

Inspection of Clannad Education Centre

C/O Five Rivers Child Care Ltd, 47 Bedwin Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3UT

Inspection dates: 26–28 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils smile here; they told us that they enjoy school and they feel safe. This is because staff make pupils feel welcome and take great care of them. They know them inside out.

Staff work well together, including with specialist therapists, to meet pupils' social, emotional and health needs. Pupils come out of their shells and take huge steps forward with their confidence and self-esteem. Their attendance improves significantly.

Pupils learn how to improve their behaviour and to follow routines, including wearing the correct school uniform. They have their moments, but staff deal with any off-task behaviour in a calm and respectful way. Staff ensure that pupils are kind to each other. Everyone knows that bullying is unacceptable. Pupils say that they always have someone to turn to if they have any worries.

A new headteacher and other staff have recently started at the school. They are working to improve the curriculum and how they assess pupils' achievements. Currently, however, too many subjects are not planned well. As a result, teaching is not pushing pupils to know more and remember more about what they are learning. Expectations are not high enough for pupils' academic achievement.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There has been a lot of changes in the last few months, including a completely new teaching team. During all these changes, everyone has made sure that pupils receive high-quality pastoral support.

Leaders, including the proprietor, have provided effective support to the school. They have made sure that the school meets all the requirements of the independent school standards and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders know the school and what they need to improve. However, the school improvement plan is not clear about prioritising what is to be done and by when. Leaders are not checking on the quality of education closely enough.

Leaders have made improvements to the school environment. This includes refurbishing a classroom and pupils helping to plan the layout for the new therapy room. In most subjects, teachers have access to the resources that they need. However, there are limited resources in science, including those needed for teachers to organise experiments.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn across a wide range of subjects, and that plans for each subject are in place. However, plans for some subjects, such as science, information and communication technology, history and food technology, are not well developed. Leaders have not made sure that there is enough focus on the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn in each subject or on how teachers will assess how well pupils are doing. It is not clear what teachers want their pupils to know and remember.

As a result, teaching does not help pupils to build up their understanding as well as it could.

Some activities and work given to pupils does not meet their needs and/or personal targets well. This means that pupils do not think and work hard enough. For example, in food technology, pupils learn to follow recipes when cooking. However, adults do not probe and check that pupils understand the vocabulary that they have been introduced to. As a result, pupils remember what they cooked but not enough of what they learned while cooking it. This mismatch between what pupils need to know and what they remember happens in other subjects too, for example in history.

The curriculum is stronger in mathematics. In this subject, pupils have opportunities to apply their understanding, for example in using money to buy and sell items or to solve problems.

In English, teachers make sure pupils read and learn from different types of literature, such as books, stories, plays and scripts. Pupils read out loud in other subjects too. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their writing and spelling as well as they should, for example in science. This is holding them back from becoming better writers.

Staff ensure that the school is a positive place to learn. They use encouraging reminders, including rewards, to help pupils to keep focused. Pupils learn to take pride in themselves and their work. They are becoming more attentive learners.

Pupils' personal development blossoms. They go on a range of visits to places of historical interest or for activities such as go-karting. They watch the news as part of the daily 'meet and greet'. They learn about the world around them, including Brexit, climate change, different cultures and religions. Leaders are now looking to arrange specific after-school activities that will help pupils when the time comes to leave school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders put keeping pupils safe and happy as their number one priority. In personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils learn how to stay safe, including when online. Through PSHE and one-to-one staff support, pupils also learn how to look after themselves better. This includes their physical and emotional health and well-being.

All staff know pupils well. They quickly share information with the relevant agencies that work with pupils. Leaders have a firm grasp on pupils' individual needs and have detailed plans in place to help them. Leaders make sure that the school premises are kept safe at all times.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have ambition for the academic curriculum but it is not where they want it to be. Moving forward, leaders need to make sure that all subjects are well planned. They need to identify and then carefully sequence the subject-specific knowledge and skills that they want pupils to know and remember.
- The proprietor needs to provide further support and challenge to leaders in ensuring that the curriculum is well planned, well resourced and well taught. This includes ensuring that science has better resources. This will help enrich the curriculum, for example to support practical work.
- Leaders are planning to improve their approach to assessing pupils' achievement. Teachers need to check more carefully that pupils know more and remember more as they teach them. Leaders and teachers need to make more effective use of pupils' targets and needs when planning the curriculum. Improvements to assessment need to be mindful of both leader and teacher workload.
- Leaders need to sharpen their improvement plan: prioritising, resourcing and setting appropriate milestones upon which to check the success of their school improvement work. In particular, they need to focus on checking the quality of education being provided.
- Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils read, both in English lessons and across the curriculum. However, the same cannot be said about writing. Teachers need to provide more well-planned writing activities, giving pupils the support needed to develop their confidence. This includes support with spelling.
- Leaders need to build on their good provision for personal development by following through with their ideas to offer more after-school activities. This will help meet pupils' needs and offer precise preparation for their next steps.

How can I feed back my views?

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School details

Unique reference number	138378
DfE registration number	305/6005
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10115218
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Proprietor	Five Rivers Child Care Ltd
Chair	David Howard
Headteacher	Shellie Barcroft (head of education); Utibe Umoren (headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£44,200 to £52,780
Telephone number	01689 873608
Website	www.five-rivers.org
Email address	education@five-rivers.org
Date of previous inspection	15–17 March 2017

Information about this school

- Clannad Education Centre is part of the Five Rivers Child Care group. It provides an education for pupils who are likely to have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils' SEND relate to a range of complex social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils start at the school after being out of education for a long time.
- All teaching and support staff are new to the school. The headteacher started at the school in mid-September 2019. The headteacher is being supported by the head of education from Five Rivers Child Care.
- Although registered for pupils aged 8 to 17 years old, the proprietor is now focusing on providing an education to younger pupils, mainly 8- to 12-year-olds.
- The school currently makes use of an off-site activity at Walnuts Gym, Orpington.

Pupils use these facilities as part of their physical education.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with a range of senior staff during the inspection, including the headteacher, designated safeguarding lead and head of education. The lead inspector also had two telephone calls with the chief executive officer of Five Rivers Child Care.
- We met with teachers, support staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- We did deep dives in mathematics, English, PSHE, food technology and science. We visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and reviewed pupils' work.
- We carried out a range of activities to look at safeguarding. These activities included talking to leaders, staff and students. We reviewed a range of school documents and records.
- We visited other lessons from across the curriculum and reviewed a range of subject plans and pupils' work.
- We spoke to staff from local authorities that work with the school in order to discuss the school's provision and how it keeps pupils safe.
- We toured the premises and reviewed additional information in relation to the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Sam Hainey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Ofsted Inspector

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