

Mark College

Blackford Road, Mark, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 4NP

Inspection dates

4 September 2018

Overall outcome

The school meets 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)

- The previous standard inspection reported that the arrangements to safeguard pupils were insufficient. In particular, the inspection found that the leadership and management of safeguarding were not effective.
- A progress monitoring inspection conducted in November 2017 found that although leaders had made a concerted effort to improve safeguarding practices, they had not ensured that all members of staff had a clear understanding of the school's policies and procedures. Additionally, there were inconsistencies in the school's procedures for debriefing staff following incidents where staff were required to restrain a pupil.
- Current leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the latest statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State. They have put systems in place to ensure that staff have a clear understanding of the legislation and, more importantly, the implications of this on school procedures. At the time of the monitoring inspection, staff were undertaking their annual safeguarding training. The content of this training was in line with statutory guidance.
- Leaders have reviewed the school's procedures for restraining pupils. In order to ensure a more consistent approach, they have put in place a whole-school system for recording future incidents.
- The previous monitoring inspection identified that some parts of the school were not well lit. This posed a potential risk to pupils, staff and visitors. Since this time, the proprietor has installed new external lighting.
- The standard in this paragraph 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)

- At the time of the standard inspection, school leaders had not ensured that all of the independent school standards had been met. The subsequent monitoring inspection judged that although leaders had successfully resolved a number of these, some standards remained unmet.

- Working alongside school leaders, the proprietor has ensured that the unmet standards have now been met. Additionally, systems have been put in place to monitor continued compliance and hold school leaders to account with a greater level of rigour.
- The standard in this paragraph is now 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- 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 persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfil their responsibilities effectively, consistently meet the independent school standards, and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

School details

Unique reference number	123933
DfE registration number	933/6185
Inspection number	10068265

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	Independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	10 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd
Chair	Andy Holder
Headteacher	Jo-Anne Houston
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000–£65,000
Telephone number	01278 641632
Website	www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk/mark-college/
Email address	markcollege@priorygroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	17–19 January 2017

Information about this school

- Mark College is owned and operated by Priory Education Services Ltd, a national organisation which manages a number of health, social care and educational settings.
- The school was registered in 1986 to provide education for up to 88 young people. It is a 38-week specialist day school for young people aged 10 to 19 who have specific learning difficulties. These include language disorders, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and

dysgraphia and/or autistic spectrum disorder and related disorders.

- A new substantive headteacher took up post on 1 September 2018. Prior to this, an interim headteacher had been in place since November 2017. Since the previous monitoring inspection, the proprietor has restructured the school's leadership and governance arrangements.
- The school does not use alternative providers. However, with adult support, post-16 students can access two local further education colleges, Strode and Weston, which provide a wide range of courses in a mainstream setting.
- In January 2017, the previous integrated inspection of the school and residential provision judged the provision to be inadequate. A further monitoring inspection in November 2017 found that some of the independent school standards remained unmet.
- At the beginning of September 2018, the proprietor closed the setting's residential provision. As a result of this, some of the previously unmet standards are no longer applicable.

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 inspection was the second progress monitoring inspection and was carried out with no notice. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils on site.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including that provided by the registration authority for independent schools, previous inspection reports and the action plan drawn up by the school. In addition, documentation available on the school's website was examined.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They evaluated the school site with regard to the independent school standards and scrutinised a range of documentation, particularly around safeguarding and the school's plans to admit younger pupils. Inspectors also met with the operations director from Priory Education Services Ltd to discuss the effectiveness of actions taken since the first progress monitoring inspection.
- As part of this inspection, the Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to consider the school's application to make a material change to its registration. The requested change was to decrease the maximum number of pupils the school could have on roll from 103 to 60 pupils and extend the age range from 10–19 to 7–19. Additionally, the school had requested to resign its residential status and rename the school as Sedgemoor Manor School. Having considered a range of evidence, the material change requested was approved.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jen Southall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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