

Open Box Education Centre

The Box, St John's Road, Epping, Essex CM16 5DN

Inspection date

29 April 2019

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(g)

Paragraph 4

- These standards were not met at the previous inspection, because leaders did not have an effective system in place to measure pupils' attainment when they joined the school. Hence, they were not in a position to measure pupils' progress accurately. Not all teachers were able to assess accurately what pupils knew or could do in order to bring about improvements in teaching. Teachers did not follow the school's marking and feedback policy consistently or make sure that pupils finished their work.
- School leaders proposed several appropriate actions to address the concerns. These included: developing new approaches to assess pupils' starting points; implementing systems that would be more effective at identifying pupils' current areas of strength and weakness; and providing pupils with targets that reflect their abilities and prior knowledge.
- Improved communication now takes place with the referring school for each pupil. Each pupil now has a detailed pupil profile which is accessible online by all teachers. These profiles provide much more information about each pupil's starting points, including any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as well as their social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Pupils are assessed on their current attainment in English and mathematics. This identifies any gaps in their knowledge and triggers appropriate interventions and support. Ongoing assessments ensure that the appropriateness of support and of pupils' targets are checked on a regular basis.
- The inspector's visits to lessons showed that teachers' planning takes better account of pupils' starting points and prior knowledge. Teachers regularly gather information on pupils' progress through tests, work scrutinies and the use of well-targeted questioning. The majority of pupils' written work is being completed.
- The school's marking and assessment policy has been overhauled and gives teachers greater freedom to decide how each pupil will receive feedback on the progress they are making. This means that individual pupils receive more bespoke written or verbal

feedback on their progress. Discussions with pupils showed that they appreciate this new approach, and they now respond more positively to their teachers' comments.

- Regular written reporting on each pupil's progress is carried out each half-term. This is in addition to the termly face-to-face review meetings with parents or carers. Reports inform parents with sufficient detail on pupils' attainment and progress towards their targets, their attendance, attitudes to learning, and social, emotional and mental well-being.
- The inspector's observations and information from the school's now regular monitoring and review programme showed that expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally higher. Leaders have a better understanding of what is working well and of aspects of teaching that need to improve. Teachers plan for activities to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders have ensured that these independent school standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Part 6. Provision of information

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

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- At the time of the previous inspection, senior leaders had not ensured that all the independent school standards were met.
- Leaders had correctly made improving pupils' emotional well-being a priority. However, systems to assess pupils' starting points when joining the school were weak. This meant that it was difficult to measure the progress pupils were making and for teachers to pitch their teaching at the correct level.
- Leaders have taken appropriate action to address these shortfalls, and teachers now have sufficient information about each pupil to ensure that their needs are better met than previously. Assessments of progress are more accurate, and targets set for pupils are more appropriate and are checked at regular intervals.
- Members of the governing body sought out appropriate training, following the previous inspection, to strengthen their role in holding senior leaders to account. Individual governors have oversight of aspects of the independent school standards and conduct regular audits to check on the school's compliance with these.
- The issues raised at the May 2018 inspection have been addressed. Leaders have rightly identified their next priority as embedding the school's systems for assessing pupils' progress in order to ensure that all pupils are challenged to achieve their very best.
- As was the case at the previous inspection, the requirement for a suitable safeguarding policy and its publication on the school's website is met.
- Effective action has been taken to ensure that the independent school standard for the leadership and management of the school 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

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 ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 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.
- 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 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:
 - 31(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent schools standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	144818
DfE registration number	881/6069
Inspection number	10102169

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	none
Proprietor	Open Box Education Centre Ltd
Chair	Sara McLean
Principal	Alison Dolan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£23,500 to £60,000
Telephone number	01992 577300
Website	www.openboxededucation.org.uk
Email address	info@openboxededucation.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	22–24 May 2018

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2017 after registration with the Department for Education (DfE). The school had been operating prior to that time, but had not been registered.
- Open Box Education Centre is registered to provide full-time and part-time education for up to 20 boys and girls aged 14 to 16. The school is owned by Open Box Education Centre Limited.
- Pupils attending Open Box Education Centre typically have a range of social, emotional, and mental health difficulties. Many have been excluded, or were at risk of being

excluded, from their previous school.

- Pupils are referred to the school by their local authority or local secondary schools. Of the 12 pupils currently on roll, eight have been referred by their local authority. Five of the pupils are supported by an education, health and care plan. The remainder of the pupils have been referred by local schools.
- The school is not registered as a special school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- There are 11 pupils on roll in Year 11 and 1 pupil in Year 10.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- On 22 February 2017, Ofsted conducted a section 97 inspection and inspectors found the provision to be operating as an unregistered school. The DfE issued a warning notice.
- The school had applied to the DfE to register as an independent school in December 2016, before the February 2017 visit. The pre-registration inspection for the school was conducted by Ofsted on 18 July 2017. At that time, three of the independent school standards were judged unlikely to be met in relation to facilities for pupils who become unwell and the suitability of the outdoor space.
- Ofsted conducted a standard inspection of the school in May 2018, and the school was judged to require improvement. Three independent standards were judged as unmet, relating to teaching and the quality of leadership and management. The school submitted an action plan, which was evaluated by Ofsted on 25 January 2019 and judged not to be acceptable.

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 conducted without notice.
- The inspector visited four lessons and looked at pupils' work to assess the quality of teaching over time. He also spoke to pupils about their work.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the special educational needs coordinator, four teachers and three learning mentors. A telephone conversation took place with the chair of the governing body. The inspector met with four pupils.
- The inspector toured the school premises.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of documents related to assessment, attendance and safeguarding, including the school's register of the checks on the suitability of staff.

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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