

Running Deer

Butterdon Wood, Willingstone, Moretonhampstead, Devon TQ13 8PY

Inspection dates

19–21 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership, management and governance of the school are inadequate because the directors have not ensured that the independent school standards are met in full.
- Directors do not have a sufficient understanding of the standards to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- Not all directors have been properly checked to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children. Leaders have not taken account of the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State in this regard.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils develop the knowledge and understanding they need to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher, who is also the managing director, does not have the strategic overview that is needed to improve the school.
- Directors and leaders have not implemented effective systems to measure the school's effectiveness so that they can plan future improvements.
- Leaders have not focused on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all subjects. Staff do not have the skills needed to secure effective learning.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across a range of subjects. It is strongest in reading and mathematics. However, the quality of writing is too variable across subjects.
- Leaders have given insufficient attention to the promotion of British values. As a result, pupils do not have a strong knowledge or understanding of life in modern Britain.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, show respect to staff, follow instructions and persevere. They complete the tasks they are set to a high standard.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils trust the staff and have confidence in them to provide them with a high-quality education.
- Pupils' attendance is good. Very few miss a day at the school. They are keen to learn when they are at the school.
- Pupils who left the school at the end of the previous academic year went on to appropriate training or employment. They receive strong careers guidance and support to plan their chosen career paths.

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?

- Improve the quality of leadership, management and governance of the school by ensuring that:
 - directors receive the training they need to understand the independent school standards and ensure that these are met
 - the safeguarding and health and safety issues identified in the unmet standards are remedied
 - directors evaluate the school's effectiveness critically to identify its strengths and weaknesses, and plan for improvement
 - leadership capacity is developed so that the managing director may carry out her duties fully
 - staff receive high-quality professional development so that they have the skills they need to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - leaders develop their own systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the progress pupils make both academically and in their personal development
 - leaders review the schemes of work and assessment for subjects other than English and mathematics, so that pupils can make the same good progress as they do in their reading and mathematics
 - policies are made available to parents.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - staff receive high-quality training to enable them to develop their skills in planning lessons that help pupils to understand the topics they study more deeply
 - the best practice already in the school, for example in planning and assessment in reading and mathematics, is shared with all staff
 - staff focus on improving the quality of pupils' writing.
- Broaden the curriculum so that pupils have the opportunity to:
 - develop their understanding of different faiths, cultures and traditions
 - understand the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
 - consider the risks that they may face out of school and develop strategies to ensure that they are able to keep themselves safe.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must:
 - actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

- ensure that principles are actively promoted which:
 - further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
 - encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England (paragraphs 5, 5 (a), 5(b), 5(b)(v) and 5(b)(vii)).
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- The proprietor must carry out appropriate checks to confirm the medical fitness of each member of staff (paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(c) and 18(2)(c)(ii)).
- The proprietor must carry out such checks to demonstrate that each director, but not the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register:
 - is not 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
 - does 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;
 - where relevant to the individual, has an enhanced criminal record check;
 - has confirmation of their identity and right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - where, by reason of the director's living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish each director'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 (paragraphs 20(6)–20(6)(b)(iii)).
- For each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1 May 2007, whether the necessary checks were made, the proprietor must maintain a register recording:
 - the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained
 - whether each check was made; and
 - whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained (paragraphs 21(6)–21(7)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils (paragraphs 23(1) and 23(1)(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for

the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including –

- accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (paragraphs 24(1)–24(1)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises (paragraphs 27 and 27(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions, particulars of the curriculum policy and particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards relating to first aid are made available (paragraphs 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(c) and 32(3)(d)).
- 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
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils as defined within the meaning of section 10(2) of the Children Act 2004 (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and directors of this recently opened school do not have the knowledge or understanding of the independent school standards that they should. The transition from a community development organisation to a registered school has not been fully thought through. During the inspection, leaders took immediate action to meet the standards, where possible and practicable. Nonetheless, leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards are met in full.
- Leaders have not ensured that the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils have regard to 'Keeping children safe in education', 2016. They have not ensured that all the necessary checks are carried out on directors and potential members of staff prior to their taking up post. As a result, leaders cannot fully assure themselves that the members of staff are suitable to work with children.
- Leaders have not ensured that an adequate staff performance management system is in place. As a result, some staff are unclear about their role as educators. While they have good subject knowledge, most members of staff have not had the training to translate this into learning for the pupils.
- The headteacher, who is also the managing director, is carrying out a wide range of duties assigned to her. She is passionate and deeply committed to the ethos and values of the school.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is weak. Where there is strong practice, such as in reading and mathematics, it is not shared more widely with the staff team and across a range of subjects.
- Leaders have given insufficient attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are too few opportunities for pupils to explore British values, including democracy, the rule of law and the mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, cultures and traditions.
- The school operates from two sites. Both are maintained to a good standard. However, there is no external lighting at the Butterdon Woods site. The arrangements for access to toilets and washing facilities at Moretonhampstead Library and the medical examination and treatment of pupils at both sites do not meet the requirements of the independent school standards.
- At the start of the inspection, policies and procedures were not fit for purpose. The school did not have an admissions policy or a first-aid policy. These were drafted during the inspection. The complaints procedure and behaviour policy did not meet the requirements of the independent school standards. Leaders rectified these during the inspection. By the end of the inspection, they were about to be published on the school's website but were not available for parents.
- Leaders, every member of staff and each volunteer are passionate about the school and the work it does. Each member of staff is acutely aware of pupils' needs and cares fervently for each pupil. Through their perseverance, care and stewardship, leaders have ensured good outcomes for pupils and former pupils, improving their life chances.

