

Cornfield School

53 Hanworth Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 5HS

Inspection dates

24–25 November 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) and 32(1)(c)

- This aspect of the standards was identified as unmet at the progress monitoring inspection in November 2019 because, while there had been some improvements in safeguarding arrangements, there were still gaps in leaders' understanding of the detail of safeguarding requirements. Leaders did not know the statutory advice about keeping children safe well enough. They were not following the procedures set out in statutory advice about keeping children safe, nor those set out in the school's safeguarding policy, consistently enough. While record-keeping had improved, a new online system for recording safeguarding concerns and actions had not been fully established.
- Leaders and the proprietor have a thorough oversight of all aspects of safeguarding. For example, the proprietor has a detailed knowledge of the school's online record system for safeguarding concerns and understands how this enables leaders to monitor and to respond to concerns as they arise.
- Leaders and the proprietor are clear about the detail of safeguarding requirements and about their own responsibilities for ensuring pupils' safety. The executive headteacher has introduced a range of safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect statutory advice about keeping children safe and which are now well established as part of the school's everyday routines.
- The school's safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website, is updated regularly and conforms to current statutory guidance. The policy provides a secure framework for staff, parents and visitors.
- The school's online system for recording safeguarding concerns and leaders' actions is now fully established. Training has ensured that all staff are accessing and using the system confidently. Leaders monitor entries frequently. They check the progress of individual cases, as well as keeping an overview of patterns and trends.
- Leaders have provided staff with a comprehensive range of safeguarding training since the previous progress monitoring visit. Staff have completed training on issues such as cyber bullying, child sexual exploitation and county lines. Most training has taken place online due to the need for social distancing during the pandemic. The executive headteacher has combined bespoke online training with digital training provided by the local authority and by other agencies. Leaders use staff meetings and daily debrief

sessions to provide ongoing safeguarding updates and to facilitate discussion about issues or concerns which may arise.

Paragraph 16 and 16(a)

- This aspect of the standards was not met at the last progress monitoring inspection because the school's new code of conduct was not sufficiently clear about when staff should report specific safeguarding incidents. Furthermore, leaders had not ensured that risk assessments were completed routinely. Leaders were too casual about potential risks to pupils and had not ensured that the school's policies were followed.
- The revised code of conduct provides clarity about staff responsibilities for reporting safeguarding concerns. A review of the school's online system for reporting safeguarding concerns indicates that staff are following the code of conduct consistently regarding the reporting of safeguarding incidents.
- Leaders give pupils' safety a high priority and are alert to potential risks to pupils. They have ensured that risk assessments are completed routinely as part of the school's everyday work. Risk assessments are completed for activities which take place often, such as walks in the local area, as well for one-off activities and events and for individual pupils. Risk assessments include advice and practical steps which staff can take to reduce the level of risk.
- All of the standards in this part are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- This aspect of the standards was not met at the last progress monitoring inspection because improvements had been introduced too slowly and were not embedded. There was no evidence at that time that improvements would be sustained when the consultant headteacher's contract ended. While all required policies were in place, leaders did not show a strong enough knowledge of their responsibilities. They did not follow their own policies, or statutory safeguarding processes, consistently enough. The proprietor had not ensured that all of the independent school standards were met.
- The pace of improvement has increased since the first progress monitoring inspection in November 2019. The executive headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils and leads by example. She has introduced a sense of urgency to the school improvement process. Staff morale is much better than at the time of the previous inspection and continues to improve.
- The executive headteacher provides regular training and feedback so that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and confident about reporting a concern. The executive headteacher checks that staff are following the school's policies and procedures correctly and consistently.
- A deputy headteacher has been appointed to the leadership team since the first progress monitoring inspection. The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed a constructive working partnership. For example, they meet regularly to access the school's online safeguarding record system and so have a shared view of concerns, actions and progress.
- All of the standards in this part are now 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. 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

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.
- 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.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	133477
DfE registration number	936/6581
Inspection number	10163417

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 special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Vivienne Spence
Headteacher	Emma Slaughter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£47,931
Telephone number	01737 779 578
Website	www.cornerways.org
Email address	cornfieldschool@cornerways.org
Date of previous standard inspection	27 February–1 March 2018

Information about this school

- Cornfield School is an independent special school catering for up to 25 girls aged 11 to 18. Pupils admitted to the school have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some have autism spectrum disorder.
- The school is run by Cornerways Children's Services Ltd, which also manages residential care and fostering services for children looked after. Pupils are placed in the school by a number of different local authorities.

- The school was judged to be good at a standard inspection in 2018, when all independent school standards were met. An emergency inspection was carried out in May 2019, at the request of the Department for Education (DfE), because of concerns about safeguarding and about the quality of leadership and management at the school. The school did not meet the standards checked at that inspection.
- The proprietor engaged the services of a consultant headteacher to support the previous headteacher, following the emergency inspection in May 2019. The consultant headteacher was appointed to the role of temporary executive headteacher on a full-time basis from January 2020, following the previous headteacher's resignation. A full-time deputy headteacher has also been appointed since the previous progress monitoring inspection.
- This is the second progress monitoring inspection. The first took place in November 2019, when a number of independent school standards checked during the inspection were judged not to be met.
- A number of teachers and teaching assistants have left the school in the past year. Approximately half of the staff have been appointed since May 2019.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

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 was the second progress monitoring inspection since the emergency inspection in May 2019. It was carried out with 30 minutes' notice. The preceding progress monitoring inspection took place on 6 November 2019, when the school was judged to not comply with the independent school standards.
- The DfE required the school to prepare an action plan by 8 July 2019. This was evaluated and accepted by the DfE in August 2019.
- I met with the proprietor and executive headteacher during the inspection. I did not visit lessons or meet with pupils due to Covid-19 precaution measures.
- I reviewed the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including consideration of a range of school policies, the school's safeguarding systems, staff training and a sample of risk assessments.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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