

The NAS Anderson School

Rookery Lane, Pilning, South Gloucestershire BS35 4JN

Inspection date

13 July 2016

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was undertaken at the request of the Department for Education, 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.
- The school received an emergency inspection in June 2015, at the request of the Department for Education, following concerns raised about pupils' educational provision, the welfare, health and safety of pupils and a failing of leaders to respond to views that had been raised. A number of standards relating to Parts 1, 3, 6 and 8 were found to be not met.
- The subsequent action plan produced by the school was evaluated in December 2015 and found to require improvement.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection. The inspection also took account of a complaint relating to concerns raised about pupils' educational provision, and the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- The inspection focused on the school's progress in those parts of the action plan relating to Parts, 1, 3, 6, 7 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, and spoke with other members of staff and pupils during the inspection. She spoke to the school improvement adviser and the director of education for this school by telephone. In addition, the inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour management and the school's procedures for handling complaints. The inspector looked at pupils' work in books to check the quality of education provided and the progress pupils have made this year. The implementation and effectiveness of individual pupils' targets, their progress plans and their statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans were also scrutinised.
- The inspection focused on the school's actions to meet the standards in Parts 1, 3, 6, 7 and 8.

Main findings

Quality of education provided

- At the time of the full inspection in November 2013, the school met all the independent school standards. However, the emergency inspection in June 2015 found this was no longer the case. In particular, the inspection found that the curriculum was not sufficiently challenging between key stages 2 and 4. Also, the curriculum was not adjusted to meet the needs of all pupils' statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- The school's curriculum policy has been revised and now takes account of pupils' needs and aptitudes.
- Schemes of work for all subjects are now well established. They include detailed long-term and medium-term plans. This enables teachers to plan work to meet the needs of different abilities in the school, including those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan and the most able. In addition, teachers plan lessons on a daily basis. They have developed high-quality resources to support their teaching. As a result, work in pupils' books and teachers' records confirm that pupils are making good progress in subjects across the curriculum.

- The previous inspection identified a lack of therapeutic services to address pupils' social interaction and communication difficulties. The headteacher has ensured that all pupils now have access to appropriate therapy to support their academic and personal development. This includes music therapy, speech, language and communication therapy and occupational therapy. Therapists set individual targets, closely linked to the pupils' statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. These targets are then reviewed and amended, at least on a termly basis. This ensures that pupils receive effective support to meet their individual needs.
- The previous inspection reported that careers advice was insufficient to enable pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options. In addition, the action plan did not set out how the school proposed to provide work-based experiences for the pupils.
- Leaders have tackled this shortcoming effectively. The school has built strong links with local businesses and organisations, such as local farms and libraries. Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 access work experience to enable them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options. The school now employs an independent careers adviser to work with individual pupils and their parents to provide advice and guidance. The standard relating to the provision of careers guidance is now met.
- The headteacher has focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching and learning during this academic year. She has successfully recruited and developed a strong staff team that is effectively implementing the revised curriculum, schemes of work and planning systems. This consistency of approach is resulting in pupils achieving well and making good progress.
- The action plan submitted by the school reported that British values would be embedded in curriculum maps and identified in planning. This work is now well established. Teachers take every opportunity in all subjects, and particularly in planned personal, social and health education lessons, to develop pupils' understanding of British values. High-quality displays in classrooms support this work. The school's 'parliament' offers opportunities for pupils to experience democracy in a meaningful and relevant way. Additionally, effective planning of religious education enables pupils to learn about other faiths. Consequently, teachers provide pupils with opportunities to develop respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs from their own.
- The previous inspection reported that leaders could not provide a complete and accurate picture of the progress pupils make over time. Also, there was insufficient oversight by leaders in coordinating assessments made by specialists and teachers.
- The school has successfully implemented a system to assess the progress and achievement of pupils in all subjects. Staff now assess pupils' achievements, needs and aptitudes when they join the school. They set academic and personal development targets, linked precisely to pupils' statements of special educational needs or to their education, health and care plans. Targets now include those set by therapists. Teachers and therapists check pupils' progress and development frequently and update the agreed system, which is used by all staff. These assessments are used to inform daily planning. Consequently, teachers and therapists work closely together to provide personalised teaching and support. The school regularly moderates pupils' assessments with colleagues from local schools to ensure that their judgements are accurate. The school's assessment information confirms that pupils are making faster academic progress, particularly in reading. Teachers also set longer-term targets to ensure that pupils are well prepared to access accredited courses which match their abilities, such as GCSEs. In addition, records confirm that pupils develop increased personal resilience and social and communication skills.
- The independent school standards relating to quality of teaching are met.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- At the time of the emergency inspection, the school's safeguarding policy and the special educational needs policy did not comply with recent guidance published by the Department for Education. In addition, the inspection reported that not all staff had received the training needed to identify potential risks to pupils to keep them safe.
- The school's safeguarding policy is now compliant with the requirements and references the most up-to-date government legislation. This policy is being implemented effectively. All staff understand their role in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Leaders have taken decisive and rapid action to ensure that staff have received training in the specific areas in the guidance, including child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and training in the school's 'Prevent' duty.
- Leaders ensure that all staff read and understand Part 1 of the statutory guidance document 'Keeping children safe in education' (July 2015). Frequent ongoing training and quizzes ensure that all staff have a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe.
- Information on the school's website relating to special educational needs and/or disabilities is comprehensive and refers to the current legislation. There is a wide range of information for parents to access including links to the local offer.
- The school's behaviour policy has been reviewed to address concerns reported at the last inspection. Leaders have reviewed all behaviour management systems. Staff record all incidents in detail. Leaders analyse incidents and implement effective strategies to improve pupils' behaviour. Records confirm that the number and severity of incidents have significantly reduced during this academic year. Incidents of physical restraint are very rare. Staff involve pupils in debriefs following incidents. This supports pupils to improve their behaviour and manage their anxieties more effectively.
- The school has reviewed the anti-bullying policy and this is placed on the school's website. Schemes of work for personal, social and health education include regular lessons to teach pupils to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn to 'understand bullying' and to keep safe when online and when using mobile phones. Parent information evenings, such as on the topic of e-safety, provide families with information to keep their children safe and to support the school's work.
- The school has reviewed the health and safety policy since the previous inspection. This policy is understood by staff and being implemented effectively. All teaching assistants have received first aid training. Therefore, the school ensures that there is always a trained member of staff available at all times to deal with medical concerns.
- The previous inspection reported that risk assessments were not amended to reflect information held on the behaviour incident log. Leaders now ensure that staff amend risk assessments following analysis of behaviour incidents. This confirms the school's rigour in its practice to keep pupils safe.
- The school meets all the requirements for this standard.

