

Wynstones School

Church Lane, Whaddon, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL4 0UF

Inspection dates

8–9 October 2019

Overall outcome

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

Residential provision outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i)

- The school's current curriculum is not demanding enough for pupils. Senior leaders are aware of this. They are taking action to improve curriculum plans in all age ranges throughout the school.
- Senior leaders are committed to increasing the rigour of what is taught to pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. They have considered the best practice from other schools. Senior leaders and trustees share a determination to develop the curriculum and yet retain the distinctive ethos of the school.
- New curriculum plans for English and mathematics have only just been introduced. In the light of these new plans, teachers are developing schemes of work that take pupils' different ages and aptitudes into account. However, this work has not yet led to a discernible difference in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- These standards remain unmet.

Paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)

- Pupils in Class 11 and 12 (Year 12 and 13) receive accurate and detailed advice on how to apply for a university place. Pupils in Class 9 and 10 (Year 10 and 11) are given information about possible career paths and they receive one-to-one interviews with a careers adviser. Even so, the upper school careers programme does not include a broad enough range of advice to enable pupils to make informed choices.
- Pupils in Classes 6 to 8 (Years 7 to 9) receive little guidance about possible career options. As a result, they have little information on which to base their future choices. The school has recently appointed a leader to begin to develop a comprehensive careers guidance programme for Classes 6 to 12 (Years 7 to 13).
- These standards remain unmet.

Paragraph 2(2)(f)

- Leaders in the Kindergarten have clearly defined roles. They are included in the school's senior leadership team. Consequently, they take part in decision making and they are held to account for the quality of the provision for children aged three to five years old.
- Children in the Kindergarten are kept safe. Volunteers are checked to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. Children are well supervised, and any risks to their safety are carefully assessed and managed.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a consistent approach in the three Kindergarten groups. Children's development is assessed regularly. This information is used to plan activities that are appropriate to help children learn. Staff in the Kindergarten work closely with parents and carers, and so they understand each child's needs well.
- Teachers' planning takes account of the needs of five-year-old children who are preparing to move into the main school. Children's learning in Kindergarten links well with the curriculum in Class 1 (Year 2).
- This standard is now met.

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

- Trustees appointed a new principal in September 2019 and established a senior leadership team at the school. Senior leaders' and middle leaders' responsibilities are clear within this new structure. Staff are held accountable for the quality of pupils' education. Senior leaders have raised staff's expectations of themselves and of pupils.
- Senior leaders have set improving the quality of teaching as a priority for the new leadership team's work. They have framed middle leaders' roles with this priority in mind. Consequently, all staff understand the need for change.
- Teachers are beginning to share their ideas and expertise with each other and so they are starting to deal with gaps in their subject knowledge. Senior leaders are providing teachers with coaching from external advisers and from existing staff in the school. These initiatives are in their infancy. Pupils do not make consistent enough progress because the curriculum is not challenging enough, and its implementation varies considerably across the school.
- Reading is not taught well. Teachers do not take a structured, systematic approach to the development of pupils' reading skills in the lower school. Pupils are not progressing at the rate they are capable of.
- Teachers' ability to assess pupils' understanding of their work in lessons is not consistently secure. Too many teachers are not aware of their pupils' misconceptions and so they are unable to react rapidly to help pupils understand.
- Senior leaders are aware of the need to establish a framework for assessing pupils' performance across the school. They have begun to meet with middle leaders to monitor pupils' attainment and progress. Staff in the lower school are developing a new system for tracking pupils' achievements. Upper school staff are about to introduce a similar system. Nevertheless, an effective framework for assessment across the school is not currently in place.
- Teachers' planning is hindered by the weakness of the assessment system and so it does not take enough account of pupils' prior understanding or their additional needs. Too

often this results in pupils being compliant in lessons but not fully engaged in their work. However, this is beginning to change. Where teachers' planning is more effective, they are selecting more appropriate activities for pupils based on a good understanding of what they already know. This is leading to pupils being better motivated and learning more.

