

Inspection of Kingsmere School

Fourballs Farm, Hundred Foot Bank, Pymoor CB6 2EL

Inspection dates: 21–23 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils get a poor education. They do not gain important skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Plans for teaching pupils English and mathematics are not good enough. In most other subjects, curriculum planning is poor. Better plans are in place for teaching science.

Pupils are not kept safe. Leaders do not act quickly enough to keep pupils safe from harm. There are gaps in the records kept of what leaders do to protect pupils and keep them safe. Leaders do not check whether staff should be working with children. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not get the help they need.

Leaders do not do enough to make sure that all pupils behave well. Pupils say they feel safe and free from bullying. They feel listened to and say adults help them to get ready for life after school. Most pupils attend regularly but a few are often absent.

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

The proprietor does not check the school's work often enough. Governors have not held staff accountable for making the necessary improvements since the last inspection. Several independent school standards are not met.

The quality of education is inadequate. Leaders have not done enough to develop the curriculum. Detailed plans are not in place for any subject. New teachers who have joined the school recently have begun to revise schemes of work in science and English. This work is at an early stage of development.

Improved planning of English in key stage 4 enables pupils to gain a good understanding of literature. However, this is not underpinned by a thorough grounding in English taught in key stage 3. Planning does not extend beyond the current term. Reading in school has a low profile. There is no clear programme used to support weaker readers. The books that pupils read are not linked to what they already know and can do.

In mathematics, changes in staff and the absence of a suitable scheme of work prevent pupils from learning more and building on what they already know. In lessons, pupils complete work and remember some of their learning. However, this learning is not linked to what they have already done and know, or what they will do later.

Learning in science is better because a specialist teacher has a clear overview of what should be taught and in what order. He is improving the quality of planning but, currently, these plans do not extend beyond this year.

None of the core subjects have coherent assessment procedures for adults to check how well pupils are learning. End of year reports to parents and carers show that pupils do not study a wide range of subjects. Physical education is taught off-site but there is no scheme of work in place to inform pupils' learning.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils are usually respectful and keen to talk. They develop positive relations but not all of them listen well enough to the views of others. Staff do not model high expectations by picking up on pupils' inappropriate language and conversation. At times, behaviour is 'negotiated' with pupils rather than staff applying the school's agreed procedures. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded systematically. Short-term exclusion is used as a last resort to manage very challenging behaviour. Pupils are helped to reintegrate back into school.

Pupils are provided with a caring supportive ethos. They feel safe and are able to re-engage in education. However, their personal development is limited by the poor-quality curriculum that leaders provide for them. Better provision is made for promoting their personal, social and health education. Although curriculum plans are not fully complete, pupils discuss personal matters and learn about healthy lifestyles and relationships in their weekly lessons. They gain a firm understanding of British values and the values and beliefs of others. Not all pupils attend school often enough to benefit from this provision.

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan are not identified early enough when they join the school. Consequently, their needs remain unknown and their EHC plans are not reviewed well. The proprietor has not established suitable procedures to identify and prioritise pupils with EHC plans. Some pupils do not receive the support they need.

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards. This is because leaders do not fully understand them. The proprietor does not systematically check that all of the standards are met. The school's effectiveness is not checked routinely or evaluated fully to spot where improvements are needed. At the previous inspection, the limited capacity of leadership to secure improvements was raised. Since then, little has been effectively done to improve this. Additional business support has been provided, but leaders still do not have sufficient time to check that all areas of the school's work are carried out effectively.

The proprietor has not done enough to improve the school. The need for urgent action is acknowledged but the proprietor's improvement plans lack rigour. General tasks, such as maintaining the school's website, checking that registers are completed properly and providing financial information to local authorities, have not been done. The governing body is made up of proprietary staff. They have not acted swiftly to tackle the issues raised in the previous monitoring inspection or hold staff accountable for making improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The school's record of recruitment checks is incomplete. Checks that must be made when appointing new staff to work with children are not recorded systematically. Child protection procedures lack rigour. Records are incomplete. Leaders realise that they have not met their responsibilities in keeping records up to date to ensure pupils' safety. Leaders do not have the time to do this thoroughly. Not all serious safeguarding issues have been referred in a timely way to other support agencies. Registers are not maintained well enough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Not enough is done to keep pupils safe. Not all routine checks are done when recruiting new staff. The actions taken by leaders to protect pupils are not recorded systematically. As a matter of urgency, leaders should take immediate steps to strengthen the school's safeguarding arrangements. They should put in place new procedures to check regularly that the arrangements in place to safeguard pupils are working and records illustrate clearly what leaders are doing to keep pupils safe from harm.
- Several of the independent school standards are not met. The proprietor does not have routines and procedures to check the effectiveness of the school's work. Leaders should implement robust procedures to check systematically that all of the independent school standards are met, and over time remain met.
- There are no procedures in place to check the backgrounds of pupils when they join the school to see if they have an EHC plan. The proprietor should put in place clear procedures to improve this and ensure that pupils with an EHC plan are identified promptly and action is taken to support them fully.
- The curriculum is poorly planned. Currently, there are no coherent schemes of work in place. There are no suitable assessment procedures to gauge how well pupils are doing and ensure that pupils are suitably prepared for tests and examinations. Leaders should carry out a thorough evaluation of the school's planning and implementation of the whole curriculum and put in place a detailed improvement plan to significantly strengthen provision.

