

ISP School (Kent)

Church Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3EG

Inspection dates

10 May 2018

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d)

- Since the last inspection, teaching has strengthened. The new headteacher has introduced clear guidance about teaching expectations. Staff training has been intensified. Leaders now ensure that pupils' learning needs are accurately identified. Teachers are beginning to provide learning activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities. A new assessment policy now expects teachers to provide pupils with helpful feedback about their progress. These policies and procedures are improving teaching.
- Teaching assistants are now effective. Their role is focused on improving the progress of pupils rather than supporting pupils' behaviour. The teaching assistants have been renamed and are known as pupil engagement guides (PEGs). Pupils are now making more progress in their skills and becoming independent learners.
- The teaching of literacy has been strengthened, and pupils make good progress in their reading and writing. Books are now readily available to pupils. Examples of teachers' higher emphasis on literacy include a focus on developing pupils' writing skills in art and science.
- Leaders carry out regular visits to classrooms to assess the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers say they welcome such visits and value the feedback provided to them. Teachers are keen to hone their skills. Links have been made to local mainstream schools, and staff share expertise with colleagues.
- While teaching has improved considerably, leaders acknowledge that teaching does not always provide exactly the right support and challenge to all pupils. The teaching in mathematics is not providing enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills.
- Due to the actions taken by leaders, this standard is now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- At the last inspection, weaknesses were found in the school's safeguarding procedures. The safeguarding policy was not up to date or published on the website. School leaders did not have suitable health and safety policies and procedures. Risk assessments were

not carried out effectively enough. Leaders did not have the necessary knowledge or skills to make sure that all the independent school standards relating to safety and welfare of pupils were met. Leaders had not followed the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- Leaders have now developed a safeguarding policy that meets statutory requirements fully. It is published on the school's website, together with other related policies. Staff are trained well in safeguarding matters. A new designated safeguarding lead is in place who has introduced robust systems for recording and monitoring safeguarding matters. Concerns about pupils are documented well, including a chronological record of all actions and communications with external agencies.
- Pupils say they feel safe at the school. Adults confirm that safeguarding procedures have been strengthened and that pupils are safe at the school.
- Leaders are committed to improving safeguarding practices in the school. They have implemented their action plan successfully. Because of this, this standard is now met.

Paragraph 11

- Leaders have produced a suitable health and safety policy. Leaders make regular checks and document them in detail. The governing board has appointed a health and safety expert to provide advice and to monitor health and safety issues across the ISP group. This has provided additional scrutiny into health and safety procedures.
- A health and safety audit from a specialist company has taken place. Leaders have implemented the recommended actions, including identifying and minimising trip hazards as identified in the previous report.
- Because of leaders' actions, this standard is now met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Leaders have strengthened the risk assessment policy and provided clear advice about assessing and minimising risk. Thorough risk assessments are now in place for buildings and activities undertaken in the school. Leaders ensure that risk assessments are fit for purpose. Initial training for staff has taken place, with further training due imminently.
- At the time of the last inspection, a risk assessment was not in place for pupils crossing a road to another school building. This risk assessment is now in place and provides clear guidance for staff.
- This standard is now met.

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

Paragraph 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(b), 19(2), 19(2)(c), 20(1), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(b), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- Following the previous inspection, leaders carried out a full review of all the records and checks made on existing staff. Leaders have carried out all the statutory checks required to ensure that staff employed at the school are suitable to work with children. This includes the prohibition from teaching checks that were missing at the time of the last inspection.

