

# ISP School (Kent)

Church Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3EG

## Inspection dates

27–29 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Arrangements for keeping pupils safe are ineffective. Leaders have not carried out suitable risk assessments on many day-to-day activities. Leaders have not made sure that the sites are consistently well-kept and safe.
- Proprietors, leaders and staff are not up to date with the latest government safeguarding requirements. They have not made sure that all the necessary pre-employment checks on staff have taken place and are suitably recorded. Record-keeping of safeguarding cases is not tight enough.
- The proprietors have not made sure that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- The proprietors and advisory board have a limited understanding of the school's performance. They do not hold school leaders to account for the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. Their approach to evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is not sharp enough.
- Teaching is not consistently effective. Some teachers set work which does not provide suitable challenge for the range of ability among pupils. As a result, pupils do not make routinely good progress.
- Support staff do not make a useful enough contribution to lessons. The extent to which they support pupils' learning is too variable.
- Adults do not reinforce consistently high expectations for pupils' writing and presentation across the curriculum.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and staff work effectively to support pupils' emotional and behavioural development.
- Pupils enjoy school and typically behave well in lessons and around the school site.

### 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?

- Enable pupils to make good progress across the subjects they study, by:
  - making sure that teachers routinely use assessment information to plan teaching that builds well on pupils' previous learning, providing work of consistently suitable challenge for pupils
  - ensuring that all support staff have the information and skills they need to support pupils' learning effectively in lessons
  - making certain that staff encourage and help pupils to develop their literacy and presentation skills to an equally high standard in every subject.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance of the school by ensuring that:
  - the proprietors and advisory board hold school leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance
  - leaders develop effective methods for analysing and evaluating the school's performance and, in particular, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
  - proprietors and those responsible for governance maintain an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.
- Ensure consistently effective arrangements for keeping pupils safe, by:
  - maintaining both school sites to an acceptable standard to minimise health and safety risks
  - keeping the school's safeguarding policy and procedures up to date with the most recent government guidance
  - making sure that leaders, staff, proprietors and those responsible for governance know about their safeguarding duties and carry these out effectively
  - carrying out all the necessary employment checks on staff, proprietors and advisory board members before they take up post, and recording these on the single central register
  - making sure risk assessments are carried out and suitable control measures are in place for all activities, resources and environments that might present any type of risk.

### The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietors must ensure that the teaching at the school:
  - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
  - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time, shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils and ensures that these are taken into account in the

planning of lessons

(paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c) and 3(d)).

- The proprietors must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- The proprietors must ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- The proprietors must 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; and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- The following checks must be made as to the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school, other than the proprietors and supply staff:
  - that no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order or interim prohibition order
 (paragraph 18(2) and 18(2)(b)).
- The proprietors must ensure that before a person offered for supply by an employment business begins work at the school the person's identity is checked by the proprietor of the school (irrespective of any such check carried out by the employment business before the person was offered for supply) (paragraph 19(2) and 19(2)(c)).
- The proprietors must ensure that no member of the management or advisory board is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that individual is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 of that Act; and that the proprietors and advisory board members do not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction (paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i) and 20(6)(a)(ii)).
- The proprietors must make sure that the following checks are carried out for each member of the proprietorial board and advisory board:
  - an enhanced criminal record check
  - checks confirming the member's identity and right to work in the United Kingdom
  - where, by reason of a member living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish the member's suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the chair of the school considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 (paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii) and 20(6)(c)).
- The proprietor must keep a register which shows a check was made to establish whether any staff are subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section

142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction and whether a check was made to establish whether any staff are subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed (paragraph 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii) and 21(3)(b)).

- The register must include information about supply staff as to whether written notification has been received from the employment business that checks of the identity, qualifications, and right to work in the United Kingdom have been made to the extent relevant to any such person and whether:
  - an enhanced criminal record check has been made and that it or another employment business has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate in response to such a check and the date the written notification that each such check was made, or certificate obtained, was received is recorded
  - the employment business supplied a copy of enhanced criminal record certificate to the school

(paragraph 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b) and 21(5)(c)).

