

Homeschool

49 Manifold Way, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0GB

Inspection dates

20–21 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Outcomes for pupils

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership and management are inadequate because the proprietor has not ensured that all the current independent school standards are met, particularly in regard to pupils' welfare.
- The school's safeguarding policy and practice do not reflect the latest statutory requirements.
- The school's procedures for making risk assessments and reducing risks to pupils do not reflect current requirements.
- The annual check of the gas appliances, required for fire safety purposes, is overdue.
- The school website does not include all the required information for parents and others.
- The school's complaints policy does not reflect the requirements effective from 1 January 2015.
- The school's systems for checking and tracking pupils' outcomes in relation to those expected for their age are insufficiently developed.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and learning are good. Pupils make good progress and fill the gaps in their prior learning across a range of subjects successfully.
- The most-able pupils are challenged to think and develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct and engagement in learning. They provide pupils with interesting and appropriately demanding work, which pupils enjoy and complete enthusiastically.
- Pupils make good gains in managing their own behaviour and developing positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' self-esteem and confidence develop well. They are keen to share ideas, and show respect and tolerance for others.
- The school's provision for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education develops effectively their understanding of fundamental British values and healthy lifestyles.

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 details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and implemented in compliance with the independent school standards.
- Ensure that the school's systems for checking and recording pupils' outcomes take full account of the age-related expectations for pupils nationally.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
 - Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school (paragraph 7, 7(a)); and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7(b)).
 - Ensure that the school premises comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by having the safety of the gas appliances checked annually (paragraph 12).
 - Ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy that applies on and off the school premises (paragraph 16, 16(a)); and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16(b)).
 - 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 pupils are ensured (paragraph 25).
 - Ensure that all the information specified about the curriculum, safeguarding arrangements and other school policies is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate (paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b) and 32(1)(c)).
 - Ensure that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils (paragraph 33) and:
 - where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 33(f));
 - ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 33(g));
 - allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish (paragraph 33(h));
 - provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations, and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations (paragraph 33(i)) is:
 - provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about (paragraph 33(i)(i)); and is
 - available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher (paragraph 33(i)(ii));
 - provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) (paragraph 33(j)) and:
 - whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing (paragraph 33(j)(i)); and
 - action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) (paragraph 33(j)(ii));
 - provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them (paragraph 33(k)).

- Ensure 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 (paragraph 34(1)(a));
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(b)); and
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1)(c)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The proprietor has not ensured that all the requirements of the independent school standards are met. He has not made sure that policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding and risk assessments have been updated to reflect the latest requirements. Consequently, the arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- In particular, the school's safeguarding policy has not been updated to reflect either the latest statutory requirements, as set out in 'Keeping children safe in education' (July 2015) or to reflect changes in personnel since the pre-registration inspection visit in September 2014.
- While risk assessments are made for off-site visits, the proprietor has not drawn up and implemented a written policy to guide the assessment of risks and the action required to reduce those that are identified.
- At the time of this inspection visit, the annual check on the gas appliances on the school premises was overdue and the school's complaints procedures did not reflect the new requirements introduced in January 2015.
- The proprietor communicates clearly the ethos of the school and his vision for its development to parents and others. He has high expectations of his pupils and these are consistently applied. Pupils respond well to these, rising to the challenges they are set. The proprietor maintains daily contact with parents and plans to provide annual written reports on pupils' progress, outcomes and areas for improvement.
- The proprietor actively promotes a culture of respect and tolerance which is shared by pupils and parents. He and the office manager have a strong commitment to helping pupils to flourish and make good their gaps in learning in a nurturing setting. They demonstrate their willingness to go the extra mile to support children and their parents in getting back in to mainstream education.
- The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that covers all the required areas of learning and promotes pupils' PSHE effectively. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Careful checks on what pupils know and can do when they join the school enable the proprietor to identify gaps in individual pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, and to devise learning programmes to address these. The proprietor makes appropriate adjustments to schemes and plans to take account of the most able and those who are at risk of falling behind.
- In the short time that the school has been operating, the combination of high expectations of pupils' good behaviour with an appropriate level of challenge of work is promoting pupils' good progress. The proprietor has established systems for contributing to annual reviews of pupils' education, health and care plans, where appropriate. He is also aware of the requirement to provide commissioning local authorities or schools with a breakdown of income and expenditure for the pupils they place at the school.
- The school's aims and culture underpin full equality of opportunity and diversity, particularly in enabling pupils to return to mainstream education and access a broad curriculum. Fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are woven throughout the curriculum. The proprietor has attended 'Prevent' duty training and includes topics such as radicalisation and extremism at an appropriate level within the PSHE programme.
- With the exception of the lapsed gas appliance safety check, the premises are well maintained. Good use is made of the nearby park for pupils' play and physical education. Washroom facilities meet requirements.
- The proprietor makes all the required checks on adults working with pupils and records these appropriately on a single central register.
- Both the proprietor and office manager are trained in first aid. There is a suitable policy and appropriately stocked first aid box. The provision for pupils who are unwell meets requirements.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The proprietor has not made effective arrangements for ensuring that the school keeps up to date with changes to the independent school standards.
 - The school's website does not include all the required information for parents and others.
 - The proprietor has not made sure that safeguarding is effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Pupils make good progress because teaching and learning are effective. Teaching builds on pupils' interests, carefully moving learning on in small enough steps to consolidate skills while deepening their knowledge and understanding. There is an effective and consistent emphasis on developing pupils' skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum.
- Working relationships between adults and pupils are strong and productive. Well-phrased questions tease out pupils' ideas and understanding, and pupils are confident in asking for help and guidance. The most able pupils show interest in how things work, such as how a rocket engine provides the necessary thrust to leave the ground.
- Pupils appreciate that setting out their work in a neat and tidy manner helps them to achieve more in the long term. They understand the school's high expectations for their good conduct and active participation in learning.
- Pupils enjoy learning outside the classroom, particularly the opportunity to look after chickens. Teaching promotes diversity and respect for people and property, both formally and informally, throughout the school day.
- Feedback to pupils on how to improve their work is regular and identifies their next steps in learning. Pupils are willing to learn from their mistakes. For example, they are quick to consult a dictionary to check the meaning or spelling of a word.
- Parents appreciate the regular updates they receive on their child's progress. They comment about the significant improvement in their children's interest in learning and curiosity to know more.
- Pupils undertake homework regularly that builds on the work they have done in lessons. This is consistently marked and corrected so that any misunderstandings are quickly spotted and ironed out.
- The proprietor has drawn up and implemented systems for checking and recording pupils' development and application of skills in different subjects. Less well developed are the ways in which the school checks and records pupils' outcomes in different subjects in comparison with those expected for their age nationally.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because the school's welfare arrangements for safeguarding, fire safety and risk assessments do not meet current requirements. Nonetheless, pupils feel safe and trust adults to care for them. This is endorsed by parents.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They make good gains in their self-confidence and self-esteem as they quickly develop positive attitudes to learning and take increasing pride in their work. This is because the proprietor's expectations are clear and consistently promoted.
- The school is orderly and routines are established. Pupils respond promptly to requests from adults and are quick to volunteer to take responsibility for jobs around the school, such as feeding the chickens.
- Pupils respect other people's views, even when they disagree. They are mindful of the need to keep safe, such as when using technology, and reflect well on becoming good citizens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. From when they join the school, pupils make rapid gains in their behaviour. They quickly learn to check themselves from using bad language or resorting to aggressive behaviour, which they know will not be tolerated by adults.
- Pupils' attendance is high, reversing patterns of often regular absence at previous schools. Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day. In lessons, they concentrate and work hard. At social times and when meeting visitors, pupils are good mannered and display confidence in talking to adults. Pupils handle the chickens with great care, demonstrating concern and respect for their welfare.
- On the rare occasion when they become frustrated, pupils respond positively to the calm and sensitive manner in which adults correct them. There have been no exclusions since the school opened. Parents express delight with the progress pupils have made in managing their anger and in taking responsibility for their actions.