- Leaders have designed a curriculum that helps pupils to engage with their learning. Some pupils attend on a part-time basis. This arrangement is supporting pupils successfully to sustain their placement in mainstream schools for the rest of the week.
- Leaders demonstrate a commitment to improve the school's effectiveness. For example, the headteacher has arranged training for staff who are not teachers to provide them with some of the skills and knowledge they need to help pupils think about their learning.
- There is a compliant risk assessment policy in place that is effectively implemented. Controls that are in place reduce or eliminate the risks pupils might otherwise face. In lessons, staff ensure that health and safety are paramount. For example, when using woodworking tools, staff insist that tools are used in a safe manner and stored appropriately.

Governance

- Directors have not objectively evaluated the school's performance or the arrangements to safeguard pupils. While they can identify the strengths in outcomes achieved by pupils, directors have not critically analysed the school's performance with relation to the independent school standards. As a result, some standards are unmet.
- Directors have not ensured that robust systems are in place to assess how well pupils are learning in all subjects. The headteacher has not given governors the information they need about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to enable them to make informed decisions to improve the school.
- Only two of the five directors have the necessary checks to show that they are not prohibited or restricted in carrying out the role of proprietor of the school.
- Directors have not ensured that policies required of independent schools are in place and are made available to parents. However, the school's safeguarding policy does meet requirements and is published on the school's website, although directors do not check that it is implemented effectively.
- Directors did not notify the Department for Education (DfE) as the registration authority when they began using the second site in Moretonhampstead.
- The DfE commissioned Ofsted to consider, as part of this standard inspection, the school's application to increase the number of pupils the school may take on roll and to extend the age range of pupils the school may accept. As all the independent school standards were not met, these material change requests were not considered.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders are not sufficiently aware of the requirements set out in 'Keeping children safe in education', 2016. Consequently, they are not aware of the need for directors to have certain checks to ensure that they are able to serve as a proprietor of the school.
- Staff have completed the required training for the safeguarding of pupils, including the risks pupils face from radicalisation and extremism. However, their work to develop pupils' understanding about the risks they may face when out of school is less well developed.
- Staff are vigilant to changes in pupils' behaviour and engage the relevant agencies when