- The register must show checks were carried out for each member of the management and advisory board as set out in paragraphs 20(6), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), referred to above (paragraph 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23(1) and 23(1)(c)).
- The proprietor must 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).
- The proprietor must ensure the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users (paragraph 28(1) and 28(1)(d)).
- The proprietors must ensure that following an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, a copy of the report of the inspection (if it has been sent to the proprietor) is published and maintained on the school's internet website (paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(d), 32(3) and 32(3)(g)).
- The proprietors must ensure that where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State (paragraph 32(1) and 32(1)(h)).
- The proprietors must ensure that the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office and the name and address for correspondence to the chair of the advisory board is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate (paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(2), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii) and 32(2)(c)).
- The proprietor must 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; fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not been effective in meeting the independent school standards.
- Leaders' approach to self-evaluation is weak. As a result, they do not have an accurate overview of the quality of the school's provision. There is insufficient clarity about leaders' and staff responsibilities. Arrangements to ensure that staff carry out all of their duties consistently well are too loose to ensure that they do.
- Leaders have not resolved issues highlighted for attention in the previous inspection report. They do not keep a close enough eye on the quality of teaching, or gather the information needed to identify what is working well or where teaching needs to improve. As a result, staff do not receive the training and support they need to improve their practice.
- Leaders track individual pupils' progress carefully. However, they have a limited understanding of the progress made by groups of pupils across the school in different key stages and subjects.
- Leaders' approach to record-keeping lacks organisation. For example, the school's complaints file does not provide a complete picture of how each complaint received is dealt with. Some of the written correspondence between complainants and the headteacher is missing.
- Leaders have not made sure that external communication is consistently effective. Some pieces of information that must be on the school website are missing. For example, information about the proprietors is out of date and the address and telephone number of the registered office is missing.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils study a range of academic and practical subjects. Older pupils select from a suitable range of academic and vocational qualifications, including basic skills courses and GCSEs, suited to their needs and ambitions. Extra-curricular activities such as breakfast club, organised games at lunchtime, and visits to places of interest enhance pupils' experience of school.
- The curriculum caters well for pupils' wider development. Assemblies, personal, social and health education, ethics and philosophy, religious education and life skills lessons all help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders' work to support pupils' emotional development and to secure improvements in behaviour is effective. A coherent approach is in place for identifying and planning the best approaches for each pupil. Leaders equip staff with the skills needed to manage challenging behaviour well and provide pupils with helpful support. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' progress towards their behaviour targets. This, and regular discussions with pupils, helps leaders and staff find out what is working and where a different approach or additional support might prove useful.

## Governance

- Governance arrangements are unclear and ineffective. Arrangements for checking the quality of leadership and for managing the headteacher's performance are inadequate.
- A local advisory board has been set up in the last 18 months to provide governance for the school. However, the board does not seek the information needed to hold school leaders to account. Board members have a very limited understanding of the quality of teaching; pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance; safeguarding and health and safety.
- The proprietors' checks on the quality of safeguarding are inadequate. They do not have a clear understanding of current safeguarding requirements. They have not made sure that all the required pre-appointment checks for staff take place, nor have they checked whether the child protection arrangements and record-keeping are secure. Attempts to ensure that health and safety arrangements are sound have been piecemeal.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that staff are up to date with the latest safeguarding requirements. Not all staff understand the correct procedure to follow if they have a concern about a child. Leaders do not keep a tight track of all the referrals received from staff. Staff concerns about pupils are not noted in the safeguarding records unless the concern is then referred to social services. Leaders do not consistently review these staff referrals to see if there are any emerging patterns that could signal a pupil might be a risk of harm. As a result, opportunities to spot potential issues are reduced.
- Records of safeguarding cases referred to the local authority are not complete. For example, one file did not contain the response from social services about the outcome of the referral or the agreed action. There was also no record of the support provided or its effectiveness.
- Arrangements to ensure that suitable checks are carried out and records kept on staff and advisory and management board members are deficient. Not all the required checks have been done or recorded on the single central register. No procedure is in place for checking the identity of supply staff when they report to work for the first time.
- Arrangements to make sure the school is a safe and healthy place to work are inadequate. Leaders have not set up a routine monitoring schedule. They rely on staff to report any concern. This has not proved effective. During the inspection, the inspector came across a toilet for pupils' use with black mould on the walls and floor. The toilet was unclean. The water from the tap was scalding. There were several potholes in the soft surface around the climbing frame which were a potential trip hazard. Several doors opened directly on to downward steps, yet there was no warning sign or other visible signal to alert users to take care.
- One building, on the Teynham site, originally an old farm building, contains white asbestos in the walls and ceiling. The proprietors undertook an asbestos safety survey in 2012 but have not taken any of the actions recommended in the report. They have not produced or carried out an asbestos management plan. No risk assessment has taken place to make sure the building is maintained safely.

