

Kingsmere School

c/o Priory Education Services Ltd, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Inspection date

5 June 2019

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(g), 4

- The previous inspection found that the proprietor did not ensure that the teaching at the school enabled pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress. Teaching did not involve well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time. Staff did not show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of pupils and ensure that these were taken into account in the planning of lessons. This continues to be the case and the standards are not met.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to implement new procedures to improve the quality of teaching. Steps have been taken to monitor teaching more closely through learning walks, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Records show that these procedures have been carried out systematically. The headteacher's monitoring is identifying the strengths and areas for development but does not link the impact of teaching on the progress made by pupils in lessons.
- New appointments have been made this year to strengthen the quality of teaching. Staff have attended training to help them settle in to their new roles. All staff are now qualified to teach or to support pupils' learning. Termly reviews enable the headteacher to monitor the development of each member of staff. Procedures to manage the performance of staff are in place. However, too many inconsistencies in teaching remain.
- Not all staff plan learning matched to pupils' needs and abilities. At times, writing tasks are too difficult because pupils are not given enough guidance about how to plan their writing. Without this guidance they are unclear how to begin, and this slows their progress. A lack of clear planning leads to time in lessons being wasted as pupils are unclear about what they are expected to do. In some foundation subjects, tasks are too basic and do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.
- Currently, pupils are making better progress in English than in mathematics or science, mainly because teaching is more effective. This is more noticeable in key stage 4 where pupils study key texts in depth and produce good-quality, extended writing. Pupils in key stage 3 make much less progress. They are not expected to respond to the written comments made in books to help them improve, or to correct common mistakes in line with the school's agreed procedures. Not all spelling errors are identified in teachers'

marking, so pupils continue to make these errors in their work. In mathematics and, to a lesser extent, in science, pupils' books show that work is often poorly presented and left incomplete. Not all pupils do enough work in lessons. The amount of completed work in their books so far this year is minimal.

- Where teaching is most effective, staff forge strong relations with pupils. They engage pupils in discussion and questioning and make links with previous learning. Off-task behaviour or casual attitudes are challenged sensitively but firmly to keep pupils focused on their work. Pupils work independently without adult support. New interactive whiteboards are used effectively to illustrate learning. Pupils' work shows that expectations of how they should present their work are firmly established.
- At the previous inspection, the proprietor was unable to demonstrate that a framework was in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly or use the information from assessments to plan teaching so that pupils can progress. This continues to be the case and the standard is not met.
- The methods used to assess pupils' starting points on entry to the school are the same as those used at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher feels that these procedures provide her with a secure baseline to monitor pupils' progress in reading, including spelling, English and mathematics. Records of pupils' progress are maintained electronically to show how well pupils are doing. However, this information is not analysed in detail to present a coherent overview of pupils' progress over time.
- New procedures have been introduced to gauge pupils' progress against criteria agreed by staff in each subject. These procedures are new and are not used systematically by all staff. Assessment criteria are clear for English, mathematics and science, but not for all foundation subjects. Pupils' work in science contains clear examples of how these procedures should be applied, but this good practice has not been developed across other subjects. Regular reviews of pupils' progress are collated, but these reports are not based on robust assessment information recorded in all of their subjects.
- This monitoring inspection also found that teaching does not foster in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think for themselves. Not all pupils work hard enough in lessons, and they often disengage from learning. Expectations of pupils are often too low. They do not show the motivation to find out for themselves. For example, they ask staff to spell words for them even though they have dictionaries to help them do this. Learning in subjects taught in the afternoons is not planned well enough. Staff do not demonstrate that they have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subjects being taught. Some pupils choose to leave lessons and wander the school. This limits their learning and progress.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- It remains the case that the proprietor does not ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to provide a programme of staff training and manage their performance annually. With the support of proprietary staff, the

headteacher has implemented a range of improvements since the last inspection. Decisive action has been taken to change staffing in order to strengthen the quality of teaching. A range of revised documentation has added some rigour to the headteacher's monitoring and evaluation.

