

Inaura School

Moorview House, Riverside, Burrowbridge, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 0RB

Inspection dates

22–24 May 2018

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| 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 | Inadequate |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The governing body has not ensured that leaders provide them with robust information about the impact of the school's development plans or pupils' progress. This makes it difficult for governors to hold leaders to account.
- Information about pupils' achievement is inconsistent and the quality of pupils' learning plans varies. Therefore, some teachers do not plan work that is challenging, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Leaders do not have a robust system to check patterns of behaviour or bullying. Therefore, improvements are not always as rapid as they should be.
- Although leaders challenge weak performance, staff do not receive formal feedback on the quality of their work or professional development to meet their particular needs.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. In English, pupils' writing is not of a consistently good standard. In addition, leaders have not secured a strong culture of reading. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Leaders have recently recruited several staff. They have also reviewed staff structures and responsibilities. These changes need time to settle and embed.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leaders are ambitious for the school. They have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. Under the direction of this team, the school is moving forward.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils access a wide and varied curriculum, which is adapted to the interests of each pupil. This helps to prepare them well for their next steps in education.
- Staff are generally skilled at supporting pupils' emotional and individual needs so that most are ready and able to learn.
- Staff support the changes that leaders are making and morale is good. Pupils are proud of their school and many attend well.

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.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the school development plan includes how and when actions are to be checked and the difference actions will make to improving pupils' progress
 - pupils' personal learning plans are consistently of a high quality across all key stages
 - there is a rigorous appraisal system in place so that staff receive frequent feedback and the professional development that they need to improve the quality of their work
 - governors hold leaders firmly to account for the actions described in the development plan and for the progress that pupils make
 - staff, including base leaders and subject leaders, are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are held to account for the quality of their work.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - there is a consistent and effective assessment system across the school sites that all leaders and staff use to check the progress that pupils make
 - teachers use accurate information about pupils' starting points to plan appropriately challenging work so that pupils, including the most able pupils, achieve in line with their capabilities
 - the teaching of writing improves so that more pupils build their resilience alongside their knowledge to write for different purposes and audiences
 - pupils are encouraged to develop an interest in reading so that they read for pleasure and information.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by ensuring that:
 - behaviour incidents, bullying and attendance patterns are checked and this leads to further improvements to the management of behaviour and bullying.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Although leaders can accurately describe the quality of education at the school and the actions needed to make improvements, these are not clear in the school development plan. The plan does not describe how or when actions are checked or the impact they will have on the progress that pupils make. Therefore, governors are not able to challenge leaders in detail about improvements to the quality of education.
- The system to check the progress of pupils requires improvement. Although there is an assessment framework in place, staff do not use it consistently and the information is not organised well. As a result, senior leaders, base managers and subject leaders are not able to effectively check and analyse how well pupils achieve across the school.
- Leaders provide informal coaching to staff and staff share their practice to support one another. However, staff do not receive formal feedback about their work. Appraisal systems are disjointed. Leaders have very recently introduced a system to hold staff to account for the quality of their work and for the progress that pupils make. However, it is too early to see the impact of this.
- Leaders have focused on a review and improvement to the staffing structure and staffing resources. This has involved recruiting staff to ensure appropriate expertise is in place. There are new leadership structures at each school base. However, these changes are recent. Base leaders are now working together, and this is beginning to impact on staff implementing a more consistent approach to their work across the school sites.
- Subject leaders are not yet monitoring the quality of teaching effectively in their subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils do not develop strong attitudes towards reading and writing and their progress in these subjects is inconsistent.
- Leaders have introduced regular case conferences where staff discuss the qualities, learning needs and strategies that work for each pupil in the school. This sharing of expertise and ideas supports and motivates staff. As a result, staff are able to help pupils to overcome their challenges and develop a positive approach to their learning.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils receive a wide and varied curriculum, which is adapted to the needs and interests of each pupil. For example, sporting, musical and artistic activities are included in pupils' timetables alongside a focus on developing core basic skills. Learning at the forest school base supports pupils' confidence and social skills.
- Pupils can describe how they are encouraged to learn life skills such as cooking and learning about healthy eating. There are also activities and events designed to help pupils understand and appreciate different cultures and beliefs. Discussions about current events during 'News Wednesday' sessions support pupils' understanding of values and an appreciation and respect for others.
- The new leadership team are ambitious for the school. They are also realistic and honest about the improvements needed. Leaders are reflective and welcome external advice to support improvements in the areas identified at the previous inspection. They have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- Staff are responding positively to changes. There is a strong sense of teamwork and

confidence about the future direction of the school. Staff absence has been high in the past, but has now significantly reduced.

