

# Homeschool

49 Manifold Way, Sandwell, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0GB

**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)(a), 2(1)(b) and 2(1)(b)(i)*

- At the time of the previous inspection in May 2019, leaders had not ensured that the curriculum was supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for all subjects. The school's curriculum plans did not take into account the needs and abilities of all pupils sufficiently well. Leaders had started to rewrite schemes of work.
- There is no clear curriculum policy in place. The long-term plans published on the school's website are not consistent with the approach to the curriculum outlined in the school's prospectus. Neither match what is happening in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. No medium- or short-term planning was available during the inspection. There is no evidence to show how the curriculum is planned to meet the pupils' aptitudes and needs.
- Leaders' work to rewrite the curriculum and schemes of work remains in the early stages of development.
- These standards remain unmet.

*Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f) and 3(g)*

- At the time of the previous inspection in May 2019, the weaknesses in the quality of teaching identified at the time of the school's last standard inspection remained. As a result, pupils made limited progress and did not attain well across many subjects. Teachers did not make sufficient use of assessment information to plan and deliver effective sequences of learning for pupils.
- There continues to be a lack of clear, coherent and well-sequenced planning to support pupils' learning. Pupils work independently, often from revision textbooks intended for older pupils. There is little opportunity for pupils to build on what they have worked on previously because they jump from one topic to another, often on a daily basis. As a result, pupils experience a disconnected series of lessons that do not build their skills or understanding effectively.

- Leaders' subject knowledge in some subjects appears to be limited, for example in art. This impacts on how effectively leaders can plan and teach a coherent sequence of learning, in turn limiting the progress that pupils can make.
- Pupils are efficient readers. They can skim and scan effectively, allowing them to retrieve information quickly. Much of the work in pupils' books is based on copying facts from textbooks. Pupils demonstrate a good recall of these facts. However, they have limited opportunity to broaden their knowledge beyond these basic facts or to apply their learning in different contexts. As a result, they do not develop a deep, or secure, understanding of concepts and skills.
- Repeated errors in pupils' English books demonstrate that teachers do not offer timely support to help pupils recognise and correct errors. Over time, pupils continue to make the same basic punctuation, grammar and spelling errors. Pupils have few opportunities to complete extended pieces of writing.
- Teachers do not consistently plan work that is age-appropriate, and, as a result, pupils sometimes do not have the prior knowledge necessary to make sense of new learning. For example, one pupil was trying to complete work about plate tectonics from a key stage 3 textbook without having the prerequisite geographical knowledge.
- Teachers are unable to provide any evidence of how assessment of pupils' progress is being used to plan and deliver sequences of learning. Leaders are not clear about what the pupils are actually covering during each lesson or what they are intending the pupils to learn.
- These standards remain unmet.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraphs 7(b) and 32(1)(c)*

- The school's safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website, is up to date. It takes into account current government requirements. The policy includes information about how a member of staff can report any concerns that they have about another member of staff to the local authority designated officer. Not all the hyperlinks contained within the policy work correctly. Leaders said that they will address this.
- These standards remain met.

#### *Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 11, 12, 15, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- At the time of the previous inspection in May 2019, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils were ineffective. Several health and safety hazards remained, meaning that pupils were potentially at risk of injury.
- The school's designated safeguarding leads have completed relevant training in relation to keeping pupils safe from harm. They are clear on their responsibilities in this area and demonstrate an awareness of reporting procedures. Pupils now have a better understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example if they have an accident or when using the internet.
- Some aspects of safeguarding remain ineffective. A number of health and safety hazards still exist, so pupils are potentially at risk of injury. Although locked during the inspection, upstairs windows open widely, so pupils could potentially fall. Broken paving outside the back door and across the garden presents a trip hazard. This route is part of the

emergency fire exit from the building. Electrical appliances are not regularly checked to ensure that they are in a safe condition. As a result, they may pose a risk to pupils' safety. The button to activate the fire alarm is on the ceiling and too high for pupils and some adults to reach. This failing means that the proprietor has not ensured compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

- Since the last inspection, leaders have taken steps to improve the quality of risk assessments completed ahead of school trips.
- Appropriate admissions register and attendance checks are in place for registered pupils. However, some pupils who attend for tuition are not included on either the admissions or attendance registers. They appear to have been attending Homeschool each school day during normal school hours for over eight months. The tuition they receive makes up the majority of their education.
- These standards remain unmet.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraphs 27 and 27(a)*

- At the time of the previous inspection in May 2019, the lighting in the classroom was insufficient for typical school-based activities, for example reading.
- The proprietor has installed new lighting and the classroom area is now suitably lit.
- These standards are now met.

