

The Anderson School

Enterprise Campus, Luxborough Lane, Chigwell, Essex IG7 5AB

Inspection dates

15 October 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 have not ensured that all arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. Too often, concerns about pupils' safeguarding are not dealt with effectively.
- Until recently, procedures for recording information about safeguarding concerns have been weak. Records show that there are too many gaps in the school's information about the action taken by leaders to protect vulnerable pupils. Not all concerns are fully recorded.
- These weak procedures limit leaders' ability to deal effectively with the safeguarding issues that they face. Paper files, and more recently electronic records, contain insufficient evidence of the actions taken by leaders to prevent similar safeguarding incidents from happening again.
- This year, leaders have updated the school's safeguarding policy and implemented new arrangements to record all safeguarding matters systematically, by computer. Training has taken place this term to enable staff to use these new procedures. This is at an early stage of implementation.
- There have been some serious incidents of pupils not keeping themselves safe online, in their own time away from school. In response, leaders have reduced pupils' access to mobile phones during the school day and held some school-wide events to raise pupils' awareness about the dangers online. However, there is little evidence about how leaders have supported individual pupils to modify their inappropriate use of technology to keep themselves safer when they are not at school.
- A small minority of pupils are persistently absent from school. A small number of pupils who left the school at the start of this year because their placements were terminated are still awaiting a new placement in another school setting. This presents a significant risk to their safety and welfare as staff are unable to account for the whereabouts of these pupils all of the time.
- This standard, which was met at the school's last standard inspection, is no longer met.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c)

- An updated behaviour policy has been shared with pupils to gain common agreement on the school's 'seven golden rules'. Pupils know the rewards and sanctions used to promote good behaviour. Pupils and staff who spoke with the inspector said school is a safe, friendly place to be.
- However, the school's behaviour records and complaints from parents show a very high number of incidents occur each term. Leaders did not plan well enough for the increase in pupil numbers joining the school last year. This influx of pupils corresponded with a sharp rise in incidents of poor behaviour, and fixed-term exclusions.
- The records of sanctions imposed on pupils for poor behaviour are not recorded systematically. Leaders do not use all of the information they have, including incidents logs, records of internal and fixed-term exclusions and terminations of contracts to provide an overview of the quality of behaviour. They do not use this information to inform their actions to improve behaviour.
- This standard which was met in the previous inspection, is no longer met.

Paragraph 10

- There is a written anti-bullying strategy on the school's website but this is a generic policy common to all schools managed by the proprietor. It is not effective because it has not been adapted so that it relates directly to the school's context.
- Pupils told inspectors that at times, bullying does happen but feel that if they are concerned they know who to go to help them sort things out.
- Recent complaints received from parents show that parents have less confidence in staff to fully resolve incidents of bullying.
- This standard, which was met in the previous standard inspection, is no longer met.

Paragraph 11

- There is a written health and safety policy on the school's website but this is a generic policy common to all schools managed by the proprietor. It is not effective because it has not been adapted by leaders so that it relates directly to the school's context and needs. Without these important changes, leaders are unable to show how effectively they implement the school's health and safety policy.
- This standard, which was met in the previous standard inspection, is no longer met.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders ensure that pupils are properly supervised within the school buildings and in the outside areas. Staff have received recent training on managing pupils' behaviour and what to do when they are faced with very challenging behaviour.
- During the inspection, pupils conducted themselves well. They gather in friendship groups or play games at lunchtimes. All of them showed good relations with others

and with staff.

- This standard remains met.

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

- At the time of the inspection, there was no written risk assessment policy available on the school's website. Therefore it is unclear what actions leaders take to reduce any risks identified and keep pupils safe.
- Leaders have implemented personalised plans for some but not all pupils in need of additional support with their behaviour. These documents show staff have assessed the hazards presented by individual pupils and put in place control measures to manage the risks involved.
- This standard, which was met in the previous standard inspection, is no longer met.

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

Paragraph 18, 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(ii), 18(2)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3)

- The school's single central record is complete and well maintained. The proprietor ensures that all necessary checks are made and recorded when appointing new members of staff.

Paragraph 19(1), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii)

- The school's single central record includes all of the necessary checks made when appointing temporary supply staff.

Paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)v, 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- The proprietor ensures that all of the information contained in the school's single central register is accurate and kept up to date.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- The proprietor ensures that the school premises and facilities are well maintained. Accommodation includes high-quality classrooms and specialist areas for teaching music, food, art and design technology, computing and physical education.
- The school site is fit for purpose. School grounds include suitable play equipment and spaces for socialising. Leaders have taken action to improve the fencing around the school to protect pupils and prevent them from accessing the school car park without permission. Pupils spoke positively of these improvements.

