

Hopewell School (Harmony House)

Harmony House, Baden Powell Close, Dagenham, RM9 6XN

Inspection dates

11 September 2015

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- This unannounced progress monitoring 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.
- An unannounced full inspection was undertaken by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors at the request of the Department for Education in November 2014. At this time the inspector judged the school to be inadequate in all areas of its work. It was also found that numerous independent school standards were not met. These were in relation to quality of education, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, ensuring students' welfare, health and safety, the premises and in the provision of information for parents and carers.
- The school submitted an action plan on 3 March 2015 to the Department for Education. The plan was evaluated by Ofsted on 2 June 2015 when it was judged to require improvement because the proposed actions did not fully address all the deficiencies cited in the inspection report. The school's revised action plan was considered during this inspection.

Main findings

Teaching

- The inspection of November 2014 found the school did not meet three of the requirements for teaching. At this time the quality of teaching was also viewed as inadequate with students' making inadequate progress. This was because the pace of learning was slow in too many classes; teachers failed to move students on when they are ready to do so and learning was not well enough planned to ensure students were taught the skills they needed to extend their learning. Further specialist resources for the delivery of some subjects, such as design technology, computing and science were sparse. This was particularly the case in the satellite classroom. It was also noted that school leaders did not check the quality of teaching with sufficient rigour to ensure the quality of teaching.
- The action plan outlined a considerable number of actions to improve teaching quality and resources. These included: improvements in the leadership of teaching and staff training; the use of assessment information; the development of new schemes of work to include opportunities to extend students' knowledge; the purchase of new resources; regular monitoring of lessons; and the establishment of links with other schools to moderate work to ensure the accuracy of assessment information.
- These actions have directly led to improvements in the quality of teaching. Leaders now have an accurate view of teaching and have used this to inform the ongoing programme of professional development. This has led to improved teaching. Improvements have also been supported by regular lesson observations and scrutiny of lesson plans with precise feedback on how teachers can improve. A new common approach to assessment is also supporting improvements in

teaching. Teachers are now clear about what they intend to teach in each lesson; they are tailoring their approaches to learning needs of individuals with their lessons and making use of the improved assessment information that is now available. Students seen during the inspection showed positive attitudes, were engaged in the varied tasks teachers provided to them and could talk about their learning. The school's end of year assessment data shows that students' progress is improving across all subjects.

- Students and staff are enthused by the new learning resources, including specialist rooms for design technology and science. Expenditure on this has been in excess of what was indicated in the school's action plan. The school is rightly developing the resources in the specialist rooms as each of the revised schemes of work are taught. Woodwork projects in the summer term showed evidence of creativity and skill development. Staff commented that the professional development had been amongst the best they had received and the new interim lead of teaching is putting further improvements in place. As a result of these actions the three unmet independent school standards for education are now met.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- The inspection of November 2014 found several of the standards in this part were not met. Insufficient checks were made to ensure that partisan views were not promoted through teaching or by visitors to the school. It was also reported that no advice was given to staff, including those who work on a one-to-one basis with students, to ensure that any opinions voiced were balanced and appropriate.
- The school outlined a range of actions in its plan to improve the quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These included a full review of this provision across the school, providing training for staff and increasing the range of experiences for students of all ages through classroom teaching and school visits. They also proposed to put in place make checks of subject-based materials, school policies, promotional materials and the vetting of visiting speakers. Following Ofsted's review of the school's action plan, the school made amendments to provide a closer focus on teaching, including specific details on staff training and the monitoring of teaching.
- The school has followed through on these actions. The new policy sets out clearly the school's stance on ensuring that partisan views are not promoted and that young people learn about different viewpoints in measured and balanced ways. Lesson plans are regularly checked for balance and to ensure that every opportunity is taken to develop these aspects. This is further reviewed through the school's checks on the quality of teaching. Based on the school's audit, the programme of visits is being extended which older students commented positively on. Consequently, the previously failed independent school standards for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are now met.

Welfare

- The inspection of November 2014 found the school did not meet the requirements for safeguarding. It was found that the systems to ensure only authorised persons could enter the school building were insufficient and inconsistent. Inspectors found that, when concerns about safeguarding had been raised, they had not been reported to the authorities in a timely fashion.
- In its action plan, the school stated a series of actions in relation to safeguarding, many of which had already been undertaken. These included training for staff, an update of policies and more detailed records of child protection. They also proposed the installation of additional doors and locks in the school. The school has carried out the intended actions, including the installation of additional doors so that the accommodation used by the school is only accessible to authorised persons. Leaders have made good use of advice from the local authority officers and carried a full safeguarding audit to ensure robust systems are in place. The schools' policies and systems, including for online safety and the prevention of extremism and radicalisation, are in line with March 2015 statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. A further review

is in process following the update of this guidance in July 2015. Staff have received appropriate training in child protection, the use of physical restraint and Prevent. Discussion with members of staff showed they have a secure understanding of the school's revised systems for child protection and their individual response. As a result of the new systems and new links with the local authority officers, the school is now actively seeking advice and reporting in a timely fashion. Consequently the independent school standard for safeguarding is now met.