- The new principal and senior leaders have approached the task of improving teaching with energy and commitment. They are seeking to draw expertise into the school to raise the quality of teachers' work. However, many of these initiatives have only just begun, they have not yet brought about significant change in pupils' experience.
- These standards remain unmet.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- This school is a safe place for pupils. The trustees have acted to overhaul the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. The principal and vice principal have set up a welfare team by creating two full-time welfare officer posts. This has increased the school's capacity to fulfil its statutory duties and enabled better guidance and training for staff.
- Senior leaders have introduced a system for recording and analysing concerns about pupils' welfare. Consequently, new concerns are logged quickly, and existing concerns are tracked effectively. Staff receive effective training in safeguarding based on the most up-to-date statutory guidance. All staff recognise their responsibility to be vigilant.
- Where concerns are raised about pupils or staff, senior leaders take decisive action to protect children. They communicate quickly with outside agencies such as social services or the police. This leads to appropriate action being taken rapidly.
- These standards are now met.

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

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(e), 20(6), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(6)

- At the previous inspection, these standards were not met because of a lack of rigour in the recruitment and vetting processes for staff. Senior leaders have reviewed these processes thoroughly and improved them. Appropriate checks are now made on each member of staff and all volunteers to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Information that was missing from staff recruitment checks in the past is now complete. Consequently, the single central record now meets requirements.
- Senior leaders now ensure that suitability checks are applied to all staff who are involved in the management of the school, including members of the board of trustees. Senior leaders' actions to ensure that these checks are complete are part of the wider improvement in the culture of vigilance at the school.
- These standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)(c)

- Senior leaders have successfully established safer working practices at the school. By developing a well-resourced welfare team, they have ensured that pupils are given effective help and support.
- This standard is now met.

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

- The new leadership team has begun to deal with the unmet standards that were reported at the previous inspection. Nevertheless, there is still much work to do to ensure that all standards in the quality of education are met consistently.
- These standards remain unmet.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

Paragraph 3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.9

- Senior leaders' implementation of changes to the safer recruitment procedures at the school also apply to the Kindergarten. Staff in the Kindergarten are well trained in safeguarding and health and safety requirements. They understand the potential risks that children in early years face. Staff are vigilant.
- Leaders of the Kindergarten ensure that all activities are well supervised. They implement an effective risk-assessment process. They keep suitable records of welfare concerns about children and the actions that have been taken as a result.
- These requirements are now met.

The national minimum standards that were assessed during this inspection

Standard 2.3

- Leaders have taken action to ensure that a helpline is available to boarders. This allows boarders access to an independent person whom they can contact about personal problems or concerns at school.
- This standard is now met.

Standard 3.1

- Leaders have amended existing policies for the care of boarders who are unwell, but the resulting guidance is not sufficiently detailed. Leaders are unable to demonstrate the consistent application of these policies at this time because no boarders currently attend the school.
- This standard remains unmet.

Standard 6.3

- Leaders have created a template for assessing the risks of staying at the accommodation provided by host families. This template is fit for purpose. However, because there are currently no boarders staying with host families, leaders are unable to demonstrate that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks.

- This standard remains unmet.

Standard 11.1, 12.1, 13.1

- The trustees maintain effective oversight of safeguarding practice at the school. Leaders keep policies relating to safeguarding, behaviour and measures to combat bullying up to date and in line with the latest government guidance. These policies are implemented consistently in the school. As a result, pupils are kept safe.

- These standards are now met.

Standard 13.2

- The school does not currently employ residential staff and so leaders are unable to demonstrate that effective communication takes place between these staff and the academic staff of the school.

- This standard remains unmet.

Standard 13.3

- Trustees and senior leaders know the school and its strengths and weaknesses well. The senior leadership team is well structured. Senior and middle leaders demonstrate a good understanding of their roles.

- This standard is now met.

Standard 13.4

- Trustees and senior leaders are unable to demonstrate that they meet all of the national minimum standards because the school no longer admits boarders.

- This standard remains unmet.

Standard 13.5

- Senior leaders have considered the previous shortfalls in the school's ability to promote pupils' well-being. They have made astute appointments and so developed an effective welfare team.

- This standard is now met.