- Leaders have also not made sure that risk assessments are in place for many of the day-to-day activities of the school. For example, leaders have not produced a risk assessment for pupils crossing the semi-public road between the science and music blocks and the main school building at Sittingbourne. Additionally, leaders have not defined how pupils' risk of meeting intruders should be minimised. Risk assessments for managing pupils with challenging behaviours and keeping them safe are typically better organised. However, examples of incomplete risk assessments for pupils were evident.
- The school does keep a safeguarding policy on its website. Nevertheless, at the time of the inspection this had not been updated to reflect current government requirements.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching is not sufficiently tailored to pupils' differing abilities.
- Teachers' expectations for pupils' educational achievement are not consistently high. Teachers assess pupils' educational progress often. However, they do not make consistently good use of these assessments. Some teachers plan work which takes too little account of pupils' ability or previous learning. As a result, pupils make inconsistent progress. Typically, the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could and some pupils make weak progress.
- The ratio of staff to pupils in each class is high. Typically, in addition to the teacher, there is at least one additional adult for every two pupils. However, these support staff often make only a minor contribution to supporting pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not consistently reinforce high expectations for application of literacy skills and presentation of work. The quality of pupils' presentation and writing varies between subjects. Pupils do not consistently have helpful opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the subjects they study.
- Teachers forge positive, caring relationships with the pupils. This helps pupils to value school and behave well. Lessons are usually calm and well ordered. Typically, pupils engage in the activities and enjoy lessons. Adults respond quickly when any pupil is finding it difficult to cope emotionally. Teaching contributes well to the development of pupils' ability to manage their own behaviour.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils are not kept safe. Pupils' welfare is not sufficiently well provided for. Health and safety arrangements are ineffective.
- More positively, work to support pupils' emotional development is effective. Pupils join the school with a range of challenging behaviour and social and emotional difficulties. Staff have a good understanding of each pupil's emotional and behavioural needs and provide appropriate support. Because of this, pupils improve their resilience and confidence. Typically they learn to manage their frustrations and express their emotions more appropriately over time. This helps them cope better with school and life in general.



