

Fusion College

Manley's Farm, West Buckland, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9LQ

Inspection dates

9 January 2020

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1)–2(1)(b)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(c)–(e), 3(g) and 4

- The registration authority requested that the aspects of the quality of education provided by the school be reviewed as a result of complaints that had been received.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the curriculum policy and schemes of work are sufficiently ambitious for pupils. Nor do the plans give due consideration to pupils' prior learning or their particular needs. Across the school, the quality of education is highly variable. Too often, lessons are not planned well, and teaching staff do not check what pupils have learned. In some subjects, improvements can be seen but these are very recent.
- Work is often incomplete, and errors go unchecked, so some teachers are unclear about what pupils have learned. Consequently, pupils do not make good progress. The accuracy of pupils' written English in a range of subjects is weak. Currently, there is no assessment framework in place. However, staff have been reviewing this and arrangements are in place to introduce a new school-wide system this term.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not met.

Paragraphs 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 3(b), 3(f) and 3(h)

- Pupils benefit from full-time education provision and receive lessons in a range of subjects, such as English, mathematics, biology and geography. The resources in place are of good quality.
- Teachers provide a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme that helps pupils understand about society and their place in it. The programme includes teaching about democracy, the rule of law and an understanding of different faiths and beliefs.
- Pupils benefit from a range of activities that helps them to understand different career pathways, including an on-site careers fair organised by the pupils and visits to further education colleges.
- These aspects of the standards are met.
- Overall, however, the standards in this part are not met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- The arrangements to confirm that pupils are safe at the school are a feature of all inspections.
- Staff have had recent training in safeguarding, including the risks from radicalisation and extremism. Staff who have joined the school recently commented on the safeguarding training they received as part of their induction to working at the school.
- However, the school's safeguarding and child protection policy does not reflect the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. For example, there is no reference to upskirting or contextual safeguarding.
- Furthermore, the proprietor has not ensured that the safer recruitment arrangements set out in 'Keeping children safe in education', 2019 have been followed fully. Some of the checks required when appointing new staff are missing.
- The standard regarding safeguarding arrangements is not met.

Paragraph 16–16(b)

- At the previous progress monitoring inspection, the inspector found risk assessments to be of poor quality. Leaders have made concentrated efforts to make sure that these have improved. The proprietor has organised training for staff and one member of staff has oversight of the completed risk assessments.
- Risk assessments completed when taking pupils off site now give detailed consideration to the specific needs of pupils who are attending. However, the examples reviewed are still not completed well as they often omit or misidentify the hazards associated with the activity. The control mechanisms put in place by leaders are not suitably robust.
- Leaders were unable to provide risk assessments for routine on-site activities, such as science experiments or cookery.
- The risk assessment policy in place does not clearly show how the assessments are to be carried out.
- The standard in this paragraph remains unmet.

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

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(e), 18(3) and 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), (iii), (viii) and 21(3)(b)

- A number of members of staff have joined the school since the July 2019 inspection. The proprietor has not ensured that all the checks required of prospective new staff have been carried out before they take up their roles. For example, prohibition checks for teachers have not been completed and checks for a member of staff who worked overseas have not been obtained.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not met.

Paragraphs 18(2)(a), 18(2)(c)–18(2)(d), 21(2) and 21(3)(a)(i), (ii), (iv)–(vii)

- The proprietor has ensured that the identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom and their qualifications of all staff members have been checked. These details are recorded in the school's register.
- The standards in these paragraphs are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The proprietor and leaders have not yet grasped fully the requirements of the independent school standards. Consequently, several are not met. The proprietor has recognised this and has continued to employ an external consultant to help the school with this aspect of their work. The new headteacher is quickly familiarising herself with the standards and is keen to ensure that the school complies fully and consistently. Plans are in place to bring these about but the checks to ensure that progress is being made are not rigorous enough. Nonetheless, the proprietor, headteacher and staff show a commitment and eagerness to meet the standards. The proprietor is ensuring that staff have sufficient resources to achieve this.
- The proprietor and leaders cannot assure themselves that pupils' well-being is actively promoted as there are missing checks for new staff and the quality of risk assessments does not yet meet the required standard.
- The standard in this part 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. 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	135278
DfE registration number	933/6215
Inspection number	10131886

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 special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Fusion College Ltd
Chair	Gary Dawkins
Headteacher	Vanessa Bingham
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,200
Telephone number	01823 653620
Website	www.fusioncollege.co.uk
Email address	vbingham@fusioncollege.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	16–18 January 2018

Information about this school

- Fusion College is an independent special school. The school was established in 2005 and, until recently, was known as Willows. It moved to its current site in 2007.
- The school offers provision for up to 16 girls who have severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Pupils are placed by their respective local authority.
- The proprietor has responsibility for the governance of the school.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place on 16–18 January 2018, when it was judged to be inadequate and a number of independent school standards were not met. Following this, progress monitoring inspections took place in September 2018 and July 2019 when several independent school standards remained unmet.

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 third progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in January 2018.
- At the registration authority's request, the proprietor produced an action plan. This was evaluated by Ofsted in October 2019. The registration authority rejected the school's action plan.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- During the inspection, the inspector held discussions with the proprietor, headteacher, designated safeguarding lead and a group of teaching staff. The inspector visited lessons and spoke with pupils. The headteacher accompanied the inspector on some lesson visits. A range of the school's documentation, including policies, risk assessments, schemes of learning, and other records maintained by school staff were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 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 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.

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection

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(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures 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.

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 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
- 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 18(2)(e) 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; and
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is—
- 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether—
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;

- 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
- 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020