

Music Stuff

Units 3 & 4, The Cuthbert Centre, 877 Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, Manchester M11 2NA

Inspection date

4 October 2017

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- At the previous inspection, inspectors found that the school's safeguarding procedures were not as effective as they should be. The proprietor, governors and senior leaders had not paid enough attention to the most recent statutory guidance. In addition, across the three different premises in operation, fire regulation checks had not been carried out on all sites. The proprietor had not ensured that an appropriate health and safety policy was in place and implemented appropriately.
- Also at the time of the last inspection, pupils' behaviour was not consistently well managed. The behaviour policy was not uniformly implemented to secure good behaviour from pupils.

Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is implemented effectively across the school. Furthermore, it is reviewed annually. The policy works alongside Manchester Pupil Referral Unit's policy from where the majority of Music Stuff's pupils are referred. There is regular and robust dialogue between both organisations to support pupils who are referred.
- The proprietor and the governing body hold the senior leadership team to account for the effective implementation of the safeguarding policy. There are regular meetings to discuss the effectiveness of the policy in relation to practice.
- Safeguarding training is regular and appropriate. Staff have an opportunity to contribute to policy and procedures. Appropriate staff files are kept that contain references and suitable medical checks. Added to this, there has been an increase in the number of leaders who have undertaken enhanced safeguarding training. All relevant pre-employment checks on staff are sought and recorded appropriately.

Paragraphs 9 and 9(b)

- A new, effective behaviour policy has recently been introduced. During the inspection, pupils were very well behaved across all four sites during lessons and in and around the buildings. Pupils and staff alike clearly understand the procedures included in the revised, simplified policy. The new policy is used well to help pupils to regulate their own

behaviour. No derogatory language was heard during the visit.

- All staff receive regular and appropriate training to support behaviour management. The headteacher meets with each centre manager on a weekly basis to address any barriers to learning that may cause behavioural issues in individual pupils. A deputy headteacher has responsibility for pastoral care. Appropriate support strategies are put into place to assist the school's very vulnerable pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools and often the pupil referral unit.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on rewards and praise. Pupils value this system. They say that behaviour is generally good and that they feel safe and secure on the school premises.

Paragraph 11

- The proprietor has ensured that there is an appropriate health and safety policy in place that covers legislation and guidance. The proprietor and his leadership team have undergone rigorous training to improve their knowledge of health and safety, including how to undertake risk assessments. Procedures are robust and they are routinely checked by an external health and safety company. Any actions found, across all four sites, are acted upon in a timely manner.
- All staff undergo a health and safety induction programme. Leaders, including centre managers, undertake enhanced training. All staff receive appropriate policies and supporting guidance on health and safety awareness. Leaders' documentation pertaining to health and safety is extremely thorough and well organised.
- There are appropriate numbers of first aiders on each site.

Paragraph 12

- Across all four sites, the fire alarm meets current requirements and emergency lighting has been fitted to all centres. Emergency signage around each site is appropriate and evacuation procedures are visible around each building.
- Each centre manager is trained as a fire warden and they undertake appropriate fire safety checks. For example, centre managers undertake fire alarm tests and fire extinguisher checks, and they carry out risk assessments associated with site safety. An external company audits leaders' fire safety checks. Documentation relating to fire safety is thorough and meets requirements.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards that were checked in this part have been met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- At the previous inspection, the proprietor, governors and senior leaders had not ensured that all the relevant checks on the suitability of staff were undertaken. The school's single central record did not meet requirements.

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e) and 18(3)

- Leaders have ensured that the school's single central record is compliant. A full check of the single central record was undertaken during this inspection.
- The proprietor ensures that all relevant checks are undertaken before a person's appointment to the school. This includes obtaining an enhanced Disclosure and Barring

Service (DBS) check for each member of staff, governor or volunteer prior to commencing any activity with pupils.

- Prohibition and barring checks are undertaken in line with statutory guidance.
- In particular, where a member of staff has lived or is living outside the United Kingdom, leaders undertake the relevant additional checks.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards that were checked in this part have been met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The previous inspection found that some of the school's accommodation did not meet requirements. In particular, the classroom acoustics were not at the required standard and there was no access to outdoor recreational areas in which pupils could play.

Paragraph 26

- Across all four sites, the acoustic conditions in the classrooms meet requirements. All classrooms are insulated appropriately. They are bright and vibrant and furnished to a high standard.

Paragraphs 29(1) and 29(1)(b)

- The proprietor, headteacher and centre managers ensure that pupils have access to outdoor space. Where there is no useable outdoor space for pupils to play in at the actual premises, centre managers ensure that pupils can access local parks, sports facilities and other green land under adult supervision. Parents give centre managers permission to take pupils off site and there are suitable risk assessments in place. At the Cuthbert Centre, the proprietor also has plans to convert the current parking facilities into an additional recreational space. At the key stage 3 provision in Levenshulme, there are plans to convert a rear garden space into a recreational area.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards that were checked in this part have been met.

