

Inspection of Grateley House School

Pond Lane, Grateley, Andover, Hampshire SP11 8TA

Inspection dates: 10–12 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

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 are at risk of harm because of the proprietor's poor oversight of this school. Staff shortages and weak leadership mean that pupils are not getting the education they deserve. The school is not providing everything needed to meet the aspirations and expectations outlined in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. Too often, adults allocated to support individuals with the most complex needs are not available.

While many pupils are happy at school and feel safe, the underlying systems that are in place to keep them safe are at breaking point. Pupils feel well cared for by the hard-working and dedicated staff who teach and look after them. Staff protect pupils from any type of bullying or discrimination. Pupils are also equipped with the skills to live independently in the future such as financial planning, shopping and cooking.

Pupils who attend lessons regularly do well. Many achieve good GCSEs, and the majority of students in the sixth form go on to positive destinations including university. However, some pupils choose not to attend lessons regularly. This is because of the behaviour of other pupils, because they do not feel well supported or because their needs cannot be fully met.

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

Historic weaknesses in the residential provision are now being felt in the school due to growing staff shortages and weak leadership. The proprietor has focused on pacifying the many complaints from parents, staff and pupils rather than tackling the systemic weaknesses in the leadership and culture of the school. As a result, there are a significant number of unmet independent school standards.

The school does not have an accurate attendance register. It is not possible to know how many pupils are in school at any time. During the inspection, it took leaders 80 minutes to account for all the pupils. They needed to find out whether pupils were in school, off site at college or alternative activities, or still in their residential houses. It would be difficult to quickly account for all the pupils if there was a fire or other emergency.

Pupils and staff have been at risk of serious harm because fire safety requirements have not been addressed quickly enough. Fire risk assessments of 2018 identified issues that needed to be addressed because they could put pupils at serious risk of harm. Governance committee records show that urgent improvements to fire doors were still not complete over a year after being identified. Work to improve fire proofing in the cellar was only completed during the inspection, over 18 months after being identified as a risk. These delays occurred despite leaders raising it as an issue. Furthermore, during the most recent fire drill, in February 2020, although records show it took four minutes to evacuate the school, only 19 out of 24 pupils actually left the building and some alarms did not activate as expected.

During the inspection, behaviour observed during lesson visits was mainly positive. When pupils called out or used inappropriate language, it was usually tackled by adults. However, pupils told inspectors that, over time, poor behaviour is managed inconsistently. Initiatives to recognise positive behaviour are in their infancy and do not reflect the behaviour policy. Some pupils told inspectors that they routinely withdraw themselves from lessons and work elsewhere because they are disturbed or intimidated by the behaviour of others. Staff do not have confidence in leaders' ability to manage behaviour.

Record-keeping of behaviour is cumbersome. There are five different systems to record the most serious incidents. This includes incidents in which adults need to physically restrain pupils because they are putting themselves, other pupils or staff in danger. There are gaps in the record-keeping of these incidents. Pupils and staff do not always receive debriefs following these incidents. Risk assessments for individual pupils are not updated to help keep them safe. During the inspection, the proprietor's regional education director found four incidents of restrictive physical intervention that had not been reported in line with the company's policy, this academic year. These records had not been checked since January 2020 by the headteacher or at all by the proprietor.

Many pupils are not receiving full access to an ambitious curriculum. Despite the dedicated efforts of many teaching, care and therapy staff, the school is unable to meet the needs of over a third of pupils as defined in their EHC plans. Too often, pupils are choosing not to attend lessons, or, when they arrive, they do not have the one-to-one adult support they are entitled to. Despite the efforts of staff, too many pupils opt out of areas of the curriculum such as physical education or from assemblies. Some pupils have complained about the disruption to their GCSE studies due to teacher absence.

Where pupils are engaged, teachers use assessment well to determine the right curriculum pathways for them. Pupils' existing knowledge and their resilience are taken in to account when making decisions. Those who are able are entered for GCSE examinations especially in the core areas of English, mathematics and science. Other pupils work towards suitable alternative qualifications.

The core curriculum (English, mathematics and science) and some other subjects such as food technology are well planned. Learning is organised logically in sequences of lessons that gradually build pupils' knowledge. Pupils who have had consistent strong teaching over time, for example in science and mathematics, know and remember more. They are able to apply their learning in a range of contexts. For example, some pupils apply mathematics learning well in their physics equations, while others apply their local knowledge well when solving problems about variation in sheep, in science.

Teachers receive regular training in safeguarding and health and safety. Unqualified teachers are supported to work towards qualified teacher status. However, there are fewer opportunities for teachers to take part in subject-specific training.

The programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and assemblies include thoughtful strategies to promote pupils' personal development. For example, the PSHE programme includes helpful sessions to discuss sexuality and other equalities issues. An insightful assembly during the inspection introduced pupils to the Hindu festival of Holi. However, fewer than half the pupils attended.

Pupils learn to keep themselves healthy and are well prepared for being independent in the future, for example, through their understanding of personal finance or through taking increasing responsibility for their time, diet and pastimes.