appropriate. The designated leader for safeguarding swiftly follows up all referrals that are made and actions that have been agreed, and escalates matters when concerns remain. As a result, pupils are kept safe in this school and say they feel safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. This is because the leadership and management of this aspect of the school's work requires improvement. Where there is good practice, it is not shared across all subjects.
- Teaching staff in subjects other than English and mathematics do not challenge pupils sufficiently to increase their knowledge and deepen their understanding. Questioning is not used effectively in many subjects. Teaching staff give clear instructions and pupils do complete tasks to an appropriate standard. However, they cannot always explain what they are learning.
- Teaching staff do not use a consistent approach or have the same expectations of what pupils can do. In English lessons, pupils write well and they are improving their formation of letters. However, teachers do not guide pupils consistently when they complete their daily 'journey logs' or when they write in other subjects.
- Leaders have not developed an assessment system for subjects other than English and mathematics. Therefore, in most subjects, teachers do not check what pupils know, understand and can do, and plan their next steps of learning precisely.
- Teaching staff set homework and insist that work that is not completed in school is finished at home. There is some evidence of pupils editing their work to improve the quality of their writing but this is in its infancy.
- Teaching staff manage pupils' behaviour well. As a result, they show very positive attitudes during their lessons. Pupils complete their tasks and persevere with gentle encouragement from staff when needed. However, in some subjects, they are not challenged in their learning to achieve their full potential.
- In English and mathematics, staff plan work carefully to extend pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. This is helping them to achieve strong outcomes in these subjects. As a result, pupils, often from low starting points, make rapid progress in their reading and mathematics.
- Highly personalised, planned sessions for rural skills and bushcraft mean that pupils can complete tasks successfully. Teaching staff help to develop pupils' creativity effectively. In these subjects, pupils also gain experience in using a wide range of equipment. They learn how to use sharp and potentially dangerous equipment safely and responsibly.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to those with protected characteristics although their knowledge and understanding of other traditions and faiths are not well developed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders know that they have not made sufficient provision for the teaching of sex and relationships education, sexual health and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This means that pupils are potentially vulnerable to some of the risks they may face out of school.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Pupils told the inspector that the school is their 'safe place' and that they 'love coming to Running Deer'. They trust the staff to provide the personalised support they need.
- Staff have forged strong relationships with pupils and their parents and carers. They work very closely with families to help pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. Leaders are also swift to react to any concerns and work well with other agencies.
- Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, appreciate the care and support their child receives and the good progress that their child is making. Parents and pupils are unanimous in recommending this school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say there is no bullying. Pupils are confident that they deal with any concerns immediately. As a result, pupils are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work. Comments such as 'I love it here' are typical of those heard by the inspector.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful to others, visitors and the staff. Pupils attend regularly and in the first three weeks of this term almost all pupils had not missed a day. Pupils are keen to come to school and when they are at school they thrive.
- Pupils concentrate well on the tasks set. They can sustain their attention for long periods of time, particularly in those subjects where they are engaged and motivated, and the quality of teaching is strong. They know the pupils well and adapt their teaching to capture pupils' interest and imagination. For example, when designing a simple seat, one pupil designed and started to make a hand-carved throne.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes are not consistently good. There are marked differences between the outcomes pupils achieve across a range of subjects. Some subjects, such as geography and religious studies, have schemes of work which are limited in the information they provide. Also, staff have not agreed how pupils' achievement and progress will be measured. This limits the progress pupils make in these subjects.
- Most pupils make appropriate progress in their studies in English and mathematics, but often they have a lot of catching up to do. Pupils generally join the school with English and mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding below those expected for their

age. As a result of the good teaching they receive in English, pupils learn to read well.

- Pupils do not make good progress in their writing. This is because the school's agreed approach is not consistently implemented across subjects. Leaders are aware of the need to increase the number of opportunities for pupils to develop their fine motor skills and practise their writing in a range of subjects.
- Pupils are making good progress in their mathematical knowledge and skills. They are able to complete calculations using efficient methods and can attempt to solve simple problems. Teaching staff understand that there is a need to challenge pupils to think more deeply about their mathematics and solve more complex problems, including when they are building dens, carving furniture and in science.
- Every pupil grows in confidence and makes good progress in managing their own behaviour. The nurturing care of the staff builds pupils' self-confidence and this enables them to be ready to learn.
- Pupils who left in July 2017 progressed to further education or employment with training. This is the result of high-quality careers guidance and the dedication and persistence of staff to find the right places for pupils to transfer to where they can fulfil their aspirations.

School details

Unique reference number	143539
DfE registration number	878/6067
Inspection number	10033897

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	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	Running Deer C.I.C.
Managing director	Joanna Winterburn
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	07805 706147
Website	www.runningdeer.org.uk
Email address	info@runningdeer.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the first standard inspection since the school was registered in May 2016. Since the pre-registration inspection, the school has leased a room in Moretonhampstead Library, where English and mathematics are taught. The registration authority has not been notified of this change.
- The school is operated by Running Deer Community Interest Company. The managing director also fulfils the role of headteacher. The school is principally based in a large area of woodland, approximately two miles north of Moretonhampstead.
- The school accommodates pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. It seeks to provide high-quality support and specialist education. Through teaching of practical skills and therapeutic education, the school aims to enable young people to

overcome barriers to learning. For example, activities are designed to stimulate and challenge pupils, supporting their personal development and improving confidence, self-esteem, communication skills, and their social and emotional well-being.

- The school does not use any other alternative providers. The school has pupils on a part-time basis who are registered to mainstream primary and secondary schools in Devon.
- All pupils who attend the school either have an education, health and care plan or an application in progress with the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed almost all pupils learning a range of subjects. In addition, the inspector looked at pupils' work and information kept by the school about pupils' learning and progress.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and staff throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with two trustees who also work at the school. He spoke with another director by telephone. He scrutinised the curriculum plan and other resources provided by the school.
- The inspector spoke by telephone to an officer of a placing local authority and the headteacher of a school that places a pupil at Running Deer.
- The inspector scrutinised records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. School policies and documentation, including risk assessments, were also examined. In addition, the inspector undertook a tour of both the sites used by the school.
- The inspector took into account one staff questionnaire and two responses to Parent View. In addition, the inspector took account of two messages received by Ofsted's text-messaging system.

Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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