- Repairs have been made to the netting surrounding outdoor trampolines to ensure pupils' safety and welfare.
- This standard remains met.

Part 6. Provision of information

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

- The school's policy and procedures for safeguarding pupils are published on the school's website and are available to parents.
- This standard remains met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)

- The emergency inspection was prompted by a recent surge in complaints received from parents by Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE). These complaints refer to concerns about pupils' behaviour and safeguarding. Furthermore, the latest responses to Ofsted's Parent View show that the parents who responded have significant concerns about the school and the ability of leaders to safeguard pupils.
- Leaders have revised the school's complaints policy. This is available on the school's website. It includes clear timescales and actions to manage complaints systematically and escalate matters if parents are not satisfied with the response.
- Despite this, not all parents have confidence in school leaders to deal with the issues they have raised. Several of the complaints received are long-standing issues that in the views of parents have not been fully resolved. Sustained complaints from the same parents show that leaders have not responded well enough to the concerns raised. The implementation of the complaints policy is not effective.
- Leaders are well aware of the level of complaints made. They acknowledge that communication between school and some parents has broken down and that more needs to be done to restore relations.
- This standard, which was met in the previous standard inspection, is no longer met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Since the previous inspection, the proprietorial body has failed to hold leaders to account for safeguarding pupils.
- Leaders have been unable to maintain good relations with some parents. Weekly newsletters, monthly coffee mornings and regular meetings with parents have been introduced to improve this and develop better communication. This is at an early stage of development. Currently, much of leaders' time is absorbed dealing with parental complaints, due to the significant number and complex nature of the

concerns raised.

- Experienced strategic leaders appointed by the proprietor earlier this year are providing further challenge and support for senior leaders. They make regular visits to the school to monitor the capacity of leaders to make improvements. They have quickly identified where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie. They have prompted improvements to the school site, early improvements in the management of safeguarding matters and a more robust management of staff.
- Since the last inspection, an established trustee has become the chair of a newly formed governing body. She knows what the school does well and what it needs to improve upon. As part of its work, the governing body aims to prioritise monitoring routinely the school's safeguarding procedures and forging better relations with parents.
- As a result, there are standards in Part 3 and Part 7 that were met at the last standard inspection, which are no longer met.
- This standard 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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	144775
DfE registration number	881/6068
Inspection number	10127656

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 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	N/A
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	N/A
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	National Autistic Society
Chair	Carol Homden
Headteacher	Mr Gary Simm
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,596 to £71,998
Telephone number	02033 750 100
Website	www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/anderson.aspx
Email address	theandersonschool@nas.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	1–3 May 2018

Information about this school

- The Anderson School caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities relating to autistic spectrum disorder, including pathological demand avoidance.
- It is based in new, purpose-build buildings in Chigwell, Essex.
- The numbers on the school roll have increased since its previous inspection, from 40 to

57 pupils.

- Since March 2019, the proprietorial body has appointed a director and assistant director of education to make regular visits to the school to monitor its work.
- Since the last inspection a newly established governing body will hold its first full meeting this term.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans and are placed by a range of local authorities.
- The proprietor is the National Autistic Society (NAS).
- The NAS is the proprietor of six other independent schools and special free schools that are registered with the DfE, as well as a school in Scotland.
- In May 2017, the DfE commissioned Ofsted to conduct a pre-registration inspection. All of the independent school standards were deemed likely to be met.
- The school's first standard inspection was conducted in May 2018. The school's overall effectiveness was judged as requires improvement and two independent school standards were not met. These related to teaching, and leadership and management.
- The school submitted an action plan to Ofsted about how it was going to address the unmet standards. This plan was deemed not to be acceptable on 31 July 2018.
- The school re-submitted an action plan to Ofsted in December 2018. This plan was deemed acceptable.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education, the registration authority for independent schools commissioned Ofsted to carry out this one-day emergency inspection. The inspection was carried out at no notice.
- It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The purpose of the inspection was to check the independent school standards relating to pupils' safeguarding, their welfare and the ability of leaders to keep them safe.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, officers of the proprietorship, a small group of staff, and a small group of pupils belonging to the school council. The inspector held telephone calls with two representatives of Essex local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents including the school's policy and procedure for safeguarding, the single central record and other child protection records. He looked at other policies and information on the school's website.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
- 10 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 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 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils.

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.

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