Provision of information

- At the time of the last inspection, the school did not meet all the requirements for this standard because the school's safeguarding and child protection policy was unavailable. Neither were there details of the nature of special educational needs provision available. This has now been rectified. The updated safeguarding policy and special education needs and/or disabilities policy and information complies with the Secretary of State's most recent guidance. As a result, the requirements for this standard are met.

Manner in which complaints are handled

- At the time of the last inspection, the complaints procedure met requirements. However, not all timescales were being adhered to as set out in the policy. The school has reviewed this policy in detail since the evaluation of the action plan. The policy sets out clear procedures to be followed, with timescales to be adhered to. The policy is on the school's website for parents to access. As a result of this review, the policy is being implemented to comply with stated procedures. The standard for the manner in which complaints are handled is met.

Quality of leadership and management

- Leaders and directors have worked relentlessly to address the unmet standards identified in the inspection in June 2015. At this time, the headteacher and deputy headteacher were new in post. They have driven improvement at a fast pace during this academic year following the recruitment of new staff. They have built a strong staff team that is committed to providing high-quality education, care and support to the pupils. As a result, targets recorded on pupils' progress plans, carefully linked to their statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans, are now suitably aspirational. Pupils are encouraged to access accreditation matched to their needs and aptitudes.
- Leaders have prioritised pupils' welfare and safety. Training has been central to ensuring that staff have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver high-quality provision. Policies and procedures in all aspects of the school's work have been revised and strengthened during this academic year. All policies meet statutory guidance requirements.
- Directors know the school well and provide the support and challenge required for further improvement. They visit frequently and check the school's progress and performance. There is no complacency at this school. Capacity for further improvement is strong.
- Standards relating to leadership and management are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Inspection team

Catherine Leahy, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- The NAS Anderson School is a small special school that provides full-time education for boys and girls aged between seven and 19. It is owned and operated by the National Autistic Society. From 1 September 2016 the school will be owned by the Aurora Trust.
- The school opened in February 2013. It had its first standard inspection in November 2013. All regulations were met at this time.
- There are currently 11 pupils at the school, aged 10 to 16.
- All the pupils currently on the school's roll have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan in relation to autistic spectrum disorders.
- The school aims to realise and maximise each pupil's potential, support them to achieve their aspirations, develop their confidence and self-esteem, and support a successful transition into their local community.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 138563 |
| Social care unique reference number | SC 449331 |
| Inspection number | 10017789 |
| DfE registration number | 803/6009 |

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 | Special school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 7–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 11 |
| Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form | 0 |
| Number of boarders on roll | 1 |
| Proprietor | National Autistic Society |
| Director of Education | Jacqui Ashton Smith |
| Headteacher | Kim McConnell |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 November 2013 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £45,462 |
| Telephone number | 01454 632 532 |
| Fax number | 01454 634 907 |
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