

Columbus House

Bridge House, 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury SK6 2SR

Inspection dates

23–25 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and managers have not ensured that safeguarding is effective or that the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have not ensured that there are accurate records of pupils' attendance and, consequently, this aspect of safeguarding practice is weak.
- Clinical staff work with pupils to consider their learning needs. This information is not communicated well to teaching staff to help pupils better access their education.
- At times, teachers do not start learning promptly and this leads to disruptive behaviour from pupils.
- Leaders and managers do not accurately evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, improvement plans do not focus on those aspects of the school needing development.
- The proprietor does not hold senior staff to account for ensuring that pupils are safe and well educated. He has not ensured that staff have the skills and knowledge to perform their roles adequately.
- Teachers do not use information on pupils' abilities or individual needs and interests to plan learning best suited to them. Consequently, overall, pupils do not make the good progress they should, particularly in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils read well and frequently.
- When teaching takes into account pupils' abilities and interests, pupils make better progress.
- Pupils enjoy the time they spend on physical activities and these promote their physical health and well-being successfully.
- Teachers plan a range of activities which effectively foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all aspects of safeguarding, including the recording of pupils' attendance, are reviewed and improved to ensure that pupils are safe
 - the leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness identifies strengths and weaknesses accurately and is used more successfully to identify actions that will support the school's improvement
 - all leaders are held accountable and have the skills and knowledge to perform their roles and responsibilities
 - teachers use information on pupils' achievements, including that from clinical staff, to plan learning more effectively
 - all teaching staff receive training and develop to be able to provide high-quality teaching and learning
 - pupils have access to a better range and quantity of good-quality learning materials, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - learning time is used more productively
 - lessons are always planned so that they stimulate and engage pupils
 - the targets set on pupils' individual education plans are more precise and therefore more achievable
 - the teaching of mathematics is better matched to pupils' abilities and allows pupils to gain a better understanding of what they are learning.
- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Senior leaders do not have an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Areas for development are not identified accurately and this has slowed the school's improvement. Where areas for improvement are identified, plans do not clearly state what needs to be done, why and how. This prevents leaders from being able to measure the impact of actions taken.
- Clinical staff work closely and regularly with pupils. Among other things, they identify how adults can plan learning to make it more accessible for pupils. Systems to communicate this information to teaching staff are not effective.
- Leaders encourage staff to take on additional training to improve the quality of their teaching but do not ensure that all teaching staff receive guidance on how to improve their practice. Consequently, teaching is not good.
- Senior leaders have put in place individual learning and behavioural plans for pupils. However, sometimes, learning plans lack precision as the targets are too broad, such as 'to improve my punctuation'.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by visits, for example to the library and the science museum. Activities that promote pupils' good physical health and well-being are plentiful, such as badminton, swimming and golf.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported. For example, pupils take part in a range of activities, such as cooking and selling products in a cafe, while raising money for charity. They also learn about periods in history such as the Holocaust and about inspirational people like Dr Martin Luther King, Junior.
- Staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire feel well supported and say that pupils' behaviour improves rapidly when they join the school.
- Local authorities which place pupils at the school consider that the communication they receive from the school is helpful and informative and that pupils' participation in learning has improved since attending the school.

Governance

- Directors, who are responsible for governance, do not hold senior leaders to account for carrying out their roles. For example, they have not ensured that teaching staff are receiving guidance on how to improve their teaching. This has had a negative effect on the quality of teaching that pupils receive.
- The proprietor has not ensured that all the independent schools standards have been consistently met.
- Directors receive regular information about pupils' behaviour and monitor records of behavioural incidents. They ensure that fluctuations in the number of incidents are investigated and that actions are taken when appropriate.
- Directors are very much involved in the daily life of the school as they are regular visitors. They build good relationships with pupils and use their own skills and knowledge of