- The school does not employ supply staff. Should a member of staff be absent, there is capacity to cover that member of staff within the school. In the unlikely event that a supply member of staff is needed, leaders say they will carry out all checks as if the member of staff was employed.
- All checks on the proprietor and board of governors have been carried out in full and are recorded on the single central record. The single central record is fully compliant with statutory regulations.
- Governors now regularly and meticulously check the single central record to ensure that it meets requirements. Governors provide a signed and dated report of such checks for scrutiny by the local and national governance boards.
- All standards are now met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(c), 23(2), 23(2)(c), 25, 28(1), 28(1)(d)

- The school has two sites. The Sittingbourne site has recently been upgraded so that it is now in good decorative order and clean. Security in this central town site has been improved through locked entrances and a high fence around the perimeter of the school.
- Leaders have plans to close the Sittingbourne site and relocate all pupils to the Teynham site. The Teynham site is situated in a rural position a few miles from Sittingbourne. Planning permission has been sought for a new modular building. Leaders acknowledge the need to apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for a material change prior to opening the building to pupils.
- On both sites, the buildings are kept in a good state of repair. Strategically placed notices and painted lines now warn the school community about steps into and out of buildings.
- The hot water posed a scalding risk to pupils at the time of the last inspection. All hot water taps now have a temperature regulator, and water is kept at a suitable temperature. The caretaker carries out daily checks and records the temperature of the hot water across both sites. Leaders check the temperature log regularly.
- At the last inspection, concern was expressed about managing a building containing asbestos situated on the Teynham site. Leaders reviewed the risks associated with this building carefully and have decommissioned this building.
- Leaders now ensure that pupils have access to showers after physical education sessions.
- Because of the action taken by leaders, all standards are met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(h), 32(2), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 32(3), 32(3)(g)

- The headteacher is currently updating the website. Nevertheless, all statutory and up-to-date information is available on the interim website. This website now provides access to the safeguarding policy and the inspection report. The name and contact details of the headteacher and chair of governors are also available.
- The school provides a detailed breakdown of the spending of money provided for local

authority funded pupils.

- The standards are fully met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher, two further members of the senior leadership team and a number of teachers have left the school. A new headteacher started in January 2018. The headteacher has appointed a new senior leadership team from existing staff.
- The proprietor reacted swiftly to the findings in the previous inspection and has strengthened governance. Governors are now suitably skilled, and a local governing board and a national committee ensure that accountability procedures are in place.
- The new headteacher has wasted no time in overhauling policies and procedures at the school. She has high ambition and has communicated her expectations to the school community effectively. Staff say that morale is high. One member of staff, representing the views of many, said, 'We now see a purpose; it's all about pupils' progress and we feel empowered.'
- The headteacher, supported by effective governance, has ensured that the school complies with all health and safety requirements. There is now a strong safeguarding culture with an emphasis on checking that procedures protect children from harm.
- The headteacher produces candid reports to governors which cover all aspects of the school's performance, including attendance, behaviour and pupils' progress. Governors know they need to provide effective support and challenge to school leaders.
- Leaders have a realistic view about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the headteacher has developed a clear action plan to remedy shortcomings. Regular senior leadership meetings review progress by looking for evidence of improvements. Leaders are united in their aim to improve the school. The action plan is fit for purpose.
- As a result of the robust and effective actions taken by leaders, this school is improving rapidly.
- The standards are fully 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.

School details

Unique reference number	119015
DfE registration number	886/6065
Inspection number	10048789

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	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	ISP Limited
Chair	Jo August
Headteacher	Mrs Mary McKeeman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,296
Telephone number	01795 422 044
Website	ispchildcare.org.uk/under-construction
Email address	senior.school@ispchildcare.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	27–29 June 2017

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.
- ISP is part of the Partnership in Children's Services Group (PICS), which is owned by Sovereign Capital Investments.

- 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 and motor-vehicle maintenance.
- The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- All the pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Since the last inspection, the governing body has been replaced and a new headteacher appointed.

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.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and two groups of staff. The inspector had a discussion with the proprietor's representative and members of the national and local governing bodies.
- The inspector toured the Sittingbourne and Teynham sites with the headteacher. Pupils and staff were observed working in lessons and around the school. Pupils' work from a range of subjects was scrutinised. The inspector spoke with a number of pupils.
- A number of documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, safeguarding documents, and minutes from governors' meetings. The inspector looked at the school's parent and staff surveys.
- The inspector reviewed the school's website.

Inspection team

Sue Child, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2018