

# The Education Centre

14 November 2017

1–3 Barclay Court, Market Place, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1DB

## Overall outcome

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)*

- At the time of the previous standard inspection, aspects relating to the welfare of pupils and their safeguarding were ineffective. Staff did not share information well enough and they were unaware of important information related to the safeguarding of individual pupils. In this inspection, it was found that this is often still the case. Some staff do not fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. For example, mentors do not always follow up on safeguarding concerns relating to vulnerable pupils because their roles and responsibilities are not clear. They are often unsure whether it is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead or their responsibility to make telephone calls to outside agencies. Because there are no clear communication systems, such as regular catch-up meetings between staff, important information about pupils' well-being is not effectively shared.
- Staff have not received sufficient training to support vulnerable pupils with complex needs, such as mental health needs. This was an area for improvement identified at the last inspection. No member of staff has been trained to ensure that safe procedures are followed when recruiting new staff. However, this term, staff have attended a one-day course that has briefly covered many aspects of safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. There are plans for more extensive safeguarding training. This includes providing further detailed information as to how staff should receive a child's disclosure.
- Staff have not had training to ensure that pupils are safe when online. However, pupils say that staff have talked to them about the possible dangers they may encounter when using social media sites.
- The behaviour of pupils at the previous inspection was identified as being inadequate. During this visit, some pupils were boisterous and loud, while others were courteous and answered the inspector's questions carefully.
- The quality, organisation and security of safeguarding records were identified as an issue at the last inspection. The designated safeguarding lead has ensured that records are now of a high quality, well organised and securely kept. At the previous inspection, the school's response to serious incidents was identified as being inadequate. There has

been one serious incident this term. It was carefully recorded and there is detailed evidence of the involvement of outside agencies. Information about the necessary actions that need to be implemented as a result of the incident is appropriate.

- Attendance this term is 93%, a little below the national average. The school is monitoring individual pupils' attendance on a regular basis and follows up on any pupil's absence effectively.
- The school now has a safeguarding policy that complies with requirements and is published on the school's website.
- The school has received support from the local authority, which conducted an audit in September 2017. Leaders are in the process of addressing the safeguarding recommendations that were made.
- Although leaders have started to address the issues identified at the standard inspection, this standard remains unmet.

#### *Paragraph 12*

- At the previous inspection, the school did not comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In particular, there was no clear procedure for evacuating the building.
- In recent months, the school has taken advice from external fire professionals regarding the evacuation procedures. There are now clear procedures and muster points. This term, the school has conducted its first fire drill and details as to the time and effectiveness of the evacuation of the premises have been carefully recorded.
- Other aspects relating to the requirements of the Fire Safety Order are fully compliant. There is a comprehensive fire risk assessment. The responsible person has attended training to ensure that they are carrying out their duties effectively. Fire extinguishers and alarms are regularly tested.
- School leaders have addressed the shortcomings found in this paragraph and, consequently, this standard is now met.

#### *Paragraphs 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- The previous standard inspection found failings associated with risk assessment. There was no policy and no risk assessments for individual pupils. The school now has a comprehensive risk assessment policy and there are personalised risk assessments which are closely linked to each pupil's behaviour management plan. These are just starting to be used by staff to identify and reduce possible threats and risks.
- School leaders do not identify and take action to reduce potential risks associated with the premises or the outside area. For example, there has been no risk assessment of the kitchen, which pupils use every day. Leaders recognise that they are still to complete premises risk assessments.
- Leaders are starting to manage risk. For example, they recognised a potential flashpoint for pupils' behaviour was when they were using the stairs. In order to mitigate this risk, leaders have now positioned staff at strategic locations on the stairs at breaktimes and lunchtimes to ensure that the number of incidents reduces.
- Because school leaders have not completed premises risk assessments or ensured that

risk assessments for pupils are always implemented effectively, this standard is not met.

#### Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

*Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(b), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(b)*

- The previous standard inspection found that some checks that should be conducted on staff, such as whether they had been prohibited from teaching, had not been done. The school's single central record was not compliant with requirements.
- During this monitoring inspection, it was found that all the necessary checks were now conducted. A check was made of the school's single central register and it is fully compliant with the requirements listed in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2016.
- Because school leaders have addressed the shortcomings found in this paragraph, this standard is now met.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 28(1), 28(1)(d)*

- The previous standard inspection found that the temperature of hot water at the point of use posed a scalding risk to users.
- During this monitoring inspection, a check was made of all the hot water taps that pupils use. None posed a scalding risk.
- Because school leaders have addressed the shortcomings found in this paragraph, this standard is now met.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The previous standard inspection found that the proprietor and senior leaders had not ensured that all of the independent school standards had been met. This inspection found that they still do not demonstrate the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and ensure that the independent school standards are met.
- In June 2017, the standard inspection found that the proprietor had not checked the work of the school regularly enough. There still remains a lack of scrutiny. Although the proprietor has visited the school and checked areas relating to the independent school standards, it continues to be the case that leaders are not held well enough to account for school evaluation, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- Leaders are uncertain as to the accuracy of pupils' starting points in some subjects. They are also unclear about the progress system that some teachers are using. For example, leaders were unsure what teachers meant when they recorded that some pupils had made 30 points of progress. Leaders are currently not tracking pupils' progress in writing. Progress is assessed on a yearly basis in many subjects and, consequently, pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, can fall behind in their learning and little is done to help them catch up. In reading, there is clearer recording, both of pupils' reading ages on entry and the subsequent progress made.
- The curriculum has been reviewed to include sex and relationships education. However, opportunities for practical work in science are still limited.

- The proprietor and governors have recognised the need for a greater level of external support and advice. They are making efforts to secure this quickly.
- Because school leaders have not addressed the shortcomings found in this paragraph, this standard is not met.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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 does not meet the following independent school standards

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection*

- The proprietor 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 (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- The proprietor 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 (paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the 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 (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

### The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).
- The proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect to all members of staff, that they are not working 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 (paragraphs 18(2) and 18(2)(b)).
- The proprietor keeps a register which shows that all pre-employment checks have been carried out for all members of staff, supply staff and proprietors, together with the date that each check was made (paragraphs 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii) and 21(3)(b)).
- The proprietor ensures that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users (paragraphs 28(1) and 28(1)(d)).
- The proprietor ensures that a compliant copy of the school's safeguarding policy is published on the school website (paragraphs 32(1) and 32(1)(c)).

## School details

Unique reference number	126149
DfE registration number	938/6249
Inspection number	10043955

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 status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Proprietor	Eostre Education Ltd
Chair	Mr William Astill
Headteacher	Mr Geoffrey Wyatt
Annual fees (day pupils)	£21,033
Telephone number	01444 450 111
Website	<a href="http://www.theeducationcentre.info">www.theeducationcentre.info</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@education-centre.org.uk">info@education-centre.org.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	27–29 June 2017

## Information about this school

- The Education Centre opened in September 1991. It specialises in working with pupils who have social, emotional and mental health issues. Many pupils have additional needs associated with autistic spectrum disorder and dyslexia. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Most pupils have had gaps in their education or have been excluded from their previous schools.
- The school aims to 'create a place where: everybody can work together to achieve his or her full potential; skills and talents are encouraged and developed; where everyone feels valued and needed and everyone knows what is expected of them and is clear about the aims of the whole school'.
- The school was last inspected in June 2017, when its overall effectiveness was judged as

inadequate and a number of independent school standards were found to be unmet.

- The school uses no alternative provision.

## 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 is the school's first progress monitoring inspection since the previous standard inspection. As a monitoring inspection, this inspection was carried out without notice.
- The school's first action plan to address the unmet school standards identified at the last inspection was rejected by the Department for Education (DfE) on 26 October 2017. The school is in the process of finalising a second action plan to submit to the DfE.
- During this inspection, the inspector carried out a range of activities, including classroom visits to observe teaching and learning, talking to pupils and staff and assessing the quality of pupils' work. The behaviour of pupils was also observed.
- There were meetings held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff. There was a telephone conversation with the proprietor and a discussion with the local authority in relation to safeguarding.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the safeguarding policy, the school's single central record and records of the local authority's quality assurance visit in September 2017. Pupils' progress information and assessment data and teachers' planning were also examined.

## Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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