

Priory Hurworth House

Westfield Drive, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, County Durham DL2 2AD

Inspection dates

8 October 2020

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- Leaders have ensured that a suitable safeguarding policy is in place. The school's safeguarding policy takes into account the required government guidance.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training, to ensure that they understand the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- A range of other safeguarding policies are in place, including local arrangements for safeguarding adults and preventing radicalisation. Leaders have established a range of policies to provide additional safeguarding guidance related to COVID-19 (coronavirus).
- The school's main safeguarding children policy was not readily available on the school's website at the beginning of the inspection. Leaders promptly addressed this during the inspection.
- Leaders are vigilant to the safeguarding risks that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities may be vulnerable to. Staff engage with parents, carers and other agencies to make sure that pupils are supported and safe.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c)

- Leaders have drawn up policies for behaviour and for sanctions and rewards. Staff understand how to implement these policies effectively. Discussions with representative groups of pupils show that pupils appreciate rewards such as the 'tokens' system. Pupils also understood the school's approach to de-escalation and positive handling. Detailed records are maintained to record incidents of pupils' misbehaviour and any sanctions imposed.
- Staff receive appropriate training in the use of de-escalation techniques and positive handling approaches. All incidents requiring restrictive physical interventions are recorded and senior leaders monitor and evaluate these thoroughly. Governors and representatives of the Priory Group have regular oversight of the numbers and types of interventions completed. Leaders' actions are reducing the overall number of

physical interventions and there is a determined approach by leaders to continue this trend.

Paragraph 11

- Leaders have drawn up a suitable health and safety policy. They take appropriate steps to ensure the effective implementation of the policy.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders deploy staff appropriately to classes. They deploy staff with the relevant expertise and in appropriate adult to pupil ratios to meet the individual needs of pupils. Staff receive training and guidance tailored to the specific needs of the pupils they teach. Leaders draw upon expertise from special educational needs experts and therapists to meet pupils' educational and social, emotional and mental health needs.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Leaders have established a written risk assessment policy and a wide range of risk assessments to safeguard the welfare of pupils. However, they are not complacent; they regularly adjust pupils' risk assessments to respond to pupils' emerging needs. Similarly, adjustments are made to school policies, such as the attendance policy, when leaders identify an aspect which needs strengthening.
- Pupils are taught about the risks associated with the misuse of drugs, alcohol and smoking. Where relevant, staff include these risks in pupils' individual risk assessments. They provide pupils with appropriate guidance on how to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils and staff are clear that smoking is not tolerated in school. Where staff are aware that it is happening outside of school, they provide educational support.
- School leaders have ensured that the above standards in Part 3 and Part 6 are met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- The school's premises are maintained to a suitable standard to ensure the health and welfare of pupils. Pupils are taught in small groups in appropriately resourced classrooms. Where necessary, these are adapted to meet pupils' learning and social and emotional needs. There are suitable outside spaces for play, learning and socialisation.
- Fitting arrangements are in place for the school's site security. Leaders have established a structured policy should pupils abscond from the premises. Relevant risk assessments are in place for pupils who may be at risk of leaving the premises during the school day. Leaders have recently strengthened procedures for checking the whereabouts of pupils who are absent at the start of the school day.
- School leaders have ensured that the above standard in Part 5 is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors demonstrate a thorough understanding of the independent school standards. They have relevant experience, skills and knowledge for their roles. They are reflective and seek to improve provision for pupils. Improvements related to the specific standards considered demonstrate

that leaders have the capacity for ongoing improvement and consistently meeting the standards.

- Leaders, including governors, fulfil their responsibilities effectively. All independent school standards checked during this inspection were met.
- Leaders' aims, plans and actions actively promote pupils' well-being. Leaders' plans are responsive to external advice, for example guidance from Darlington local authority.
- The proprietor has established clear lines of governance to challenge and support the headteacher and leadership team. Regular checks are made of pupils' progress, welfare and safeguarding. Leaders have commissioned a school improvement adviser for external challenge and support.
- Leaders, governors and the proprietors have ensured that the above standards in Part 8 are 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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	137511
DfE registration number	841/6006
Inspection number	10163193

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 school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Limited
Chair	Sharon Pearson
Headteacher	Claire Blackett
Annual fees (day pupils)	£64,997 – £80,872
Telephone number	01325729080
Website	www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk
Email address	hurworthhouseschool@priorygroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	20–22 November 2018

Information about this school

- Priory Hurworth House School accepts up to 80 pupils. They are aged between five and 19 years, with social, emotional and mental health needs, and/or who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, attachment disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder.
- All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has two separate departments on the same site. There is a discrete primary provision and a separate middle and upper school.
- The school uses three alternative providers: Darlington College, Leeds College and Martin Gray Football Academy.

- The school's strategic governance is through a governing body, who then report to the Priory Education Group company board.
- The school had its previous standard inspection on 20–22 November 2018. There was a subsequent material change inspection on 13 March 2019.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to a complaint about the school and concerns regarding the welfare and safety of pupils.
- The inspection focused particularly on the welfare, health and safety of pupils, safeguarding of pupils and quality of leadership in and management of the school.
- This inspection was carried out without notice. The inspector made a phone call to the headteacher before going onto the school's site to ensure compliance with the school's COVID-19 protocols.
- I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, leader for safeguarding, chair of the governing body and a managing director for the Priory Group. I reviewed site security and the appropriateness of the building at the start of the day, during teaching time and at lunchtime. Meetings were completed with three groups of pupils who were representative of primary, secondary and post-16 pupils. I met with three groups of staff representative of teaching staff, teaching assistants and recently appointed staff. I reviewed relevant policies and a range of documentation relating to safeguarding and recording pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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