

Sycamore Hall Preparatory School

1 Hall Flat Lane, Balby, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 8PT

Inspection dates

3 March 2021

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)

- At the time of the previous inspection safeguarding was judged to be effective. However, these independent school standards were judged not to be met. This was because the safeguarding policy was not compliant with statutory guidance and staff training in safeguarding was incomplete.
- The proprietor wrote an action plan explaining what steps she would take to address the unmet standards. The proprietor stated that the safeguarding policy would be updated and made available to parents on the school's website. The proprietor also confirmed that staff would have additional training in safeguarding and safer recruitment.
- The proprietor has revised the safeguarding policy. The policy is compliant with current government guidance. At the start of this inspection the safeguarding policy did not reflect the January 2021 update to 'Keeping children safe in education'. This was corrected before the end of the inspection.
- The proprietor has provided staff with training in safeguarding and child protection. Staff are up to date with their training and know how to help children keep safe. The designated lead for safeguarding (DSL) and the deputy DSL have completed enhanced training.
- The DSL has completed training in safer recruitment. The single central record and staff files show that all pre-employment checks have been completed on staff and volunteers.
- The DSL knows how to get help for children who need it. The DSL is aware of local routes to early help. She knows how to access resources produced by the local safeguarding partnership. Pupils' files of any referrals and actions taken are complete and stored securely.
- The headteacher ensures that the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents. The policy explains what staff or parents should do if they have any concerns that cannot be dealt with by the proprietor.
- These standards are now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a safeguarding policy in place and a printed copy is available to parents upon request. At the time of this inspection, the proprietor could not upload the current safeguarding policy to the school's website. This was due to a technical difficulty. There is a notice on the website that explains how to get a printed copy of the policy. The proprietor plans to put the policy on the school's website as soon as she is able.
- These standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the time of the last inspection these standards were judged not to be met. This was because school leaders had not ensured that all the independent school standards were met.
- The proprietor has completed the actions regarding the school's documentation and staff training. The proprietor is an experienced teacher and school leader. She is aware of the need to continue to check all aspects of school improvement on a regular basis.
- These standards 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.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 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.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	106816
DfE registration number	371/6010
Inspection number	10172509

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Jane Spencer
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Miss J Spencer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,950
Telephone number	01302 856800
Website	www.sycamorehallschool.co.uk
Email address	sycamorehall@tiscali.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	5–7 November 2019

Information about this school

- Sycamore Hall Preparatory School is a non-selective independent school for boys and girls between the ages of two and 11 years.
- The school is located on the site of the proprietor's home.
- The school is registered for up to 45 pupils. Currently, there are 36 pupils on roll between the ages of three and 11.
- The proprietor is also the headteacher. Her sister is the only other full-time teacher.
- The proprietor manages the before- and after-school care for pupils attending the school.

- Children in Reception are taught as part of the infant class.

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 school's first Ofsted progress monitoring inspection since the inspection in November 2019.
- Following the inspection on 5 to 7 November 2019, the Department for Education directed the school to write an action plan by 9 February 2020. The purpose of this action plan was for leaders to show what steps they would take to meet the unmet independent school standards. The action plan was evaluated on 14 February 2020 and judged to be acceptable.
- This inspection was carried out with no notice. The lead inspector phoned the school shortly before going onto the school's site to ensure compliance with the school's COVID-19 (coronavirus) protocols.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher. The inspector met with the DSL, who is a teacher in the school. The inspector also met with pupils.
- The inspector reviewed the school's documents and policies.
- The inspector checked the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Patricia Head, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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