

Fusion College

Manleys Farm, West Buckland, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9LQ

Inspection date

23 July 2019

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

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

- Leaders' actions to keep pupils safe are effective. Staff have had the relevant training to allow them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website and follows guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education. Leaders have clear processes in place, so staff know what to do when they have concerns about pupils' welfare. Staff record these concerns well and form chronologies, which leaders use to evaluate the most appropriate action. Leaders are currently evaluating the method for recording these concerns, including moving over to electronic methods. Currently, leaders are working out of several folders, including some that are archived. This makes the process of evaluating trends over time more difficult. However, it does not compromise the effectiveness of safeguarding at the school.
- The standard in this paragraph is now met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Risk assessments are poor in quality. Despite this being an unmet standard at the previous monitoring inspection, leaders have not made the necessary improvements. Risk assessments for off-site activities are particularly poor. Staff have copied and pasted from existing risk assessments when recording risks and the actions they will take to reduce these occurring. Apart from the information at the top of each risk assessment, which names where pupils are going, all risk assessments are identical to one another. This process lacks rigour, inhibits how well staff reduce risks and puts pupils at unnecessary risk of harm.
- The standard in this paragraph remains unmet.
- Leaders have not ensured that the overall standard in this part is met.

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

Paragraph 18, 20

- The proprietor has successfully checked whether school leaders are subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education Act 2008, which prohibits them from taking part in the management of an independent school.
- At the time of the inspection, leaders had not checked that all staff employed to teach at the school were not prohibited from teaching. However, leaders successfully rectified this during the inspection.
- Despite the need to rectify this aspect of leaders' work, the standard in this paragraph is now met.

Paragraph 21

- Leaders have ensured that the school's single central register is maintained in line with statutory guidance. However, changes were made during the inspection to ensure necessary compliance. Leaders use a range of methods for recording recruitment checks. This unnecessarily complicates the process and risks lack of compliance in the future. Leaders acknowledge the need to strengthen how well they ensure the school's single central register meets the independent school standards.
- Despite changes needed during the inspection, the standard in this paragraph is now met.
- Leaders have ensured that the overall standard in this part is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)(a–c)

- Leaders' knowledge of the independent school standards is not sufficient to ensure that these are consistently met. At the previous monitoring inspection, several standards were unmet. A number of these remain unmet. In addition, the lead inspector allowed leaders to make an additional check on recruitment during the inspection as this had not been completed. This raises questions about how well leaders know how best to ensure that the independent school standards are met in full.
- Leaders have started to undertake work with an external consultant to help them with this aspect of their work. The proprietors recognise the need to ensure that there is expertise at leadership level, so they are not too reliant on this external support. Leaders at the school are developing an understanding of the independent school standards but, as yet, this is not sufficiently in depth.
- Leaders cannot ensure pupils' well-being is actively promoted as the quality of risk assessments is poor and does not effectively recognise risks to pupils.
- The standard in this part remains unmet.

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, as set out in the annex of this report. 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 unmet at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

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 role 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

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.

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if–

- 18(2)(b) 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;
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if–
 - 20(6)(a) MB–
 - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend 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;
 - 20(6)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB–
 - 20(6)(b)(i) where relevant to the individual, an enhanced criminal record check;
 - 20(6)(b)(ii) checks confirming MB's identity and MB's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 20(6)(b)(iii) where, by reason of MB's living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish MB's suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Chair of the school considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - 20(6)(c) subject to sub-paragraph (8), where the Secretary of State makes a request for an enhanced criminal record check relating to MB countersigned by the Secretary of State to be made, such a check is made.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether–
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether "S" is subject to 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 such a direction;
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether "S" is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.
- 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation each member ("MB") of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were

made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

School details

Unique reference number	135278
DfE registration number	933/6215
Inspection number	10094027

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 special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Female
Gender of students in the sixth form	Female
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Fusion College Ltd
Chair	Gary Dawkins
Headteacher	Taryn Stanton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,200
Telephone number	01823 653620
Website	None
Email address	tstanton@fusioncollege.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	16–18 January 2018

Information about this school

- Since the previous monitoring inspection, the school name has changed from Willows to Fusion College. In addition, the body of proprietors has changed to Fusion College Ltd.
- Fusion College is an independent special day school. The school was established in 2005. It moved to its current site in 2007.
- The school offers provision for up to 16 girls who have severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

- Pupils are placed by their respective local authority.
- The proprietor has responsibility for the governance of the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place on 16–18 January 2018, when it was judged to be inadequate and a number of independent school standards were not met. Following this, a progress monitoring inspection took place in September 2018 when several independent school standards remained unmet.
- The school complies with its registration agreement.

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 second progress monitoring inspection since the previous standard inspection and was carried out without notice.
- The previous monitoring inspection in September 2018 judged several independent school standards to remain unmet. The school was required to produce an action plan explaining how it would meet the independent school standards that were unmet at this inspection. This action plan, evaluated on 28 December 2018, was judged as being acceptable with modifications.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and the registered manager to discuss actions taken since the previous monitoring inspection to meet unmet independent school standards. The lead inspector evaluated the school's single central register and several staff personnel files to determine whether leaders had completed the required recruitment checks on staff.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the quality of risk assessments for both on- and off-site activities. The lead inspector also held a safeguarding meeting with the headteacher to determine how well staff identify concerns about pupils' welfare and how diligently leaders act to involve external agencies.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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 - 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.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

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

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