

Best Futures School

The Stables, Church Lane, Aylesby, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN37 7AW

Inspection dates

8 January 2020

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), and 3(e)

- The school's standard inspection in May 2019 found that leaders and managers had not planned the curriculum adequately, particularly in English. Too often, teachers missed chances to promote academic learning because most of the timetable was spent on enrichment and physical activities. Pupils were spending too much time waiting for the next activity to start, resulting in valuable learning being lost. Inspectors also found that the work set for pupils did not match their needs. The previous inspection found that too many teachers did not have good subject knowledge. They did not always model the correct vocabulary, and incorrect spellings in books were common. Assessment was not used well to plan the next steps of learning for each pupil.
- The school's action plan submitted to the Department for Education was found to be unacceptable.
- Since the previous inspection, two deputy headteachers have been appointed to the school. They have ensured that curriculum plans and schemes of work are now in place for the core subjects of English and mathematics. They have also made sure plans are in place for a wide range of other subjects, such as geography, history and personal social and health education. Teachers meet regularly to reflect on the success of their planning. Their weekly planning records show how staff plan learning to meet each pupil's needs.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum so that an appropriate range of subjects are now delivered to pupils. This means that academic outcomes are more of a priority.
- Leaders are improving teachers' subject knowledge through individual coaching. They are planning to enhance this further through visits to other schools to observe good practice.
- Leaders have introduced a new assessment system which is closely aligned to the curriculum. This system enables teachers to track the progress that pupils make through the curriculum. Ongoing assessment is demonstrated in pupils' workbooks, where pupils assess their understanding of the lesson. Teachers now have sufficient information to plan activities which meet pupils needs and abilities. The assessment system identifies pupils' next steps in the curriculum.

- Evidence from lesson visits and pupils' workbooks shows that teachers are modelling appropriate vocabulary and incorrect spellings are corrected.
- These standards are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The standards in these paragraphs were not met at the standard inspection in May 2019, because the proprietor had not ensured that safeguarding procedures were robust. The proprietor and governors had not ensured that when required, the appropriate agencies had been involved in safeguarding concerns. In addition, there were inconsistencies in how recruitment checks were made or recorded. Staff were not aware of the potential safeguarding risks faced by pupils in their setting. Inspectors also found that procedures for administering pupils' medication were not stringently followed. In addition, risk assessments were not updated to reflect the changing needs of the pupils.
- The school's action plan submitted to the Department for Education was found to be unacceptable.
- An updated safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. The policy reflects the latest government guidance.
- Leaders addressed the issue of involving appropriate agencies in safeguarding concerns at the time of the previous inspection. Where necessary, referrals are now made to the local authority designated officer.
- Leaders' checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and young people are secure. Recruitment systems have been reviewed and appropriate checks are made and recorded. Staff files are well organised and document the checks that have been undertaken.
- The proprietor and leaders have recently updated the safeguarding knowledge of all staff. Since the previous inspection, staff have undertaken a range of appropriate training. This has resulted in them having a better understanding of the safeguarding risks to pupils in their setting. Leaders have considered carefully how to improve their processes for safeguarding pupils. Weekly safeguarding and welfare meetings have been introduced for all staff. At these meetings, concerns about individual pupils are discussed, solutions sought and actions followed up. Regular safeguarding updates are provided to staff, to ensure that they are kept informed about issues within the locality, as well as national concerns. This practice ensures that pupils' welfare is a prime focus in the school.
- Procedures for administering pupils' medication have been reviewed. A new policy provides staff with the guidelines to administer medication safely. Staff have received training in how to store, administer and record the dispensing of medication to pupils.
- The process for preparing risk assessments has been improved. The health and safety leader attends the weekly safeguarding and welfare meetings. Risk assessments are informed by the up to date information that is shared at this meeting. This means that the changing needs of individual pupils are quickly reflected in their risk assessment.
- These standards are now met.

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

Paragraph 17, 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(1), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(a), 19(2)(a)(i)(b), 19(2)(a)(i)(c), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(2)(e), 19(3), 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), 20(6)(c), 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)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(6)

- This standard was met at the previous inspection.
- The proprietor has ensured that all appropriate checks have been carried out on current leaders, staff and members of the community interest company (CIC) board.
- All relevant checks are recorded in a single central record.
- This standard continues to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- This standard was not met in the standard inspection of May 2019. This was because senior leaders and governors did not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and therefore actions taken had not led to school improvement. Inspectors found that because governors lacked knowledge about the school's strengths and weaknesses, their ability to challenge the proprietor and support school improvement was limited.
- At the previous inspection, inspectors found that the school did not have a suitable system in place to allow teachers to improve the quality of their teaching. This had a negative effect on the quality of teaching that pupils received.
- The school's action plan submitted to the Department for Education was found to be unacceptable.
- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been replaced by a community interest company (CIC) board. The board have a wide range of skills and experience. A skills audit has been undertaken to identify the skills that future recruits to the board would require. The new board receive performance reports on safeguarding, education, attendance, health and safety and social, emotional and mental health. These reports provide the board with the information that they need to understand the workings of the school. Board members have specific roles, for example safeguarding, where they visit the school to meet with those responsible. The board now have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is clear from minutes of meetings that they are holding the principal to account for standards in the school.
- Two deputy principals were appointed in September 2019. They have worked with the principal to create a system for teachers to improve the quality of their teaching. All staff take part in performance management reviews, which identify their training needs. Leaders commissioned an educational psychologist to undertake lesson observations across the school. The feedback received has been used to improve teachers' practice.

Leaders know that there is still work to do in aligning lesson visits with the national teachers standards and the performance management system.

- This standard is now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets 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. 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 now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 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.

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 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 schools 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.

School details

Unique reference number	142828
DfE registration number	812/6004
Inspection number	10128143

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Dawn Best
Chair	Dawn Best
Principal	Dawn Best
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,500 to £38,500
Telephone number	01472 278978
Website	www.bestfutures.co
Email address	office@bestfutures-school.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	21–23 May 2019

Information about this school

- The school is located in a rural setting in North East Lincolnshire.
- The school is registered to accept up to 10 pupils between the ages of five and 11 years. Pupils are referred to the school by a local authority and have social, emotional or mental health difficulties or have an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis. The majority of pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The pupils take part in physical education at a local sports facility.
- The proprietor is also currently the principal. A new principal was appointed in July 2019

but is no longer in post. The proprietor is intending to recruit to the post in the near future. The principal amended the government's Getting Information About School's website to reflect the change of proprietor, during the inspection.

- A new community interest company board has been created, to replace the governing body.
- Two deputy principals have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school was judged to be inadequate at the most recent inspection in May 2019.

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.
- This was the first monitoring inspection following the school's standard inspection in May 2019.
- An emergency inspection took place in February 2019, where inspectors found that the school did not meet all of the independent standards that were checked during the inspection.
- This inspection was conducted with no notice to the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the proprietor, members of the board, the two deputy principals, the local authority SEND strategic lead, staff and pupils. Telephone conversations took place with parents and a representative of the local authority designated officer.
- The inspector visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in their books.
- A wide range of the school's documentation was studied relating to the independent standards that were checked. Documents relating to safeguarding, employment checks and the safeguarding policy were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Suzette Garland-Grimes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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