Governance

- Governors have wide experience and skills to enable them to provide strategic direction for the school. Since their formation a year ago, they have supported leaders to make key appointments to the school staff and to review the staff structure. Governors ensure that they receive appropriate advice. For example, they have appointed an experienced clerk to governors. Governors know that they need to receive more detailed information about the impact of school development priorities to be able to hold leaders to account effectively.
- Governors understand their responsibilities regarding safeguarding. Minutes show that they provide appropriate challenge to leaders about issues such as arrangements to check that pupils who have low attendance are safe.
- Governors visit the school often. The lead for safeguarding checks recruitment processes such as the single central record. Governors challenge leaders appropriately about health and safety issues including risk assessments and arrangements for the medical rooms.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and meets current government requirements. It includes information and procedures to recognise risks to pupils such as from peer-to-peer abuse, honour-based violence, and children missing from education and preventing radicalisation. Consequently, staff are well informed and know how to keep pupils safe.
- The designated lead for safeguarding, supported by several deputy safeguarding leaders, is knowledgeable and experienced in leading safeguarding. Leaders ensure that they attend safeguarding training and local updates. They work closely with a wide range of agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the help they need.
- Staff receive safeguarding information during induction. There are also appropriate training and updates for staff through training sessions, requirements to read safeguarding documents and reminders at staff meetings about safeguarding issues. As a result, staff understand how to notice signs of abuse and know how to report these concerns.
- Arrangements for checking the safety of pupils who do not attend regularly are secure. There is a well-established system to check the well-being of pupils each day. There are appropriate actions to follow up pupils who do not arrive at school.
- Leaders have reviewed health and safety arrangements to check that they are secure and meet requirements. There is now a leader appointed to oversee this work. As a result, leaders receive detailed reports and recommendations. This supports them to ensure that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across subjects or the different school sites. A lack of the implementation of a consistent and whole-school assessment system has led to staff developing their own systems. This variability of approach to assessment does not enable teachers to plan work which precisely meets pupils' needs. This slows their progress.
- The new mathematics subject leader checks pupils' work and plans lessons effectively using assessment information gathered. However, when pupils arrive during the year, there is not a thorough assessment of pupils' starting points to ensure that there is an accurate understanding of what pupils already know, understand and can do. Therefore, pupils sometimes repeat work that they have previously learned.
- The teaching of writing focuses on the technical aspects of writing, often through the completion of spelling, punctuation or grammar exercises. There are few examples of pupils developing their ability to write for real purposes or audiences.
- Pupils' personal learning plans generally provide clear guidance to staff to support pupils' individual learning needs. However, some learning plans are not sufficiently detailed, with gaps in assessments and next steps. This does not enable staff to plan precise next steps of learning to ensure that pupils achieve their full potential in their academic and personal development.
- Pupils are interested and engaged in science as teaching is practical and relates to real life. For example, in the forest school base, there is a greenhouse and polytunnel where pupils take part in activities to support their learning about horticulture.
- Teaching activities around the school sites are generally calm, purposeful and orderly. This is due to the skills shown by staff in recognising and supporting pupils' emotional and behavioural challenges. Although therapies provide much needed support, there is a consistent focus on learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. There is little work to promote an understanding of the impact of bullying. Although incidents of bullying are not common, leaders have not ensured that incidents are analysed in order to reduce re-occurrence.
- However, pupils are proud of their school. Many present their work well, taking care and attention, as seen in their workbooks and artwork.
- Pupils are polite and show good manners including when at alternative provision. This is because staff provide a safe and secure environment.