- However, due to the school's small size, apart from the headteacher, there are no other staff with leadership responsibilities. Furthermore, until this term, there has been no one in school each week to manage the administration, organisation and day-to-day operations. The lack of support staff places significant demands on the headteacher's time and limits her capacity to secure sustained improvement. The proprietor has recognised this shortfall. Additional business support one day each week is now provided. This is very new. The governors have not had time to gauge whether this is sufficient to enable the headteacher to focus on school improvement.
- The effect of this limited capacity was clearly evident during the inspection. Records of the impact of actions to improve the school are not collated systematically or in a coherent way. Not all minutes of meetings or headteacher's reports were readily available. Personnel files are stored safely but not systematically so that information can be located quickly. Individual records to monitor pupils' behaviour are not analysed routinely to spot patterns and trends and take action to prevent incidents from happening.
- The proprietor ensures that safeguarding arrangements are effective. However, basic administration duties such as transferring information gained from recruitment checks to the school's single central record are not always carried out in a timely way. Not all checks of the whereabouts of pupils who have left the school have been made to ensure that they remain in education. Monitoring by proprietary staff has not been rigorous enough to spot these issues and take action to support the headteacher in resolving them.
- The headteacher continues to provide strong leadership. This is clearly evident in the school's caring and supportive ethos and the respect shown to her by pupils. Her morning welcome for pupils sets the tone for learning. Pupils are reminded of their conduct and the expectations of them. They respond positively to her and wear their uniforms with pride.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to introduce a new model of governance. Governance has been strengthened since the last inspection. However, the chair and three additional governors all have leadership and management roles within the proprietary body. They provide further capacity for assisting the headteacher in monitoring the school's work, but the current governance structure does not fully meet the needs of the school. This was identified at the time of the previous inspection and little has been done to change this.
- Regular governor visits to the school and meetings to report on the progress achieved in making improvements are holding the headteacher to account. However, governors are not sufficiently thorough in checking the impact of the actions taken to resolve the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Minutes of recent governors' visits state that all of the independent school standards are now met. This is not the case.
- Governors have brokered additional support for the headteacher. She meets regularly with leaders of other schools in the region operated by the proprietor to share good practice and foster stronger working relations. The proprietor has invested in new

fencing around the school and installed digital resources in classrooms to enhance teaching and learning. Plans are in place to introduce new online procedures next term to manage safeguarding and child protection matters more systematically.

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 does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - 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
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - shows a good understanding of aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress
 (paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)).

- 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
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).

Standards that were not identified at the previous inspection and were not met at this inspection

- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - 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
 - demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught
 (paragraph 3(b), 3(e)).

- The proprietor must ensure 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.

(paragraph 4.)

School details

Unique reference number	131260
DfE registration number	873/6039
Inspection number	10105570

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd
Chair	Michelle Smith
Headteacher	Lynne Keating
Annual fees (day pupils)	Information on request
Telephone number	01354 610503
Website	www.priory childrensservices.co.uk
Email address	Lynne.Keating@priorygroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	20–22 February 2018

Information about this school

- Kingsmere School provides education for boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Most of them have been permanently excluded or are at risk of being permanently excluded from mainstream schools.
- It is located in a rural setting in Cambridgeshire.
- It is registered with the Department for Education to take a maximum of 12 boys.
- Pupils join and leave the school at different times of the year.
- The school uses the following alternative provision: Open Road, Kings Lynn; Peterborough Regional College.

- The school staff consists of a headteacher, a teacher, two support assistants and an instructor.

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.
- The inspection was the first progress monitoring inspection since the last full inspection in February 2018. It was carried out at no notice.
- The Department for Education accepted the school's action plan in April 2019.
- Lessons were observed in English, art and computing.
- A sample of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science was scrutinised.
- A range of documentation was looked at, including the school's action planning, monitoring records, behaviour and incidents log, assessment procedures, minutes of meetings of the governing body, headteacher's reports, and policies and procedures relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the chair of the governing body.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils in lessons and at breaktimes.
- No questionnaires were used to survey the views of pupils, staff or parents and carers.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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