Sixth-form students have personalised plans. These are ambitious and centred around their needs, interests and strengths. Students complete sustained projects, for example in art, linking with an interest in the music of The Beatles. Some students are successfully completing college courses, including A levels. Impartial careers advice and detailed transition planning mean that most students go on to purposeful education, employment or training. However, this is not always the case for students who join the school at an older age.

A significant proportion of staff are worried about their workload and well-being because of the current staff shortages. For example, the recent absence of maintenance staff has had an impact on the well-being of pupils and staff in terms of keeping the school site well maintained.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that systems and processes for attendance, fire safety and the use of physical intervention are well managed. As a result, pupils are potentially at risk of harm.

Staff are generally well trained and know how to share any worries they have about pupils. Concerns and referrals about the most vulnerable pupils are managed thoroughly by the head of care. She works well with families and other professionals to help keep pupils safe from harm.

During the inspection, some staff shared safeguarding concerns with inspectors.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- There is not a single effective system for knowing how many pupils are on the school site. This means that it is not possible to account for pupils in the case of an emergency. Leaders should urgently introduce an accurate attendance register so that staff know where pupils are at all times.
- The recording of incidents of extreme behaviour is over-complicated and at times incomplete. Pupils and staff do not always receive debriefs after the use of

restrictive physical interventions. This means that staff do not learn from the experience and pupils' risk assessments are not updated to prevent future occurrences. The proprietor needs to ensure that restrictive physical interventions are recorded accurately, once and well. The proprietor should investigate the quality and severity of the restrictive physical interventions and any learning points from them rather than just the number that take place.

- The proprietor has been too slow to challenge weak leadership. The oversight of the school has been poor. As a result, staff shortages have had an impact on the well-being of staff. Incomplete work, including on fire safety, has put pupils at risk of harm. The proprietor should act decisively to ensure that all independent school standards are met, the premises are safe and staff are well supported in their roles.
- Too often, pupils choose not to attend lessons. This means that they are not receiving their full educational entitlement. Leaders should introduce procedures to ensure that all pupils attend lessons regularly and should monitor the effectiveness of these procedures.
- Pupils are not receiving the support they are entitled to according to their EHC plans. Some pupils do not consistently receive the individual one-to-one support funded by their local authority. This means that they are not having full access to their education entitlement. The proprietor should take urgent action to ensure that staff levels are high enough for pupils to receive the individual support they are entitled to and are being funded for.

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	116588
DfE registration number	850/6058
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10123971
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	9 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Proprietor	Cambian Education Group
Chair	John Ivers
Headteacher	Mark McQuillan
Annual fees	£67,910–£219,617
Telephone number	01264 889751
Website	https://www.cambianguroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/asperger-schools/grateley-house-school/
Email address	mark.mcquillan@cambianguroup.com
Date of previous inspection	5–7 June 2018

Information about this school

- Grateley House is an independent residential special school for pupils, usually in the average- or higher-ability range, who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Many pupils have other associated difficulties. Each pupil has an education, health and care plan and is usually placed at the school by their local authority. The large majority of pupils are residential, although the school also provides for a small number of day pupils.
- The headteacher has been in post since June 2017. The head of education was absent during the inspection.
- This was a standard education inspection, but it was aligned with a social care inspection of the residential provision, which took place at the same time. Since the school's previous integrated standard inspection, on 5 to 7 June 2018, it was subject to an integrated progress monitoring inspection, on 9 to 10 July 2019.
- The school works in partnership with River Bourne Community Farm, Salisbury SP1 2SR to create part-time alternative provision opportunities. The school also works with a range of post-16 providers to enhance and extend the offer for post-16 students. The current links are:
 - Andover College, Charlton Road, Andover SP10 1EJ
 - Sparsholt College, Westley Lane, Sparsholt SO21 2NF
 - Peter Symonds College, Owens Road, Winchester SO22 6RX
 - Wiltshire College Salisbury, Southampton Road, Salisbury SP1 2LW.

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 met with the headteacher and head of care. We also met with members of staff in groups and individually. We talked to pupils informally in groups and individually throughout the inspection.
- We met with the following representatives of the proprietor during the inspection: the regional education manager, an advisory headteacher, the regional care manager, the director for improving children's service, two property services managers. We also held a conference telephone call with the proprietor's director of property and fire safety officer.
- We did deep dives in English, mathematics, science and food technology. Each deep dive involved a conversation with the headteacher, discussions with subject leaders and teachers, visits to lessons, talking to pupils and looking at their work.
- To inspect safeguarding, we looked at documentary evidence including the single central record of recruitment checks, talked to designated safeguarding leads, talked to staff and observed the school at work.
- We observed breaktimes and lunchtimes and talked to pupils and staff informally at these times.
- We considered 13 responses to our online survey, Parent View. We took account of 23 responses to the confidential staff survey.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dan Lambert

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.

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.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
 - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 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.

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.

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.

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