Part 6. Provision of information

- At the time of the previous inspection, the school's safeguarding policy was not in line with statutory requirements. This had to be amended and published on the school's website.

Paragraphs 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The proprietor and leaders meet the requirement to publish an appropriate safeguarding policy on the school's website.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards that were checked in this part have been met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- Following the previous inspection, the proprietor, governors and leaders wrote an action plan to address the identified weaknesses. Leaders have since revised the action plan, responding to Ofsted's evaluation of the proposed plan as acceptable with modifications.

- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been expanded and roles have been clarified. There are two deputy headteachers, one who has responsibility for teaching and learning and another to support pupils' good behaviour.
- Leaders demonstrate appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to ensure that the independent school standards are met. Leaders are committed to providing the best quality of education and experience for pupils. There is clear evidence of a strong commitment to continuous improvement to policy and practice.
- Leaders actively promote the well-being of pupils. Pupils' safety is of paramount importance. Leaders have refined systems and procedures to meet the needs of pupils more effectively, for example by overhauling the behaviour policy. The school council is very active in supporting further improvement. Leaders actively seek pupils' views to improve the school further.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards that were checked in this part have been met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The proprietor ensures that arrangements are made to promote the welfare of pupils at the school and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- The proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that the policy is implemented correctly (paragraphs 9 and 9(b)).
- The proprietor ensures that the 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 proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).
- The proprietor ensures that no person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act. The proprietor ensures that no person carries out work, or intends 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 in either such direction. The proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment. The proprietor ensures that in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The checks made in paragraph 2(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be complied with before a person's appointment (paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e) and 18(3)).
- The proprietor ensures that the acoustic conditions and sound insulation of each room or other space are suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein (paragraph 26).
- The proprietor ensures that a suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable pupils to play outside (paragraphs 29(1) and 29(1)(b)).
- The proprietor ensures that the persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and so that the independent school standards are met; 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)).

School details

Unique reference number	137887
DfE registration number	352/6006
Inspection number	10040204

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	Alternative provider
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Number of part-time pupils	10
Proprietor	Mr Andrew Portersmith
Chair	Mr Jeff Mills
Headteacher	Mr Matthew McCann
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,000 per annum
Telephone number	0161 223 8700
Website	www.musicstuffeducation.org
Email address	musicstuff@musicstuffeducation.org
Date of previous standard inspection	18–20 October 2016

Information about this school

- At the time of the previous inspection, the DfE considered a material change so that the proprietor could increase the number of sites from one to three. This application was refused as the school failed to meet a number of the independent school standards and its overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate. Music Stuff Education is currently operating from four different sites across Manchester without the relevant approval from the DfE. Two sites are located in Openshaw, one site is located in Levenshulme and a further site is located in Burnage.
- The school is registered to take up to 51 pupils.

- The school mostly provides for pupils who have been excluded from mainstream education. The overwhelming majority of pupils are referred from the Manchester Pupil Referral Unit. The school currently accommodates 46 pupils, of which 36 are full time and 10 are on an intensive support programme.
- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher and proprietor advised the lead inspector that the Manchester Pupil Referral Unit had commissioned 70 places over the academic year. If this takes place, there is likely to be a breach of regulations.
- Almost all pupils have missed long periods of time from mainstream school. Currently, there are four children looked after at the school and every pupil has special educational needs and/or disabilities. They require additional support to meet their needs. A small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan. In addition, there are a number of pupils who have a child protection plan, a child in need plan or have access to early help.
- The previous standard inspection took place in October 2016.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection. This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the previous standard inspection.
- The DfE accepted the school's action plan following the previous standard inspection, subject to modifications. The action plan was accepted on 23 March 2017.
- This progress monitoring inspection was conducted without any notice to the provider.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector undertook visits to all four sites operated by the proprietor. These visits were undertaken with both the proprietor and the headteacher. Tours of the premises were undertaken.
- Discussions were held with the proprietor, the headteacher, members of staff and pupils over the four sites to assess leaders' actions to meeting the relevant unmet standards.
- Learning walks were undertaken with leaders across the sites to assess the pupils' behaviour and engagement towards their learning. The inspector also looked at pupils' work. Informal observations were also undertaken of pupils during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector considered a range of documentation, including health and safety records, fire risk assessments and records, behaviour records, safeguarding documentation, school improvement plans, external audits of provision and a wide range of policies.
- The scope of the inspection required the inspector to report against paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(b), 11, 12, 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 26, 29(1), 29(1)(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c), 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c) of the independent school standards. All commissioned inspections should include a check of the school's safeguarding policy (Part 3 of the standards) and a check that the safeguarding policy is published on the school's website or otherwise made available (Part 6).

Inspection team

Jonathan Smart, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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