

Sunfield Children's Home Limited

Clent Grove, Clent, Stourbridge, Worcestershire DY9 9PB

Inspection dates

5 December 2017

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1)(a)

- The school has established a written policy for the curriculum. Schemes of work and teachers' plans give pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.
- Teachers' plans also incorporate specific aims and objectives from pupils' individual learning plans.
- The standards for this paragraph are met.

Paragraph 2(2)(a)

- As part of the Department for Education's (DfE) commission, the lead inspector was asked to scrutinise levels of staffing and ensure that these were sufficient to deliver the curriculum and ensure that pupils are safe. Levels of staffing are adequate across the school.
- Staffing ratios meet the levels set out in pupils' care plans and risk assessments.
- Staff spoken to by the inspector demonstrated a good knowledge of pupils' needs.
- The standards for this paragraph are met.

Paragraph 3(h)

- The lead inspector was commissioned to assess how well pupils' behaviour is managed by staff, including the use of any physical restraint. Staff effectively manage pupils' behaviour. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive.
- Staff have a clear understanding of pupils' needs and make appropriate use of the school's reporting procedures. The school's records of physical restraint provide adequate details about incidents and are monitored by leaders.
- Leaders use information about behaviour incidents to offer additional support to pupils and review the effectiveness of their work.
- The standards for this paragraph are met.

The following paragraphs, though not in the scope of the inspection, are matters of concern.

Paragraph 3(f)

- Resources in some classrooms, particularly those in the outdoor environment, are in a poor condition.
- Displays in communal areas do not reflect the current topics and schemes of work that the pupils are following.
- Some resources are placed too high to contribute to learning effectively.
- The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that the standards for this paragraph are met.

Paragraph 3(g)

- Teachers' planning is not routinely evaluated. In some classes, teachers' evaluations of pupils' progress are sparse. Other assessment systems are in place to capture the progress that pupils make.
- The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that the standards for this paragraph are met.
- Not all of the standards in this part are met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The DfE commissioned an evaluation of the effectiveness of several aspects of welfare, health and safety. This included an evaluation of the arrangements for missing pupils.
- There are shortcomings in the school's recruitment and vetting procedures that are outlined in part 4. The arrangements to check staff's suitability to work with children do not have regard for current guidance as outlined in 'Keeping children safe in education'. Though shortcomings are being addressed, there is a lack of oversight from leaders to many aspects of welfare, health and safety.
- The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that these standards are met.

Paragraphs 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- Training for staff is in place. Staff are clear about their responsibilities, they know how to manage a concern, and know what to do if they are not satisfied that their concerns are acted upon.
- Staff supervise pupils appropriately throughout the school day.
- Leaders and staff complete risk assessments for activities and individual pupils. Risk assessments are detailed and identify appropriate control measures.
- Staff have a good awareness of pupils' individual risk assessments.
- Leaders are developing a culture of safeguarding. Communication with the local authority designated officer is improving. The school has now established a safeguarding board and identified a member of staff as a first point of contact for any concerns.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and takes account of the most recent government guidance.
- The standards for these paragraphs are met

Paragraph 11

- The school has a written health and safety policy. The policy sets out clear aims and the responsibilities of leaders and employees. Though some resources are in a poor condition and require replacement, the school building is safe, secure and warm.
- The school has effective arrangements in place should a pupil be deemed to be missing.
- The school has liaised with local police to devise individual pupil plans that set out risks and the steps that staff must take if a pupil is missing.
- Individual pupil plans are known to staff. Staff are clear about the actions that they must take if a pupil is missing.
- The standards for this paragraph are met.

Paragraph 15

- Leaders do not maintain the school's admissions register in line with current government guidance. Leaders have not centrally recorded when and why pupils leave the school. Information is contained within an electronic 'discharge' document but is not in one place.
- The standards for this paragraph are not met.
- Not all of the standards in this part are met.

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

- Part 4 was not in the scope of the inspection. Checks were made on the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, given the significant changes to staffing since the last inspection.