- The inspection of November 2014 found the school did not meet the requirements for preventing and tackling bullying because there was insufficient information and guidance about the school's stance on homophobic or cyber bullying. The action plan stated leaders intended to carry out a review of the anti-bullying policy to include all forms of bullying and that this would be shared with parents and students through the school website. The school revised policies, including that for online safety, makes full reference to the school's approaches to tackling and preventing bullying and are published on the school website. New systems for reporting any incidents of poor behaviour and/or bullying are now place. These are being well used by staff and analysed by leaders to check their effectiveness and provide support as needed for students. Age-appropriate assemblies and teaching of the curriculum have improved students' awareness of different types of bullying. Consequently, the school now meets this independent school standard.
- The inspection of November 2014 found the school did not meet the requirements for fire safety. This was because fire extinguishers were not easily accessible, having been moved from prominent positions following incidents of students using them inappropriately. This measure had not been communicated to staff and the previous headteacher was not aware of their whereabouts. The school outlined a series of measures to address this in its action plan; this included a fire safety audit and the appointment of a fire safety officer. There is now clear leadership of fire safety and five staff have undertaken fire marshal training. The fire safety audit took place in April 2015. Fire extinguishers are now installed around the school. These are all covered, labelled and tested. In line with their action plan a fire safety file keeps track of issues relating to fire safety, including records of fire drills. Consequently the independent school standard for fire safety is now met.
- The inspection of November 2014 found staff were not deployed well to ensure the proper supervision of students; in particular the report made reference to both teachers' and students' safety in the satellite classroom as the teacher was sometimes working alone. In its action plan the school proposed to review its security arrangements, provide training for staff in supervising students and introduce a new rota of supervision throughout the school day. The satellite classroom is no longer in use. As a result of all these actions, and the improved arrangements for ensuring that only authorised persons have access to the premises, students are now well supervised at all times. Students commented on the higher level of supervision in the school.
- The school has also revised its systems for keeping attendance records, with monthly printouts taken of the electronic registers and kept on file, as required. As a result of the actions taken by the school, all the independent school standards to support students' welfare and safeguarding are now met.

Information for parents

- The inspection of November 2014 found the school had not met the standards for the provision of information. Key information including the name of the headteacher, the name and contact details of the Chair of the Governing Body, academic performance and the number of formal complaints made against the school in the previous years were not available to parents. Further, the school could not demonstrate that it had sent local authorities the required annual statements of income and expenditure relating to the funding for students' statements of educational needs. They could only demonstrate that the statements had been prepared.
- In its action plan the school stated it intended to provide an updated website and prospectus that would contain the required information and ensure the financial statements were sent out.

The school has a new website; this provides all the required information for parents, including the name and contact details of the governing body. The required financial statements were emailed to the placing local authorities in May 2015. All of the standards for the provision of information are now met.

Leadership and management

- Leaders, including governors, have worked with determination to address the independent school standard failures identified in the November 2014 inspection. Their systematic approach in tackling these, improving the quality of teaching and in establishing new systems underpinned by effective monitoring has resulted in all the independent standards, including those for leadership and management, being met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements.

Inspection team

Angela Corbett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Hopewell School (Harmony House) is an independent day school which opened in November 2006 and is owned by a sole proprietor. The school is situated within Harmony House which is a charitable project of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.
- The school provides education for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and for those with autistic spectrum disorders, who have experienced disruption and disengagement in their previous education.
- The school is registered for up to 65 students aged 5 to 19 years. There are currently 30 students on roll, aged between eight and 16, one of whom is resident in one of the Holibrook homes. The overwhelming majority of students are boys, in line with other schools of this type. All students have statements of special educational needs or educational health care plans. Since the last inspection very few children have joined the school. Almost all children who left were from Year 11 or of sixth form age.
- The school runs an outreach programme for seven of the students on roll, delivering education off-site within community facilities such as colleges and libraries.
- At the time of the last inspection the school made use of a satellite classroom located at the rear of an unoccupied children's home located approximately 3.5 miles from the school. This provision is no longer in use.
- Since the last inspection eleven staff have left the school, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher. An interim headteacher is now supported by two interim deputy headteachers. Four staff previously deployed in outreach work or in another of the Hopewell schools are now teaching in the school
- The school was judged as outstanding in all aspects when it was inspected in September 2013. However, when the school was inspected in November 2014 inspectors found this was no longer the case and all aspects of the school's work were judged inadequate with numerous independent school standards not met.
- A governing body replaced the review committee just prior to the last inspection. Two further external members are in the process of being recruited.

- The school aims to: 'educate and empower young people to realise their full potential, whilst building on resilience and providing opportunities for them to achieve the outcomes of the Every Child Matters Agenda; equip young people with the tools they need to enhance their dignity and life chances; and provide high quality services that make a positive difference to young people in a safe and therapeutic environment'.

School details

Unique reference number	134388
Inspection number	10006566
DfE registration number	301/6002

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, behavioural difficulties (SEBD), moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
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	30
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	0
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Herman Allen
Chair	Yvonne Miller
Headteacher	Wendy Birch
Date of previous school inspection	11–13 November 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£44,000 to £60,000
Telephone number	020 8593 6610
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