

Charlton House School

57 Midanbury Lane, Bitterne Park, Southampton, Hampshire SO18 4DJ

Inspection dates

5 November 2020

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5 and 5(b)(iii)

- At the time of the last inspection, an element of this part of the independent school standards was found to be un-met. Standards of behaviour were variable in the upper part of the school. Some older pupils felt that their opportunities to pursue interests and make a positive difference to their school community were limited.
- There are now no pupils in the secondary phase of the school. In re-opening the primary phase, the headteacher has sought pupils' views as part of establishing a clear ethos for the school. Pupils' commitment to meeting their teachers' suitably high expectations were evident during this inspection.
- In the short time since the school re-opened, early work has been done to develop pupils' contributions to their school and the wider community. A house system encourages pupils to work together towards a common goal. Pupils recently collected food for the homeless as part of their harvest festival celebration. The headteacher has plans for engaging with other community projects throughout the year, including some linked to overseas charity work supported by the Catholic church.
- This paragraph within this part of the independent school standards is now met. Other paragraphs within this part were not considered during this inspection.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b) and 10

- Some standards contained in this part were judged to be un-met when the school was last inspected. At times, teachers' low expectations led to older pupils not behaving as well as they should, causing learning to be disrupted. Some older pupils felt that concerns they raised about bullying were not dealt with effectively. Concerns identified in the secondary phase of the school were not evident in the primary phase, where pupils behaved well and were considerate of each other.
- The secondary phase of the school is now closed to pupils. New written behaviour and anti-bullying policies were put in place when the school re-opened to primary-aged pupils at the start of the autumn term. While these policies are fit for purpose, the headteacher intends incorporating the views of pupils, staff and parents more fully. Some initial consultation work has taken place but has not yet been reflected in the written policies.

- Pupils currently in the school conduct themselves thoughtfully, understanding what is expected of them. In classrooms visited during the inspection, pupils showed themselves to be polite and eager to please. In the playground, they played happily together. Records show this behaviour to be typical of what happens day to day.
- The headteacher describes bullying as being directly in conflict with the school's ethos, which is based around 'loving one another'. Current work is focused on helping pupils to become a good friend and on learning more about what bullying actually is. Only one alleged incident of bullying has been reported since the start of the autumn term.
- Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the independent school standards, which were un-met at the last inspection, are now judged to be met.

Paragraph 7

- In December 2019, safeguarding was judged to be effective, with paragraph 7 of the independent school standards being met.
- At this inspection, arrangements to keep pupils safe from harm were found to be fit for purpose. The written safeguarding and child protection policies reflect statutory guidance. Staff, including those acting as designated safeguarding leads, have received suitable training for this part of their work. Systems for reporting and acting on any concerns about a pupil are appropriate, with records kept securely.
- Leaders have made the required recruitment and vetting checks on adults working in the school. However, they have not checked and recorded the suitability of the members of the proprietary body. As such, the school has not given due regard to guidance from the Secretary of State about safeguarding. Swift action was taken during the inspection to begin obtaining and recording the required information.
- Because leaders have not followed statutory guidance regarding checks on members of the proprietary body, paragraph 7 of the independent school standards, which was met at the previous inspection, is now un-met.
- The other paragraphs contained in this part of the independent school standards were not reviewed during this inspection.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18, 20 and 21

- This part of the independent school standards was met at the last inspection. The Department for Education (DfE) asked for it to be checked at this inspection.
- All staff currently at the school have been newly employed since the last inspection. Leaders have carried out all of the required suitability checks in a timely way. These checks are recorded clearly on the single central register.
- At the start of this inspection, no suitability checks for members of the proprietary body were recorded on the single central register. Leaders had not made sure that these checks had been carried out. Staff were subsequently able to provide evidence of checks made by the DfE on the chair of the proprietary body.
- This part of the independent school standards, which was met at the last inspection, is not met, because relevant checks have not been made on all members of the proprietary body or recorded on the single central register.