Paragraphs 18, 18(2)(b), 20, 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i-ii) and 21(1)

- At the start of the inspection, the single central record did not include a check under section 128 for the principal of the school.
- There were a number of errors on the single central record. The omissions and errors demonstrate that leaders do not have adequate oversight of recruitment and vetting procedures.
- The standards for these paragraphs are not met.

Paragraphs 19, 19(1), 19(2) and 19(2)b

- Several agency staff have gaps in their employment that are not accounted for; there is no evidence that the agency has scrutinised gaps in employment. As a result, leaders cannot be assured that adequate checks have been made to ensure the suitability of staff.
- The standards for these paragraphs are not met and constitute a welfare, health and safety risk to pupils.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The DfE commissioned a review of the effectiveness of the overall leadership and

management of the school. Leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards are met consistently.

- The proprietor and leaders do not check the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff's suitability to work with children adequately. As a result, there are omissions in the admissions register and several shortcomings in terms of recruitment and vetting.
- The omissions and shortcomings put the well-being of pupils at risk.
- There are weaknesses in aspects of the quality of education. Some teachers are not using assessment information thoroughly or ensuring that classroom resources adequately promote learning.
- A questionnaire was circulated to all staff on the day of the inspection. Findings from the questionnaire show that the vast majority of staff feel that pupils are safe and that pupils' behaviour is well managed. Views about the effectiveness of leadership and management were mixed. Ten per cent of staff disagree or strongly disagree that the school is well led and managed. A further 15% of staff stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed that the school is well led and managed.
- In a meeting with teachers and support staff, all said unanimously that they felt that pupils were safe and that they were proud to work at the school.
- Leaders are managing a period of considerable change at Sunfield. The whole organisation has been restructured. Leaders demonstrate that they have a range of skills but recognise that there is work to do to ensure that the independent school standards are fully met.
- The standards in this part are 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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

- Part 1 paragraphs 3(f) and 3(g)
- Part 3 paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 15
- Part 4 paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(b), 19(2), 19(2)(b), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii) and 21(1)
- Part 8, paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

School details

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| Unique reference number | 117033 |
| DfE registration number | 885/6024 |
| Inspection number | 10044656 |

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.

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| Type of school | Independent school |
| School status | Independent residential special school |
| Age range of pupils | 6 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 29 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 15 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Number of boarders on roll | 17 |
| Proprietor | Sunfield Children's Homes Ltd |
| Chair | Helen Kippax |
| Headteacher | Mr Graeme Cheyne |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £87,013 |
| Telephone number | 01562 882253 |
| Website | www.sunfield.org.uk |
| Email address | sunfield@sunfield.org.uk |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 8–10 December 2015 |

Information about this school

- Sunfield is an independent special school for pupils with complex learning needs, including autism and pathological demand avoidance syndrome.

- All pupils who attend the school have a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school became a subsidiary of the Ruskin Mill Trust in May 2017. The school has undergone significant restructuring and changes in staffing since May 2017. A new principal has also been appointed.
- The school is located close to the village of Clent in Stourbridge. The school is set in extensive grounds.
- Sunfield is registered for 70 pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was an unannounced emergency visit commissioned by the DfE.
- The DfE commissioned the inspection as a result of complaints made about the school. The lead inspector specifically focused on: the quality of education; the welfare, health and safety of pupils; the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors; and the quality of leadership and management.
- This inspection was aligned with a welfare social care inspection of the children's homes on the same campus. A copy of that report is published separately on Ofsted's website.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation including: the single central record; child protection files; curriculum plans and schemes of work; records of behaviour incidents and physical restraint; staff personnel files; care plans; individual learning plans; communication plans and a range of risk assessments.
- A meeting was held with education staff.
- The lead inspector took account of 55 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- At the time of inspection, there were insufficient responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View for these to be considered.
- The lead inspector observed teaching in most classes.
- The lead inspector spoke to pupils and parents during the inspection.
- Meetings were held with leaders to discuss: the quality of pupils' personal development and welfare; the tracking and monitoring of behaviour and physical restraint; the content of the school's admissions register and the overall quality of education.
- The lead inspector held discussions with Worcestershire's designated officer via the telephone.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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