many learners need to improve their employability and they provide courses to do this, including for those learners who get the majority of their education at local colleges. Learners have not always taken these opportunities, however, and this limits the extent to which they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- School leaders go to great lengths to promote the personal development and welfare of learners in line with the school's ethos. They have a good insight into the emotional and social needs of learners in the sixth form. This can mean, however, that academic rigour is given insufficient emphasis. This results in learners making slower progress from their starting points than would usually be expected.
- Staff ensure learners are safe and feel well supported in the sixth form. Staff visit learners who are not attending to ensure that they are safe in their homes and have access to academic and careers guidance.

School details

Unique reference number	135735
Inspection number	10011269
DfE registration number	933/6000

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school
School status	Independent
Age range of pupils	8–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	3
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Dr Adam Abdelnoor
Chair	Matthew Gibson
Headteacher	Dr Adam Abdelnoor
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,954
Telephone number	01458 830434
Website	www.inaura.net
Email address	admin.office@inaura.net
Date of previous inspection	17–18 April 2013

Information about this school

- Inaura is an independent special school for girls and boys with complex emotional, social and mental health difficulties. The school opened in 2006 and comprises 10 sites. The school is owned by Inaura, a registered charity. The main site is in Burrowbridge, near Bridgwater, in Somerset. The other sites and the school's registered office are located approximately 14 miles away in Lower Godney, near Glastonbury and in East Huntspill.
- All pupils have their places funded by local authorities. Nine pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- The school caters for pupils who are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- When the school was last inspected in April 2013, it was judged to be adequate. At that time, the school met all independent school standards.
- The trustees have responsibility for the governance of the school.
- The school uses a wide range of local off-site provision in the area. These include Wells Leisure Centre, climbing in Bristol, horse riding in North Somerset, Ceramics workshop in Burnham-on-Sea and Chiltern Trinity Gym in Bridgwater.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with no notice.
- The inspectors observed learning and behaviour in 10 lessons during the inspection. Inspectors visited the 10 sites which comprise Inaura. One off-site provision, Ceramics workshop, was also visited during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress and attendance with the headteacher and school leaders. In addition, the inspectors spoke with pupils and staff throughout the inspection to seek their views of the school. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives from local authorities who place pupils, and parents, to seek their views.
- There were too few responses to the online Parent View questionnaire for these to be published.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documentation including records relating to behaviour, attendance, bullying and safeguarding. School policies and school documentation were also examined.

Inspection team

Catherine Leahy, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Lee	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steffi Penny	Her Majesty's Inspector

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