Standard 15.1, 15.4, 20.6, 20.7

- These standards relate directly to staff employed to work with boarders or adults providing lodgings for pupils. The school no longer takes boarders and so leaders are unable to show that these standards are met.

- These standards remain unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools 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.

School details

Unique reference number	115793
Social care unique reference number	SC034618
DfE registration number	916/6031
Inspection number	10115787

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.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	14
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	0
Proprietor	Wynstones Limited
Chair	Ted Yates
Headteacher	Stephen Holland
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,001–£10,225
Annual fees (boarders)	Not applicable
Telephone number	01452 429220
Website	www.wynstones.com
Email address	reception@wynstones.com
Date of previous standard inspection	26–28 March 2019

Information about this school

- Wynstones School is an independent boarding school. The board of trustees of Wynstones School is the proprietor. Since the previous inspection, the trustees have appointed a new substantive principal. He took up his post in September 2019.
- The principal and vice principal have restructured the leadership of the school. They have introduced a new leadership team structure. This became fully operational in September 2019. The leadership team includes 'phase leaders' for the Kindergarten, lower school and upper school.
- The school aims to provide a balanced education that develops pupils' understanding and appreciation of the world around them and promotes their social awareness. The school follows the Steiner Waldorf principles of education.
- Although the school is registered to take boarders, the trustees have decided not to admit boarders for the foreseeable future. There are currently no residential pupils attending the school.
- The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 in March 2019.
- This first monitoring inspection of the school was integrated with a monitoring inspection of the residential boarding provision. The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The lead inspector visited lessons across a range of subjects and age groups, some of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders, and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work. An inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders, welfare officers and teachers. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's action plan for improvement, minutes of trustees' meetings, minutes of parent forum meetings, attendance and behaviour logs, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- The school does not currently have any residential pupils. Inspectors scrutinised policies and documents relating to the provision for residential pupils. However, it was not possible for the school to demonstrate the consistent application of many of these policies in practice because there are no residential pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kerry Fell	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that where the school has pupils below compulsory school age, it provides a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills. (paragraph 2(2)(f))
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b))
- The proprietor must ensure that for persons appointed as members of staff at the school, other than the proprietor and supply staff, the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person:
 - the person's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
(paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(e))
- 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, subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the Chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB:
 - checks confirming MB's identity and MB's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 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
 - 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.
(paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c))
- In relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, the proprietor must ensure:
 - a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e).
(paragraph 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii))
- 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. (paragraph 21(6))
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school actively promote the well-being of pupils. (paragraph 34(1)(c))

The school now meets the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. Boarders are informed who this person is, and how to contact them and they are easily accessible. Boarders are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside telephone numbers, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner, to contact in case of problems or distress. (national minimum standard 2.3)
- The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (national minimum standard 11.1)
- The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour among pupils. This policy includes measures to combat bullying, including cyberbullying, and to promote positive behaviour; school rules; disciplinary sanctions; when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions. (national minimum standard 12.1)
- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary. (national minimum standard 13.1)
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (national minimum standard 13.3)
- The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the well-being of pupils. (national minimum standard 13.5)

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that:
 - a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
(paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i))
- The proprietor must provide pupils receiving secondary education access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that:
 - enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.
(paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii))
- 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;
- 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;
- involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
- 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;
- demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- 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(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(g))

- 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)
- 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))

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of boarders who are unwell and ensures that the physical and mental health and emotional well-being of boarders is promoted. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, dealing with medical emergencies and the use of household remedies. (national minimum standard 3.1)
- The school ensures that 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 appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (national minimum standard 6.3)
- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. (national minimum standard 13.2)
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. (national minimum standard 13.4)

- Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding. (national minimum standard 15.1)
- Boarders are at all times under the responsibility of an identified member of staff who is suitably qualified and experienced. (national minimum standard 15.4)
- The school ensures that all adults providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf have undergone safeguarding training that is updated regularly as advised by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and that they understand the school's policy in relation to pupils going missing and their role in implementing that policy. (national minimum standard 20.6)
- The school has a satisfactory written agreement with each adult providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf. (national minimum standard 20.7)

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