education to try and help improve teaching and learning in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective as procedures are not followed to ensure pupils' safety and welfare. For example, pupils' attendance is not correctly monitored.
- During the inspection, other weaknesses in safeguarding were identified by the inspector, highlighting the lack of rigour in aspects of safeguarding. Issues, such as the designated safeguarding lead lacking appropriate training, pupils accessing adult-only toilets and toilets without appropriate locking devices, were resolved during the inspection.
- Some aspects of safeguarding practice are stronger. For example, senior leaders have ensured that staff have received regular training in safeguarding and that the safeguarding policy, which they sign to say they have read and understood, meets all current government guidelines. This policy, along with other required information, is made available to parents and carers via the school prospectus as the school does not have a website.
- Senior leaders ensure that risk assessments are written and updated regularly to consider pupils' safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too much of pupils' lesson time is spent unproductively. Teachers are sometimes slow to get learning under way and this leads to disruptive behaviour, which further prevents pupils' learning.
- Clinical staff work closely with pupils to discover how they learn best. However, this information, as well as information about what pupils already know and can do, is not used by all teachers to plan learning. Consequently, planned learning often does not match pupils' needs.
- Learning resources for teaching are limited. This has a negative impact on the quality of some teaching, for example developing pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts.
- When teachers take account of pupils' interests, they make better progress. This is particularly evident in English, where pupils' project work allows them to use and improve their literacy and information and communication skills effectively.
- Teachers develop good working relationships with pupils. They are successful at identifying ways of encouraging pupils to engage in learning.
- Teachers use information and communication technology well to help pupils learn, for example spelling games and watching news programmes for young people.
- Teachers successfully encourage pupils to read regularly and actively promote a love of reading, for example through having a range of up-to-date fiction and non-fiction available. Teachers encourage pupils to use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words, and they spend time explaining complex vocabulary so that pupils have a good

understanding of what they are reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate as procedures to ensure pupils' safety are ineffective.
- Clinical staff work closely with pupils to help give them confidence in managing their emotions. This supports pupils in being able to access social and learning situations.
- Pupils take part in a wide range of well-planned activities which effectively promote their personal development, such as visits to a synagogue and Comic Relief Day.
- Older pupils have access to independent online careers advice websites. This supports them in making informed choices for their future.
- Pupils demonstrated maturity when making thoughtful comments and giving considered answers during the inspection.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement as, at times, learning is disrupted by low-level poor behaviour. Sometimes, this is due to learning not starting promptly at the beginning of a lesson or teachers not being able to engage pupils in their learning.
- Pupils arrive promptly at the beginning of lessons. Most pupils attend school every day.
- Overall, pupils are learning to control their behaviours well. This is reflected in the lowering rates of incidents and adult physical interventions over time.
- Pupils are exceptionally polite and considerate to visitors. This was evident during the inspection and was demonstrated by the manners shown and the thoughtful and considered conversations that took place with the inspector.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not good. Their mathematical knowledge is underdeveloped because teachers do not ensure that pupils understand how to use calculations to solve problems.
- Pupils make better progress in English. They have more opportunity to practise their literacy skills. The progress many pupils make in learning to spell is particularly good.
- Pupils have access to a range of literary texts, both in school and in the local library. Pupils read regularly from a range of texts. They frequently ask if they can spend time at the local library. Consequently, pupils read well.
- As pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, they make good progress in a number of pursuits, such as swimming, climbing, knot-tying and the health and safety aspects of physical education (PE).

School details

Unique reference number	143098
DfE registration number	381/6018
Inspection number	10053836

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 school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Care 4 Children Ltd
Chair	Tariq Verplan
Headteacher	Shaneela Akhtar
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000
Telephone number	0161 150 5483
Website	n/a
Email address	hello@care4children.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 November–1 December 2016

Information about this school

- Columbus House is registered to accept up to six pupils aged between eight and 13 years who have emotional and behavioural needs.
- There are currently five pupils on roll, aged between nine and 13 years. All are children looked after. Four pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- All pupils are referred to the school from local authorities.
- The school operates on one site and does not use any alternative education provision.
- Pupils take part in all of their PE activities at other sites, such as local leisure centres.

- The lead teacher was new to the role in September 2018. All except one member of the teaching team have taken up their roles more recently.
- The vision of the school is to provide an all-inclusive approach to education, encompassing learning in and outside of the school, to create for pupils a better experience of school and to support their transition into adult life.
- The school was previously inspected in December 2016, when it was judged to require improvement. It then received a progress monitoring inspection in June 2017, when it was judged that those independent school standards that were previously unmet were met.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- The inspector met with the lead teacher and all teaching staff during the inspection. She met with the education director and the head of education, who represented the proprietor during the inspection. She also met with care staff and clinical staff.
- The inspector observed lessons and looked at all pupils' work in their books in all subjects with the lead teacher.
- The inspector spoke with pupils informally during the school day and observed behaviour throughout the school day.
- There were no responses received to Parent View or the Ofsted online parent free-text service. Four responses to the staff questionnaire were received and there were four pupil responses to the pupil questionnaire. The inspector also spoke to two representatives from different local authorities who place pupils at the school. All these views were considered.
- The inspector toured the school's buildings, inside and out, to check whether the relevant independent school standards are met and that pupils' welfare is considered.
- A range of documentation was examined by the inspector, including policies, the record of safeguarding checks and other safeguarding documentation. All documents relating to the independent school standards were studied and their implementation and effectiveness considered.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 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(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 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(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 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.

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.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admissions and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].

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 roles 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; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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