- Pupils learn about how to keep themselves physically fit and healthy. They receive substantial advice and therapeutic support about how to manage their emotions. They become more confident and learn how to be more successful learners than they may

have been in the past. As an astute pupil said, 'They help us to learn to calm down here. They help us to like learning again.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Incidents of poor behaviour continue to persist because leaders do not have effective systems to be able to evaluate patterns of behaviour. Leaders have identified this as a priority and have spent time visiting other schools to research options. However, they have not yet established a consistent approach to improving pupils' behaviour over time, or over the different sites of the school.
- Attendance is good for many pupils. A very small number of pupils who are waiting to move to other placements do not attend well. Leaders' work with other agencies to secure appropriate educational placements is starting to improve attendance for these pupils.
- The school has a firm approach towards promoting personal responsibility. Staff are skilled at ensuring that pupils are ready for learning and 'to not give up'. Pupils are polite and ready to discuss their work and their lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement as progress is inconsistent across the different sites and subjects. There are inconsistencies in the assessments made as pupils start at the school. Therefore, staff do not always identify strengths or weaknesses in pupils' starting points and achievement. Some pupils, particularly the most able pupils, do not make rapid progress they need to achieve in line with their capabilities.
- Many pupils arrive at the school with weak attitudes towards learning. Pupils' workbooks and folders show that while pupils gain spelling, punctuation and grammar skills, they do not consistently use or apply these skills in finished pieces of writing, either in English or in a range of subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils' workbooks show that sometimes, learning activities do not build on what pupils already know, understand or can do. This is particularly for the most able pupils. As a result, these pupils do not make good progress.
- Some pupils do not successfully develop positive attitudes to reading. They do not read widely or understand what they need to do to broaden and improve their reading.
- However, as pupils move into key stage 4, leaders ensure that pupils are able to take accredited courses whenever possible including functional skills, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network awards, BTEC National Diplomas and GCSEs.
- Staff support pupils in key stage 4 to be aspirational and to consider their next steps in education, employment or training. Pupils receive advice and guidance from staff within the school and from a variety of external visitors, mainly from local colleges.
- All pupils who left in 2017 moved onto further education courses to study areas of interest, for example in animal care or mechanics. Leaders have continued to track these pupils and most have been successful in their placements. Similarly, for the current year,

nearly all pupils are on track to secure placements at college when they leave the school.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 135735 |
| DfE registration number | 933/6000 |
| Inspection number | 10041378 |

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 | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 8 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 28 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 2 |
| Proprietor | Inaura School Registered Charity |
| Chair of local governing body | Norman Tyson |
| Headteacher | Emile Etheridge |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £53,990 |
| Telephone number | 01823 690211 |
| Website | www.inaura.net |
| Email address | admin1.office@inaura.net |
| Date of previous inspection | 26–28 January 2016 |

Information about this school

- Inaura is an independent special school for girls and boys who have complex emotional, social and mental health difficulties. The school opened in 2006 and comprises eight sites. Inaura, a registered charity, owns the school. The main site is in Burrowbridge, near Bridgwater, in Somerset. The other sites are approximately 14 miles away in Lower Godney, near Glastonbury and in East Huntspill.
- All pupils have their places funded by the local authorities. Three pupils are looked after. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses a wide range of local off-site provision in the area. These include Alstone

Court Riding Establishment, Banwell Equestrian Centre, Haines International Motor Museum, Holly Hedge Animal Sanctuary, pottery classes, Somerset Rural Youth Project, Swingrite Golf Centre and Wall Eden Farm. In addition, a range of sport centres provide physical activity. These include: Blackbrook Pavilion, Burnham-on-Sea Swim and Sports Academy, CrossFit at Chilton Polden, Gym 1610 at Bridgwater, Greenbank Pool, Strode Swimming and Fitness and Orchard Gymnastics.

- A local governing body formed in the summer 2017 represents the proprietor and is responsible for the school. A headteacher took up his post in September 2017, having previously been deputy headteacher at the school. A new deputy headteacher took up her post in October 2017.
- The previous standard inspection took place in January 2016 and judged the school to be inadequate, with several independent school standards not met. A monitoring visit took place in October 2016 and found the independent school standards to be met in full.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning alongside senior leaders during learning walks across all the school sites. A sample of alternative providers were also contacted. Inspectors looked at pupils' books and folders, personal learning plans and information about pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils to seek their views of the school. There were only a very small number of responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. However, inspectors spoke to two parents who contacted the inspection team during the inspection. The views of staff were gathered through discussions and from the 35 surveys completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents including the school's development plan. In addition, policies and records related to health and safety, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised. A premises check and meetings were held with the leader responsible for health and safety.
- Several meetings were held with leaders including senior leaders, the designated lead for safeguarding, the four base managers, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. A meeting took place with representatives from the governing body. Telephone conversations were held with a representative from a local authority that places pupils at the school and with an adviser who supports senior leaders.

Inspection team

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tonwen Empson, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| David Simons | Ofsted Inspector |
| Andrew Brown | Ofsted Inspector |

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