

The Yellow House School

1 Alderford Street, Sible Hedingham, Halstead, Essex CO9 3HX

Inspection dates

18 September 2018

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

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

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(ii)

Paragraph 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(viii)

- Safeguarding arrangements met the independent school standards at the previous inspection in November 2017. This inspection found that suitable arrangements are not in place to meet this standard.
- Leaders and directors have a lack of understanding of the Secretary of State's guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' for schools and colleges, September 2018. Leaders are unfamiliar with its contents and unaware of the key changes in the new version.
- The school's safeguarding policy is out of date and does not have regard of the current guidance from the Secretary of State. This policy is, therefore, unsuitable. The policy is available on the school website.
- Staff have received some basic training in safeguarding pupils this term, enabling them to identify if pupils are potentially at risk. The most recent internal training for school staff referred to out-of-date guidance. Staff lack up-to-date knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding pupils. Whole-staff training is planned for November 2018.
- Leaders do not have in place systems to check that staff have received, read and understood the latest statutory guidance.
- The school's single central record of the pre-employment checks carried out on the suitability of staff, directors and the trustee is not up to date. It is not scrutinised on a regular basis by senior leaders to determine whether all relevant checks have been made and recorded appropriately.
- The prohibition check for one member of staff is not complete.
- There is no record of the completion of the section 128 checks regarding prohibition from teaching.

- The checks for medical fitness are incomplete.
- There are no dates for the checks made for staff's qualifications.
- The single central record does not show whether additional overseas checks were required and carried out.
- The designated lead professional for safeguarding is, as required, a member of the senior leadership team and has been trained to the required level in safeguarding to fulfil the roll.
- Leaders record staff training on a regular basis, including where staff have reviewed statutory guidance.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and are well cared for at the school. There are good links with parents and external agencies, including the local authority, to keep pupils safe.
- Leaders have not ensured that the three independent school standards are met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- At the time of the standard inspection, the school premises were not being maintained to a standard that promoted pupils' health, safety and welfare. This was due to the poor condition of some of the accommodation.
- This inspection found that leaders have acted promptly to address the shortfalls that were identified at the previous inspection. The trustee has continued to invest in modernising the school buildings.
 - Both schools have been repainted, which makes it a cleaner and more welcoming environment.
 - New carpets have been laid to replace the worn carpets that presented a trip hazard.
 - Sash windows have been repaired.
 - Upstairs windows have been fitted to restrict how far they can be opened. This no longer presents a health and safety risk where pupils could easily climb out of or fall from the windows on the first floor.
- Cleaning is sufficiently thorough.
- The premises are well-maintained and are appropriate for the number and age range of pupils on roll.
- Leaders are clear about the statutory requirements for health and safety checks.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is now met.

Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(d)

- At the time of the previous inspection, the temperature of hot water at the point of use posed a scalding risk to users.
- Leaders have ensured that the temperature of hot water at the hand basins does not pose a scalding risk.
- Leaders have ensured that the two independent school standards are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not been effective in ensuring that all the independent school standards were met. In addition to the standards not met, there were weaknesses in the leadership of the school.
 - Leaders did not know how well they were doing in raising standards in the school.
 - Turbulence in leadership was having an impact on the school's capacity to make necessary improvements.
 - School improvement planning did not focus clearly on the strategic development needs of the school.
 - The monitoring and evaluation of staff performance did not give leaders precise information to identify what needed to improve.
- In the action plan, the proprietor proposed to:
 - conduct inspections with the director to scrutinise standards
 - hold weekly meetings with the headteacher and director to ensure that standards are met
 - allocate a designated member of staff to carry out weekly health and safety checks and to report findings to the headteacher and senior administrator
 - ensure that leaders and the director have up-to-date knowledge of guidance and regulations by, for example, purchasing membership to an online system to access accurate information
 - plan and implement an appraisal system alongside the current supervision system which includes regular lesson observations
 - introduce plans for improving provision and outcomes in each department and self-evaluation documents which will serve to inform whole-school self-evaluation and school-development planning
 - introduce accurate systems to monitor pupils' progress: for example, implement a range of 'I can...' statements and purchase appropriate assessment software to support staff in doing this
 - undertake regular scrutiny of pupils' work and follow-up with clear feedback to staff
 - implement and embed a whole-school marking and assessment system.
- This inspection found that leaders must bring about further improvements to strengthen leadership and management of the school. The school's self-evaluation lacks sufficient rigour. There is no in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of whole-school provision to appraise school improvement planning, which means that the school improvement plan lacks the essential precision to drive rapid improvement.
- Improvement plans do not have measurable targets to hold staff accountable for securing improvement. Leaders do not systematically monitor standards of teaching, learning and assessment on a formal basis in the school. Leaders do not have precise information to identify what needs to improve.

