

Woodspring School

Ebdon Lane, Wick St Lawrence, Weston-super-Mare BS22 7YA

Inspection dates

19–21 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant decline in the school's effectiveness. A number of the independent school standards (ISS) are not met. The new proprietor has not been in post for long enough to make the substantial improvements needed.
- Weak assessment practice is resulting in some poorly planned teaching activities. Pupils do not receive appropriate support or challenge across different subjects. As a result, progress is inconsistent.
- Leaders have not ensured that staff receive the training they need to improve the quality of their teaching. As a result, pupils do not achieve good outcomes.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Safeguarding training and practices, including the use of risk assessments, are not up to date. Safeguarding concerns are not reported appropriately.
- Pupils are not well prepared to live in modern Britain. They do not have a good understanding of other cultures or religions.
- Pupils' education and behaviour plans are not effective. Parents and carers, pupils and staff are not clear about pupils' objectives or the resources needed to support them to achieve well.
- The quality of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is weak. Pupils are not well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.
- Poor attendance at school and/or during lessons means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils do not yet understand the rules, boundaries and sanctions in place to support positive behaviour. Low-level disruption, or more serious behaviour incidents, take place at times. As a result, pupils' learning is disrupted too often.
- Pupils receive little therapy or counselling. Therefore, they continue to face the emotional challenges that contribute to weaker attitudes towards their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The new proprietor, directors and headteacher have a strong vision for the future of the school. They have an accurate understanding of the actions needed to improve the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of safeguarding by ensuring that:
 - all staff have the safeguarding training, guidance and updates they need to enable them to know how to report concerns appropriately and in a timely way
 - strategies that are identified to reduce risks for pupils are shared and used reliably.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - there is a robust plan in place to make sure that the ISS are met in full
 - pupils' behaviour and education plans are reviewed appropriately so that there are clear objectives, identified resources and timescales for improvement for each pupil
 - pupils receive their full entitlement to curriculum subjects, particularly with respect to PSHE, so that they are better prepared for their future lives
 - there is an assessment system in place that supports leaders' evaluation of pupils' achievement so that weaknesses can be identified quickly and remedied.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills
 - staff receive the training they need to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high across the school.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - pupils receive the emotional and social support that they need to develop more positive attitudes towards each other, to staff and towards their learning
 - the behaviour policy is well understood and consistently applied across the school
 - incidents of pupils not attending lessons or not engaging with their learning reduce significantly
 - stronger partnership working between school and parents supports pupils who do not attend well to improve their attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The school's effectiveness has declined significantly since the previous inspection. Leaders' checks to ensure that the ISS are met in full have not been effective. A number of standards were not met during this inspection. The proprietor, director and headteacher, who are new in post, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, it is too soon to see evidence of improvement.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares them well for their futures. Changes in staff have led to gaps in the teaching team. For example, pupils have not received effective PSHE. There is little planned teaching about different cultures or beliefs. Pupils rarely discuss and debate issues to do with British values. As a result, pupils report that they do not feel 'ready for the outside world'. Pupils leave the school ill-prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is an assessment framework in place. Teachers use their own methods to check and record pupils' progress and achievement. As a result, teachers and leaders do not have a reliable overview to help them plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Leaders are not able to evaluate the progress that pupils make across the school from their starting points. Consequently, they are unsure about what pupils know, can do and understand and the progress they make during their time at the school.
- The systems for checking the performance of staff have lapsed. Staff have not had feedback on the quality of their work. Similarly, there has been little professional development to support them to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the quality of teaching is not improving and pupils do not make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Leaders and staff do not ensure that pupils' individual education and behaviour plans include precise, measurable and personalised targets to enable pupils to make progress and achieve well. The plans are not regularly reviewed and so are not accurate or up to date. Consequently, it is difficult for staff to assess how successful pupils are in achieving their individual objectives.

Governance

- The new proprietor has a realistic understanding of the school's weaknesses and the areas for improvement, which require urgent action. There are plans in place to improve safeguarding, teaching resources and to introduce a more therapeutic approach to support pupils' individual needs. However, these plans are at the very early stages of implementation and little impact is yet evident. On taking ownership of the school, the proprietor commissioned a review of the school's effectiveness. However, leaders have not yet had the time required to implement the actions needed to improve the school rapidly.
- The proprietor has ensured that the new headteacher has appropriate experience to lead the school and is providing him with leadership support. However, this support is not yet resulting in the rapid improvement needed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The culture of safeguarding is weak. Over some time, leaders have not ensured that staff have had mandatory safeguarding training or the regular updates that are required. As a result, there have been incidents of concern that have not been reported in good time and not followed up with external agencies. These weaknesses in safeguarding procedures place pupils at risk.
- The lack of training extends to weaknesses in how risks to pupils are managed. Staff ensure that pupils' risks are assessed in line with the risk assessment policy. However, staff are not vigilant in checking that the agreed strategies are actually being used. This places pupils at risk of harm.
- The proprietor has begun to improve the security of the school site. However, staff do not consistently follow the agreed protocols for managing the entrance to the site. This compromises pupils' safety.
- The school's system for checking the whereabouts of pupils is not rigorous. Staff do not ensure that pupils accurately register when they enter and leave the site. Therefore, staff cannot always be sure about who is on site and who is not.
- Some health and safety checks are in place. However, records show that leaders do not plan or implement frequent testing of the fire alarm system.
- The school's website is currently being reviewed to reflect the new owner's information and policies. The school does have a safeguarding policy that meets current requirements and this is made available to parents on request. However, leaders have not ensured that this agreed policy is implemented consistently and effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Leaders have not provided staff with the support and feedback they need to improve the quality of their teaching and pupils' outcomes. In some subjects, pupils demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding, but this is not consistent across subjects. Therefore, there are inconsistent expectations across the school and pupils make better progress in some subjects than in others.
- Weaknesses in the school's assessment systems start from when pupils arrive at the school. Staff do not gather useful information about what pupils know, understand and can do when they join the school. They do not have sufficient resources to support or challenge pupils appropriately during lessons. This means that some pupils receive work that is too hard or too easy. As a result, too few pupils make up lost ground and acquire the knowledge and understanding they need.
- Parents receive reports about the progress that pupils make. Many describe weaknesses in the progress that pupils make because of absences from lessons, poor behaviour or a lack of interest from pupils.
- Weaknesses in how well pupils' behaviour is managed mean that there are too many incidents of pupils choosing to walk out of their lessons or to 'opt out' of the activities taking place. The headteacher has introduced a new behaviour system. Pupils expressed a view that although this new approach is supporting some pupils' behaviour to improve, they still have their learning interrupted too often.