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 are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	131260
DfE registration number	873/6039
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10116632
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd
Chair	Leon Brandon
Headteacher	Lynne Keating
Annual fees (day pupils)	Information not provided to inspectors
Telephone number	01345 610503
Website	www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk
Email address	Lynne.Keating@priorygroup.com
Date of previous inspection	20–22 February 2018

Information about this school

- Kingsmere School opened in 2016. It provides education for up to 12 boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of being permanently excluded from mainstream schools.
- Currently, 10 boys attend the school. About half of them live in a children's home run by the proprietor. All pupils have missed periods of their schooling before joining the school. Five pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school proprietor is Priory Education Services.
- It is registered with the Department for Education to take a maximum of 12 boys.

- Pupils join and leave the school at different times of the year.
- The school uses the following alternative provision: Sunset Care Farm, Thetford.
- The school consists of a headteacher, four teachers, five support assistants and an instructor.
- The school's previous inspection history:
 - In the school's standard inspection in February 2018, the overall effectiveness of the school was judged to require improvement. Several independent school standards were unmet.
 - In April 2018, following the inspection, the proprietorial body submitted an action plan to the Department for Education (DfE). This contained the actions that leaders identified they were going to take in order to meet the independent school standards. This plan was deemed acceptable.
 - In June 2019, Ofsted was commissioned by the DfE to conduct a progress monitoring inspection. There remained unmet standards.
 - In September 2019, following the inspection, the proprietorial body submitted a new action plan to the DfE. This plan was deemed not acceptable.
 - In November 2019, Ofsted was commissioned by the DfE to conduct an emergency inspection. Several independent school standards were unmet.

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.

- We looked at a range of documentation, including safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, including the single central record. We looked at the school's latest action plan, incidents logs, attendance records, minutes of meetings of the governing body and other information provided by school leaders.
- We considered the seven responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils' views and two free-text responses from parents and carers. Staff questionnaires were not used.
- We did deep dives in English, mathematics, science and catering studies. We visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work, met with teachers and other staff about these subjects and met with pupils.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector
Kim Pigram

Her Majesty's Inspector
Her Majesty's 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.
 - 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph 2(1)(a), the matters are:
 - 2(2)(a) full time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed according with section 8 of the Education Act, 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 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;
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 - 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;

- 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

- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if:
 - 20(6)(a) MB:
 - 20(6)(a)(i) is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that individual is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 of that Act; and
 - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend 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;
 - 20(6)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the Chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB:
 - 20(6)(b)(i) where relevant to the individual, an enhanced criminal record check;
 - 20(6)(b)(ii) checks confirming MB's identity and MB's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 20(6)(b)(iii) where, by reason of MB's living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish MB's suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Chair of the school considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and, where an enhanced criminal record check is made, the Chair obtains an enhanced criminal record certificate relating to the individual; and

- 20(6)(c) subject to sub-paragraph (8), where the Secretary of State makes a request for an enhanced criminal record check relating to MB countersigned by the Secretary of State to be made, such a check is made.
- 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(2) The register referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form.
- 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member ("MB") of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.
- 21(7) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007:
 - 21(7)(a) whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (6) was made; and
 - 21(7)(b) whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained.

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)(a) the information specified in sub-paragraph (2) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;
 - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;
 - 32(1)(f) an annual written report of each registered pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught is provided to the parents of that registered pupil except that no report need be provided where the parent has agreed otherwise;
 - 32(1)(h) where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State;
 - 32(1)(i) where a pupil with an EHC plan wholly or partly funded by a local authority or other body through public funds is registered at the school, such

information as may reasonably be required for the purpose of the annual review of the EHC plan is provided to the responsible local authority.

- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is:
 - 32(2)(a) the school's address and telephone number and the name of the head teacher.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is:
 - 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language;
 - 32(3)(e) particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations;
 - 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which:
 - 33(b) is made available to parents of pupils.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard in this paragraph 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.

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