- Leaders discuss what more should be improved and how, but documents, plans for improvement and evaluations lack detail. It is not clear from the documentation how proposed actions would benefit the pupils.
- Proprietors and trustees do not hold senior leaders to account rigorously. There is significant variation in the monitoring of written records, which reduces accountability for all the key areas of the school's work. Minutes of meetings are not always shared to drive improvement.
- The proprietor, the director and leaders do not have an in-depth knowledge of the independent school standards. Although improvements are evident for the premises, weaknesses in leadership and management remain. Not all systems and procedures are in place to safeguard pupils.
- The second action plan submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) has not been updated since it was judged not to be acceptable in June 2018.
- Leaders have implemented and embedded a whole-school marking and assessment system. Scrutiny of pupils' work is not formalised to allow leaders to develop a sharper understanding of the quality of education that the school is providing.
- A designated member of staff has been allocated to carry out weekly health and safety checks and to report findings to the headteacher.
- The proprietor, the director and the headteacher have a clear vision for the school and have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils. They have developed a trusting relationship with the local authorities who regularly place pupils at the premises.
- Leaders have not ensured that this independent school standard is 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. 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 the school's premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are assured (paragraph 25).
- The proprietor must ensure that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users (paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(d)).

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection.

- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils(paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

Standards that were met at the previous inspection but are now judged not to be met at this inspection.

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that, in relation to persons appointed as members of staff at the school –
 - no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction; and

- the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of such person's medical fitness

(paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(ii)).

■ The proprietor must keep a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question:

- in relation to each member of staff appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether – checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that each member of staff has the relevant qualifications;
- a check was made to establish whether staff are subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 124 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
- checks were made where appropriate that staff had the relevant qualifications;
- checks were made pursuant of 18(2)(e) (for those who have lived outside the United Kingdom);

including the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(a)(3)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(viii)).

School details

Unique reference number	134398
DfE registration number	881/6048
Inspection number	10072703

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 school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	13 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	5
Number of part-time pupils	17
Proprietor	Mrs Debra Pester
Chair	Mr James Pester
Headteacher	Mr David Ollier
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,184
Telephone number	01787 462504
Website	www.theyellowhouseschool.essex.sch.uk
Email address	yellowhouse@btconnect.com
Date of previous standard inspection	28–30 November 2017

Information about this school

- The Yellow House School is a small independent special school owned by a sole proprietor. The school is based on two sites, one in Essex and one in Suffolk. The detail in this report applies to both sites. Use is made of an allotment site in Clare for therapeutic provision.
 - The main site is at 1 Alderford Street, Sible Hedingham, Halstead, Essex CO9 3HX.

- The second site is at 1 Nethergate Street, Clare, Suffolk CO10 8NP.
- The school opened in Sible Hedingham in 2002 and Clare in 2006 and is registered with the DfE to admit 15 pupils.
- The school provides full-time and part-time education for young people and all pupils have an education, health and care plan. All pupils have histories of poor attendance in their previous schools. Some have not attended school for three years. Pupils are admitted to the school at various times during the year and most stay until the end of Year 11.
- Pupils' part-time provision is agreed with the placing authorities.
- The school aims to ensure that pupils can restart their education in a safe and supportive environment.
- The school received its previous standard inspection in November 2017, when it did not meet three of the independent school standards and its overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2017.

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 was the first progress monitoring inspection following the school's most recent standard inspection (November 2017), when the school's overall effectiveness was judged as requires improvement, and three of the independent standards were judged as not met.
- The inspection was unannounced.
- Following the standard inspection, the school submitted an action plan to the DfE to address areas for improvement identified in the inspection. The plan was evaluated on 5 March 2018 and judged as not acceptable.
- The school submitted a second action plan to the DfE. This was evaluated on 1 June 2018 and judged as not acceptable. The second action plan has not been updated.
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietor, the director, the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The DfE commissioned Ofsted to conduct this progress monitoring inspection, focusing particularly on the unmet standards in connection with premises, accommodation and the quality of leadership and management. The inspector toured the school sites to check the health and safety standards that were not met at the standard inspection (November 2017).
- The inspector checked whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils met the relevant independent school standards. Policies and processes were evaluated. The school's website was checked for compliance with the statutory information that should be available online.
- There are no new entries to Parent View since the standard inspection in November 2017.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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