Outcomes for pupils**are good**

- From when they start at the school, pupils make good progress. Although the first pupils were only admitted towards the end of last term, they are making good gains in learning. Those who have fallen behind in relation to others of the same age nationally are catching up well.
- Pupils are keen to achieve the targets they are set and move on to the next stage of learning. They understand the importance of setting out their work neatly in order to ensure accuracy when making calculations. Pupils read for different purposes and enjoy using computer-based games to improve and strengthen their spelling skills. They accelerate their progress by habitually correcting their work and responding well to suggestions as to how they can improve.
- Pupils make swift progress in making good the gaps in their previous learning. Similarly, most-able pupils make good progress because teaching encourages them to think about different ways of developing their knowledge and understanding in different contexts. For example, in a technology lesson examining the properties of different materials to be used to build a model rocket, one pupil identified how a wooden handle would insulate a metal rod being used as a poker in an open fire.

School details

Unique reference number	141501
Inspection number	10006307
DfE registration number	333/6007

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	Day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Colin Rankine
Chair	Colin Rankine
Headteacher	Colin Rankine
Annual fees (day pupils)	From £40 per day
Telephone number	0121 649 1599
Website	www.homeschoolsocialenterprise.org
Email address	homeschool@live.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Homeschool is part of the Homeschool Social Enterprise, a registered charity. The school was registered with the Department for Education on 3 October 2014. It admitted its first pupils in the middle of March 2016.
- The proprietor is also the headteacher. He is supported by the office manager who also assists in the classroom. There are no other staff. The school does not have a board of governors or proprietorial body.
- The school is accommodated on the ground floor of a town house. It is registered to provide day education for up to five boys and girls aged between five and 11 years.
- None of the present cohort has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. There are currently no children who are looked after on the school roll.
- The school does not use any alternative providers for its pupils.
- The school does not have any specific religious affiliation. It aims to, 'educate and support children with a rich and varied education along with strong Christian values'.
- This is the first standard inspection of the school by Ofsted since its registration.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted at one day's notice and took place over two days, including the preparation day.
- The inspector had discussions with the proprietor and the school's office manager.
- Although there is currently only one pupil on roll, the inspection took into account historical data and other relevant information relating to pupils on roll since the school opened.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and talked to them about it. He looked at teachers' planning and the school's records of pupils' outcomes and progress.
- The inspector considered views of one parent visiting the school. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to be considered.
- In order to check the school's continued compliance with the independent school standards, the inspector examined policies, schemes of work and other documents. These included verifying the checks recorded on the school's single register of the suitability of adults to work with children.

Inspection team

Michael Best, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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