- Pupils develop their understanding of the importance of respecting others regardless of difference. Pupils are clear that discrimination is not acceptable.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils usually behave very well in lessons. They have positive relationships with staff and are willing to make an effort and follow instructions.
- Staff manage class behaviour well. Expectations are clear and routines well established. When pupils are struggling to cope they are well supported, so emotional outbursts and poor behaviour are minimised.
- Outside of class, the school is an orderly environment. Pupils typically conduct themselves well as they eat and socialise and play together at lunchtime. Staff and pupils show respect for one another.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well.
- Staff accompany pupils who attend alternative provision in order to keep an eye on their welfare and keep them safe.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- The progress of current pupils, including those who are most able and those eligible for pupil premium funding, is too variable across subjects and over time because of the inconsistent quality of teaching.
- Pupils do not routinely have the opportunities needed to build well on their existing skills and knowledge. Some pupils make quick early gains in their learning when they join the school, but opportunities to make further strong progress are often restricted. Progress is sporadic because teachers have not considered pupils' starting points well enough. The most able pupils, in particular, are not routinely tackling work of high enough challenge. At times, progress for some of these pupils is poor.
- Pupils make too little progress in developing their literacy and presentation skills in some of the subjects they study. Their understanding of how to communicate and present their thinking on paper is not consistently well developed. For example, pupils are not routinely encouraged to record their scientific methods and thinking. In design and technology, pupils' work shows limited progress in developing design annotation and written evaluation skills.
- Leaders' analysis of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science (core subjects), indicates that, on average, pupils made less progress than expected in the 2015/16 school year. No analysis was available for pupils' progress this year, or for pupils' progress in each non-core subject.
- Previous pupils have also made variable progress. Pupils who sat GCSEs in 2015/16 typically had notably differing achievement between subjects. Even taking into account pupils' special educational needs and varying aptitudes in different subjects, this indicates that pupils did not make the progress they could have in some of the subjects they studied.

- In 2015/16, pupils taking entry-level literacy and numeracy and functional skills qualifications passed all those they entered. However, leaders have not analysed the extent to which this suggests successful achievement in relation to pupils' starting points when they joined the school.
- Pupils typically make good progress in their social and emotional development. They leave the school better prepared to cope with the next stage of education than might otherwise have been the case. All those who left in the summer of 2016 went on to a college course.

## School details

Unique reference number	119015
DfE registration number	886/6065
Inspection number	10008864

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Partnership in Children's Services (PICS) under the ownership of Sovereign Capital Investments
Chair	Rizvan Khan
Headteacher	Craig Walter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,296
Telephone number	01795 422044
Website	<a href="http://www.ispchildcare.org.uk/educationisp-schools">www.ispchildcare.org.uk/educationisp-schools</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:senior.school@ispchildcare.org.uk">senior.school@ispchildcare.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	27 February–1 March 2013

## Information about this school

- ISP School (Kent) is an independent day special school. It is part of the Integrated Services Programme (ISP), a company that cares for and educates children and young people looked after by local authorities. Since the last inspection, ISP has become part of the Partnership in Children's Services Group (PICS) which is owned by Sovereign Capital Investments. The members of the PICS board of directors are the proprietors of the school. It operates a local advisory board for the school.

- The school is situated on two sites. One in Sittingbourne and the other in nearby Teynham. In the main, secondary pupils study at Sittingbourne, and primary-age pupils at Teynham. However, the older pupils attend the Teynham site for horticulture, animal care, motor-vehicle maintenance and physical education lessons.
- Although the school is approved to take pupils up to the age of 18 it is rare that a pupil stays at the school beyond the age of 16. There have been no students of sixth-form age at the school in the last year.
- The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- All the pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Approximately half the pupils are eligible for the higher-level pupil premium as they are children looked after.
- The school makes use of Challenger Troop, an alternative provider. Some pupils attend there, accompanied by school staff, as part of their weekly timetable.
- The school was last inspected on 27 February to 1 March 2013.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in seven lessons, one jointly with the headteacher. The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work from a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, together with senior leaders.
- The inspector held discussions with senior leaders. Discussions were also held with one of the proprietors and a member of the local advisory board. The inspector also spoke with teachers, support staff and pupils.
- The inspector toured both sites with the headteacher to look at the resources and condition of the provision. The inspector reviewed documents including safeguarding policies; health and safety, behaviour and attendance records; self-evaluation and planning documents; and the school's records on teaching and learning.
- Account was taken of 24 staff survey responses, one response by a parent to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and one parent's written contribution. The inspector also spoke to one parent, and one local authority officer responsible for placing pupils at ISP schools, both by telephone.

## Inspection team

Diana Choulerton, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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