

Inspection of The View School

Former Edenbridge Library, Church Street, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5BD

Inspection dates: 10–12 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils quickly build up a sense of security in this school because dedicated staff do not give up on them. In the short time since the school opened, staff have worked as a team with pupils to shape its calm and inviting atmosphere. Pupils enjoyed telling us about how they feel about their new school and the friendships they are forging.

Some pupils have previously not attended school regularly. In this school, their attendance improves. They feel protected and know that staff work hard to deal with behaviour and any bullying. Pupils are learning to be more sensitive to others. However, this work is in progress. Some pupils don't yet understand what bullying really is, or how words can hurt. Sometimes pupils' poor language and impulsive behaviour disturb learning.

Parents are appreciative of the school. They are glad that their children have gained confidence and settled down in a new school. Parents value the time that staff put in to talking to them about how their children are doing. However, not enough is expected of some pupils. Some of their learning is at too low a level because staff do not all have enough knowledge of the subjects they teach.

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

School leaders and the proprietor have focused on setting up the school, getting pupils into calm routines and helping staff to manage behaviour. Staff know pupils well and have been trained to understand their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff's care and devotion to the pupils shine through. For example, during the inspection, leaders and staff cooked Christmas dinner for all the pupils, who helped with getting the table and celebrations ready. Such momentous experiences make a big difference to pupils' happiness and self-esteem.

Pupils try to work with purpose, even when they feel anxious or distracted. Over time, pupils are becoming more motivated to stick at their work and manage it on their own. Some pupils get so involved in what they are working on that they are happy to continue it into lunch and breaktimes. They feel safe to discuss ideas and are beginning to accept that not all views match their own.

However, leaders have not done enough to adapt the school's curriculum to meet pupils' different abilities and backgrounds. Leaders planned the curriculum before the school opened to pupils. Pupils told us that some work is too easy or they have done it before. They are not gaining enough new knowledge to prepare them well for when they leave the school. Pupils in key stage 4 are missing out on some crucial knowledge that will get them ready for examinations, employment and further education. This weakness is seen especially in mathematics and some option subjects. Leaders and staff accept that they know the pupils' emotional needs better than their academic abilities at this stage in the school's development.

Leaders have selected curriculum topics that they think will interest the pupils and give them memorable experiences. Staff and leaders are rightly keen to help pupils to understand the wider world and different lifestyles and beliefs. Pupils certainly have benefited from some well-planned projects, including a map-reading exercise and walk to Hever Castle, learning about Anne Boleyn and writing some related ghost stories. However, these topics are not always linked in a way that will help pupils to remember important facts or skills.

Many pupils can read competently when asked to do so but are reluctant to read for pleasure. Suitable programmes are in place to help younger pupils catch up with the basics and they enjoy story-times with trusted adults. However, plans to develop reading are not precise enough to help all pupils read confidently, as a natural part of their everyday lives. Pupils do not have access to enough interesting books and texts as part of their reading diet.

Staff's expectations of what pupils can manage have not kept pace with pupils' increased confidence. A few pupils only get involved in lessons on their own terms. Staff's approach to motivating pupils is gentle, in order to relieve pressure on their anxieties. However, not enough is being done to encourage pupils to conform to higher expectations – for example, sitting at a table and persevering with tasks. Individual plans for pupils do not include enough about reaching academic goals and improving their attitudes to learning.

Improving pupils' physical and mental health is a definite priority in the school. Leaders have made sure that pupils get regular opportunities for exercise and sports. However, pupils' regular sessions at the leisure centre are not planned or taught in line with the stated curriculum plans. Pupils participate, but some are more committed than others, and they do not receive enough direct instruction and coaching to help them improve.

Leaders and staff want all pupils to learn and live by positive British values, know right from wrong and be tolerant of all kinds of people and lifestyles. Leaders are not afraid to challenge some pupils' narrow views and help them to accept the diversity of modern British society. The proprietor and leaders have made sure that the school complies with Schedule 10 of The Equality Act 2010.

Because of the weaknesses in the curriculum and staff's subject knowledge, the school does not meet all the independent school standards relating to the quality of education and leadership and management.

Safeguarding

The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school's safeguarding policy meets all statutory requirements and is published on the school's website. All checks on adults working in the school are carried out and recorded meticulously. Staff know pupils well and are able to spot signs that they might be at risk of harm. School leaders responsible for child protection work closely

with families and the local authority to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have focused on training staff to understand SEND and manage pupils' behaviour. They have not prioritised the quality of teaching and the curriculum as highly. Some staff do not have enough subject knowledge to teach the range of subjects on offer. Leaders must ensure that staff develop appropriate levels of subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics, physical education and the foundation subjects at key stage 4.
- Leaders designed and planned the curriculum before the school opened to pupils. The intended range of subjects is suitably broad and in line with the national curriculum. However, the planned curriculum is not adapted well enough to all the pupils in the school. Sequences of topics do not always link together well and links between subjects are not designed to help pupils know and remember more. Leaders need to make sure that the topics and subjects link together to help pupils build on what they already know, understand and can do.
- Staff know pupils' personal and emotional needs well and have used information from their education, health and care plans to set goals. However, these goals do not always include enough detail about pupils' academic needs. As a result, some pupils are given work that is too easy, and other pupils are not helped to catch up. Leaders must ensure that pupils have suitable and well-planned learning goals as part of their provision planning.
- Leaders must ensure that reading is taught more systematically, using a rich variety of texts and genres in order to meet pupils' different needs and abilities.
- Staff's expectations of what some pupils can achieve are not high enough, now that pupils have mostly settled into school routines. A few pupils do not exert themselves sufficiently and do not use their lesson time well. Leaders and staff must make sure that expectations of pupils increase incrementally over time.
- Some pupils have difficulties working together and being respectful to each other. Leaders and staff must ensure that their focus on tolerance, mutual respect and kindness continues and is fully embedded in pupils' communication and interactions.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	147034
DfE registration number	886/6155
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10114757
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Julian Roberts
Headteacher	Louise Bourne
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,500
Telephone number	01732 865049
Website	theviewschool.org
Email address	info@theviewschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The View School was registered in June 2019 and opened to pupils in September 2019. This was its first standard inspection.
- The school caters for pupils aged 11 to 19 with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. At the time of the inspection there were no pupils in the sixth form.
- The school has just started to use provision at Hadlow College for a small number of pupils.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors met with the proprietor, headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- We carried out deep dives into English, mathematics, science and physical education (PE). We met with staff responsible for leading these subjects, considered curriculum planning, visited lessons, spoke to pupils and staff and reviewed pupils' work in books and folders. We accompanied pupils to the local leisure centre when they went for their PE lesson.
- We met with two groups of pupils to discuss their experience of school.
- A meeting was held to which all staff were invited. We spoke to the member of staff responsible for overseeing the provision at Hadlow College.
- We reviewed the school's safeguarding records and the checks made on adults working in the school.
- The views of three parents who contributed to Ofsted Parent View were considered alongside other evidence.
- We reviewed relevant documentation and information in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Phillips

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work—
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan;
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school—
 - 3(a) 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;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) 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;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;

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;

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