- There is a lack of investment in teaching resources. For example, staff do not have effective information technology equipment to use to engage pupils' interest or to support their teaching. This limits pupils' progress.
- The headteacher has introduced a new outdoor education approach to the curriculum. Although not yet fully established, pupils show a real interest and excitement about learning new skills and knowledge while being actively engaged outside.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. The PSHE curriculum has not been taught consistently. As a result, pupils do not explore issues about how to live healthy and safe lives sufficiently. In addition, pupils have not developed an appreciation of the views, cultures and beliefs of others. Some pupils show a lack of respect for staff and one another as they move about the school.
- Pupils report that they would benefit from therapies and counselling. Many have had traumatic experiences in the past. Pupils can describe their hopes and aspirations for their futures. However, they express disappointment that they do not receive targeted support to help them to manage and overcome the emotional challenges they face.
- Pupils receive impartial careers advice from an external agency and this starts in Year 9. The school also has links with local further education colleges to support pupils as they move to future education. However, while pupils are supported to move on to their next destination, some pupils do not achieve the outcomes they need to ensure that they move on to the courses of their choice.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Although staff are more confident in managing behaviour following recent training, pupils say that serious behaviour incidents make them feel unsafe at times.
- The headteacher is working to raise expectations of behaviour. He has introduced a new behaviour policy based on a 'behaviour response ladder'. There are higher expectations, such as arriving at school dressed appropriately for lessons. However, these changes are recent and pupils are not yet clear about the rules, boundaries and sanctions for behaviour.
- Some pupils attend school regularly. A few, however, refuse to come to school each day or are on a reduced timetable. Sometimes, pupils do not stay engaged throughout lessons. Poor attendance at school and/or during lessons means that some pupils do not achieve as they should.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Too often, the quality of teaching does not enable pupils to learn effectively. As a result, pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, do not make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Many pupils arrive at the school after long periods of non-attendance and disengagement

with learning. There is little therapeutic support in place to help pupils to develop their self-esteem and positive attitudes towards learning. Without this support, pupils fail to achieve and make progress in their academic or personal development.

- Until very recently, staff did not assess pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding on arrival at the school. Pupils' individual education plans do not provide precise information about their strengths and weaknesses, including in English and mathematics. As a result, time is lost as work is repeated and pupils do not catch up on the learning that they have missed.
- Pupils are unable to access some areas of the curriculum due to a lack of specialist teachers and limited resources, for example computing, music and PSHE.
- Leaders do not have the robust information needed to help them to identify weaknesses and to challenge teachers about the progress pupils make. Therefore, some pupils continue to make weak progress in some subjects. Some pupils work to achieve functional skills. Many are unable to access qualifications such as GCSEs.

School details

Unique reference number	138132
DfE registration number	802/6010
Inspection number	10054227

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Keys Group
Chair	Nicola Kelly
Headteacher	Karl Templeman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,000
Telephone number	01934 707578
Website	www.aspirationscare.com/woodspring-school
Email address	nicolakelly@keyschildcare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–22 September 2016

Information about this school

- Woodspring School is an independent special school which provides education for pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream education. Most pupils have complex social, emotional or mental health difficulties. All have education, health and care plans or are in the process of obtaining one.
- In February 2018, a new proprietor took over the registration of the school. The Keys Group, which is a company that manages children's homes and schools, now owns it. The proprietor began operational responsibility in April 2018. A regional manager and the

managing director of education for the group oversee school improvement.

- A new headteacher, who is also headteacher at another school in the Keys Group, took up post at the school in April 2018.
- The previous standard inspection was in September 2016.
- The school uses two alternative providers: the Conquest Centre in Taunton for equine therapy and the Alternative Education Centre in Taunton. An agency called Face-to-Face supports pupils in school with careers advice. Pupils receive physical education at local sports facilities.
- There are currently no pupils in the sixth form.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE). It was requested that the inspection be brought forward in the inspection cycle due to concerns raised to the DfE about the school's provision for safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders and teachers. Learning was observed with the headteacher. Pupils' workbooks, folders and assessment information were scrutinised.
- Checks on compliance with the independent school standards included a tour of the premises and a scrutiny of health and safety arrangements.
- A range of school documents were analysed and evaluated, including documents about attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation.
- There were no responses to the online survey, Parent View. However, some views were gathered through telephone calls made to parents.
- An inspector met with pupils to gather their views.
- The eight responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered.
- The inspector spoke to representatives of North Somerset and Devon local authorities.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Lownds

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if:
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are:
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which:
 - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school's aim and ethos; and
 - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act;
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor:
 - 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and

beliefs;

- 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which:
- 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living; and
- 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that:
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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