

White Trees Independent School

Tile House Farm, Birds Green, Willingale, Ongar, Essex CM5 0PN

Inspection dates

22 June 2016

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- The school was previously inspected by Ofsted in November 2015. This was an emergency inspection as a result of a complaint about the behaviour and supervision of pupils at the school. A number of requirements concerned with pupils' welfare were found not to be met. The school submitted an action plan to the Department for Education (DfE) which was accepted.
- 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. The inspection was unannounced.
- This was the first monitoring visit since the school was inspected in November 2015.
- The purpose of this inspection was to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards in the following areas: the welfare, health and safety of pupils (Part 3 of the standards) and the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (Part 4).
- The inspector met with the principal and a member of the proprietorial body to discuss the progress made since the previous inspection. The inspector scrutinised documents including health and safety policies, records of individual pupils, risk assessments and the single central register of checks of staff.
- No pupils were present in school when this inspection took place.

Main findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The inspection of November 2015 found that staff did not have sufficient guidance to inform them of their responsibilities to protect pupils from harm. It also found that the safeguarding policy was misleading because it referred staff to out-of-date guidance. In its action plan, the school indicated that it would review all policies relating to safeguarding and allocate sufficient time to staff to read them and to understand how to implement the policies effectively. A revised safeguarding policy has been produced and all staff were provided with appropriate training on safeguarding children in January 2016.
- The previous inspection found that the school's behaviour policy was not being implemented consistently, due partly to a succession of supply staff. In its action plan, the school indicated it would revise the policy and keep more informative records which link pupils' behaviour to their learning. The behaviour policy has been reviewed and staff now maintain detailed daily records of pupils' attitudes and conduct and how this impacts on their learning. Permanent staff have been appointed in order to reduce the number of supply teachers. Staff have received comprehensive training on managing poor behaviour and on de-escalation techniques.
- The school now has a clear and systematic system for dealing with poor behaviour and has developed a sequence of consequences which has been shared with pupils. This system is displayed in classrooms. Since the previous inspection, no behavioural incidents have escalated beyond step three of the seven-step system. This supports the school's view that the behaviour management systems have improved.

- The previous inspection found that pupils were not always properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff. In its action plan, the school indicated it would develop a core group of staff and make them aware of the structure of the organisation and the necessary protocols. The school has clarified the hierarchical structure of the organisation and made this available to all staff. Arrangements for staff's supervision of pupils have been revised and implemented effectively. Information on individual pupils is shared routinely on a daily basis.
- The previous inspection found that risks had not been identified or followed up systematically. A suitable risk assessment policy is in place, following a review by senior staff. The proprietor has identified a range of potential risks, and appropriate arrangements are now in place to minimise these. The inspector reviewed a sample of risk assessment documents relating to recent excursions arranged for pupils. These were detailed and comprehensive and took the individual needs of pupils into account.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- The previous inspection found that the checks for disqualification, barring and prohibition were not recorded on the single central register. These checks were made but were kept in staff members' files, rather than recorded on the register. In its action plan the school indicated that the single central register had been updated to meet the unmet standard. The inspector's scrutiny of the single central register confirms this.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- The school opened in February 2014 and is registered with the DfE as an independent day special school for a maximum of six male and female pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 years with behavioural, emotional and social needs.
- There are currently six pupils on roll, five of whom are looked after by the local authority.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

School details

Unique reference number	140655
Inspection number	10018866
DfE registration number	881/6053

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	Special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Proprietor	SureCare Residential
Chair	Simon Barr
Headteacher	Tess Boyes
Date of previous school inspection	24–26 February 2016
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,000
Telephone number	01277 899 9355
Email address	tess.boyes@whitetrees-school.com

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