### *Paragraphs 25, 29(1), 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, in addition to health and safety concerns about the appropriateness of the school premises, the outdoor space was not sufficient for pupils to play outside or to use for physical education (PE) lessons.
- The main classroom continues to be located in a small garage with no natural light or ventilation. Pupils are based in this small classroom for much of the day, including snack and lunchtimes.
- Arrangements for outdoor play remain unsatisfactory. Pupils do not have regular access to outdoor space for play. Pupils say they sometimes go to the local park, but only if they have completed their work and have behaved well. They also use this park for outdoor PE lessons, but they do not have exclusive use of it. On the day of the inspection, pupils went to the park twice. This was clearly unusual.
- These standards remain unmet.

## Part 6. Provision of information

### *Paragraph 32(1)(d)*

- Only the most recently published inspection report is available on the school's website. This does not meet the requirement to publish and maintain previously published reports about the school.
- This standard is unmet.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that the school met the independent school standards. Several standards were unmet, highlighting weaknesses in safeguarding, health and safety and the quality of education provided.
- Leaders are well-intentioned and seek to provide a safe place for pupils at risk of exclusion. They want the pupils to develop self-confidence and skills for the future. Pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations and to be successful and independent. Parents speak positively about the provision. However, due to the lack of a carefully structured curriculum, pupils continue to have gaps in their skills and knowledge. Work is not well matched to their needs and abilities. They make limited progress.
- Leaders have written a school improvement plan, but it lacks detail. It does not show how improvements will be made. It lacks measurable criteria to judge how successful leaders will be in addressing the areas for improvement. This continues to hinder the school's progress. The plan was recently reviewed but contains no evaluation of any impact. Leaders are not doing enough to improve the quality of education offered.
- Several standards, including those linked to safeguarding and the quality of teaching and learning, remain unmet. The proprietor states that he cannot follow some of the independent school standards because he considers that they are part of the system which has already failed the pupils.
- These standards remain 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	141501
DfE registration number	333/6007
Inspection number	10132783

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	Independent day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Colin Rankine
Headteacher	Colin Rankine
Annual fees (day pupils)	Up to £6,000
Telephone number	07500 416 635
Website	<a href="http://www.homeschoolsocialenterprise.org">www.homeschoolsocialenterprise.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:homeschool@live.co.uk">homeschool@live.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	20–21 November 2018

## Information about this school

- Homeschool is part of Homeschool Social Enterprise, a registered charity.
- The school was registered with the Department for Education (DfE) in October 2014. The school is registered to provide day education for up to five pupils aged between five and 11 years old.
- The proprietor is also the headteacher. The proprietor's wife is a teacher at the school and also the school's business manager. She is currently not teaching as she is on maternity leave. There are no other school staff. The school does not have a governing body, but it has three trustees, including the proprietor and his wife.

- The school is situated on the ground and first floors of a town house in a residential area in Wednesbury. The main classroom is located in a converted garage.
- The school has a Christian religious ethos.
- There are no registered pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision or separate premises for its pupils.
- The school's last standard inspection was on 20 to 21 November 2018.
- An unannounced progress monitoring inspection commissioned by the DfE was carried out in May 2019, when it was judged that some 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.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- This was the second progress monitoring inspection since the school was judged inadequate at the standard inspection in November 2018.
- Following the standard inspection in November 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to submit a statutory action plan to address the unmet standards. The action plan was evaluated by Ofsted in March 2019. The DfE rejected the proposed action plan.
- The first progress monitoring inspection took place in May 2019, when it was judged that some independent school standards remained unmet. Some independent school standards that were met at the standard inspection in November 2018 were judged not to be met at the progress monitoring inspection in May 2019.
- Following the progress monitoring inspection in May 2019, the DfE did not require the school to submit a further action plan.
- Inspectors held discussions with the proprietor and business manager. They scrutinised a range of documents, including school policies, the school’s improvement plan, the admissions and attendance registers, safeguarding information, risk assessments and health and safety documents. The lead inspector undertook a tour of the school and the garden with the proprietor.
- Inspectors spent time in lessons, including a PE lesson which took place in the local park. They looked at pupils’ work and talked to them about their learning and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Nicola Harwood	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 un-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(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
  - 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; and
  - 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.

#### **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.
- 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.

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].
- 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 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable–
  - 29(1)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and
  - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

### **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 6. Provision of information**

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 32(1)(d) following an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, a copy of the report of the inspection (if it has been sent to the proprietor) is published and

maintained on the school's internet website, and provided to the parents of each registered pupil, by any date specified by the body who conducted the inspection.

## **The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards**

### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures—
  - 27(a) the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein.

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