- Arrangements for vetting of supply staff, referenced in paragraph 19 of the independent school standards, were not considered as part of this monitoring inspection.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(2), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(3) and 32(3)(f)

- When the school was last inspected, this part of the independent school standards was not met in its entirety. Required information about how to contact the proprietary body and about the complaints policy and number of complaints received was not made available to parents.
- The school's new website is under construction. The intention is that this will become a single port of call for any information that parents might need and that the school is expected to make available. A review of what currently exists in draft form suggests it looks likely to meet requirements once it is completed. However, this draft version is not publicly available at the present time.
- In the meantime, all content has been removed from the existing website, except for very basic contact information. Required information, including the details found to be missing at the last inspection, have not been made available to parents.
- Elements of this part of the independent school standards continue to be un-met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the last inspection, significant weaknesses were identified in the work of school leaders, directors and governors, which were impacting negatively on some staff and pupils. Improvement priorities identified by these leaders were not being addressed effectively.
- All leaders connected with the school are newly appointed to their roles. The new proprietary body, formed in August 2020, consists of two directors. At the start of the inspection, staff in school were not sure who these directors were.
- A governing body is in the very early stages of being formed and is intended to provide additional leadership capacity to the school. A group of former governors are supporting the school in an advisory role. However, there are no clear terms of reference for how these two groups will strategically support and challenge the school on behalf of the directors. During this inspection, the proprietary body's view of the school's compliance with the independent school standards was found to be inaccurate and optimistic.
- The headteacher demonstrates a deep-rooted commitment to the school and its pupils. She is wisely reaching out to colleagues beyond the school to support her in developing her expertise in this new role. A former governor is providing the headteacher with useful advice in a voluntary capacity. Nevertheless, the headteacher has a great deal of work to do in re-establishing the school in its new format.
- This part of the independent school standards, which was considered in its entirety, remains un-met.

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	116567
DfE registration number	852/6003
Inspection number	10166932

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 school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Proprietor	Charlton House School Limited
Chair	Brother Peter Tracey
Headteacher	Louise Blake
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,085
Telephone number	02380 671 739
Website	www.charltonhouseindependentschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@charltonhouseindependentschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	3–5 December 2019

Information about this school

- Charlton House School is a small independent Roman Catholic school with a Christian ethos. It currently has 28 pupils on roll, who are taught in three mixed-age-group classes. Collectively, these classes cater for pupils from Year R to Year 6.
- The school was most recently inspected in December 2019 and judged to be inadequate. At that time, it was called St. Mary's Independent School and also had a secondary phase, catering for pupils up to the age of 16. In May 2020, the school closed to pupils and the limited company running it went into administration, with all staff made redundant.
- The primary phase of the school re-opened to pupils aged four to 11 in September 2020, under the name of Charlton House School. Most pupils on roll are former pupils of the St.

Mary's primary phase. Current staff previously all worked at St. Mary's and have been re-employed on new contracts.

- The school no longer has a nursery provision. There are plans for a local childcare provider to open an early years setting on the school site in the near future, subject to successful registration with Ofsted.
- The school is now owned and run by a proprietary body called Charlton House School Limited. This is a private company limited by guarantee. The two directors belong to the Brothers of Christian Instruction, a Catholic educational organisation that owns the school's buildings and land. The previous proprietary body, which was called St. Mary's Independent School Limited, also included directors belonging to the Brothers of Christian Instruction.
- The headteacher was appointed to her post in June 2020. Prior to this, she was employed in the primary phase of the school.

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 inspection was carried out during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, following government guidelines and the school's risk assessment. Aspects of part one of the independent school standards that were un-met at the last inspection were not considered, in line with Ofsted's operational guidance for autumn 2020.
- I met with the headteacher to review evidence relevant to the standards being considered. Together, we toured the school briefly. I looked at the school's central record of recruitment and vetting checks for relevant adults. I spoke to children and staff on the playground at lunchtime. I spoke to the chair of the proprietary body via video call. I also had telephone calls with a representative from the local authority safeguarding team and with one of the school's voluntary advisers. I considered policies and other documents provided by the school.
- After the last inspection, leaders were required to submit an action plan to the DfE. This plan has not been formally evaluated by Ofsted, at the request of the DfE, due to changing circumstances in the school's status during summer 2020.

The school has applied to the DfE to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

The outcome of this part of the inspection is: The school is not likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the age range accommodated by the school is implemented. This is because it is not currently meeting all of the independent school standards. However, evidence from this progress monitoring visit suggests that changing the age range accommodated by the school from three to 16 years to four to 12 years would be appropriate, in line with the current operating arrangements.

Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, 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 un-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)(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[14], the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate[15];
 - 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)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request.
- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(2)(b) either-
 - 32(2)(b)(ii) where the proprietor is a body of persons, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 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 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.

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

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)(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.
- 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(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation 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.

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)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor-
 - 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 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.

- 10 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

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