

Crookhey Hall School

Crookhey Hall, Garstang Road, Cockerham, Lancaster LA20HA

Inspection dates

15 June 2016

Overall outcome

Independent school standards 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 inspector was also requested to look at and report separately on concerns about the school site identified in a complaint received by the department.
- 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 (Welfare, health and safety of pupils) and Part 8 (Quality of leadership in and management of schools). A number of standards relating to Part 3 and Part 8 were not met.
- The school received an unannounced progress monitoring inspection in December 2015, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. A number of standards relating to Part 3 (Welfare, health and safety of pupils), Part 6 (Provision of information) and Part 8 (Quality of leadership in and management of schools) were not met.
- The school produced an action plan, which details the actions to be taken to meet the standards not met, in February 2016.
- This was the second monitoring inspection.
- The school was given no notice of this inspection.
- The inspector met the school's senior leaders, pupils, a representative of the proprietorial body and an officer of a local authority who commissions places for pupils to attend the school. The inspector also toured the school, accompanied by the headteacher, to evaluate the safety of the site 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, the school's single central record of checks on staff, the school's risk assessments and records of staff training in keeping children safe.
- The focus of the inspection was the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

Main findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety

- The standards for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are met.
- The inspection in December 2015 found that some of the standards relating to welfare, health and safety were not met. Although the school had updated its safeguarding policy, there were inconsistencies between the policy in school and that published online. Leaders had not ensured that teachers and other adults had received training in several of the specific safeguarding issues listed in the latest statutory guidance.
- Leaders have eradicated the inconsistencies between the versions of the school's safeguarding policies, to ensure consistency between the policy available in school and that published online. The school's policy closely follows up-to-date guidance from the Secretary of State and is implemented effectively.
- Teachers and other adults, including volunteers working in the school, are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding listed in the latest statutory guidance. This is because leaders have

taken rapid action to provide appropriate training in the specific areas in the guidance, including female genital mutilation, sexting, domestic violence, drug and alcohol awareness and the statutory duties of schools relating to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

- Teachers' and other adults' understanding of safeguarding, including their understanding of Part 1 of the statutory guidance document 'Keeping children safe in education' (July 2015), is regularly checked by leaders through the effective use of written assessments. Consequently, teachers and other adults working in school have a good understanding of all the specific aspects of safeguarding listed in the latest statutory guidance.
- Leaders' recent review of the site's access protocols and subsequent actions means pupils are better protected from the dangers associated with vehicle movement in the school's grounds because the school's main entrance gate is now closed during the school day.

Part 6. Provision of information

- The standards for the provision of information are met.
- The inspection in December 2015 found that the standards relating to the publication of information on the school's website were not met. The school's safeguarding policy, published on the school's website, contained several references to statutory guidance that had since been amended. References were made to 'Keeping children safe in education' (March 2015), rather than the latest version of 'Keeping children safe in education' (July 2015).
- The school's amended safeguarding policy published online meets requirements. The policy published on the school's website is appropriately detailed and correctly references the up-to-date statutory guidance from the Secretary of State relating to keeping children safe in education.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- The standards of the quality of leadership in and management of schools are met.
- The inspection in December 2015 found that the proprietorial body had not fulfilled its statutory duty, described in 'Keeping children safe in education' (July 2015), to ensure all staff read at least Part 1 of this guidance. The inspection also found that leaders had not ensured that all versions of the school's safeguarding policy accurately identified the latest statutory guidance or that staff were trained well in the specific areas of safeguarding it identifies.
- Leadership has been strengthened by the restructuring of senior leadership in the school to include an executive headteacher with additional experience and expertise. Consequently, the school has made rapid improvement to meet the standards because senior leaders are more stringently held to account.
- Leaders actively promote the welfare of pupils. They have rapidly brought about improvements to the staff's knowledge and understanding of safeguarding through improved training. Leaders have clarified the school's safeguarding policy so it meets statutory guidance requirements. Consequently, the school now meets the national standards for the provision of information and the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- Senior managers of the proprietary group are well informed of the impact of leaders' actions through ensuring effective reporting mechanisms are in place and because they visit the school regularly.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Inspection team

John Nixon, 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 31 boys and girls on roll, aged 13 to 17 years. All pupils on roll have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care 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

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| Unique reference number | 119849 |
| Inspection number | 10020604 |
| 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.

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| 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 | 3 December 2015 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £28,000–£30,000 |
| Telephone number | 01524 792618 |
| Fax number | 01524 792684 |
| Email address | p.o'connell@crookheyhallschool.co.uk |

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