

Wilsic Hall School

Wadworth, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN11 9AG

Inspection date

24 March 2021

Overall outcome

The school does not meet 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, 7a, 7b

- This inspection was triggered as a result of complaints and concerns about the school's safeguarding arrangements and the welfare of its pupils. Inspectors found that the school's safeguarding arrangements do not meet requirements.
- Records of safeguarding concerns, including those relating to the conduct of members of staff towards pupils, do not clearly indicate when and where concerning incidents took place. They do not provide enough detail about what happened.
- Records of safeguarding concerns do not include clear and detailed enough information about how leaders have followed up on concerns and whether any further actions are required. Therefore, leaders and the proprietor body cannot monitor pupils' welfare and safety well enough.
- The proprietor body has very recently introduced a new system for recording safeguarding concerns. The system is not yet fully operational across the school.
- There is important information missing from the single central register, which collates details of the pre-employment checks made on staff and members of the proprietor board. These checks are designed to ensure that staff and members of the proprietor body are recruited safely.
- These standards have not been met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 11

- There is a detailed written behaviour policy in place which outlines the rationale for the approaches the school has adopted for managing pupils' behaviour. The policy includes links to more information about how to put the approaches into practice.
- Around school, staff support pupils' behaviour by praising them, using gestures to communicate routines and expectations, as well as by using visual cues. Pupils respond positively when staff communicate with them.

- Behavioural incidents are logged in detail. Logs describe the actions staff took to manage the pupil's behaviour, such as de-escalation strategies and how well pupils responded. Information from the incident log is used to update individual risk assessments.
- The school has a bullying policy in place that takes account of the needs of the pupils, including communication difficulties. Incident logs indicate that bullying is very rare at the school.
- The school is set in extensive grounds with a head of site who oversees health and safety. The site is generally well maintained. Inspectors observed pupils and staff using equipment confidently.
- These standards continue to be met.

Paragraphs 12, 13

- Fire safety measures are not consistently strong. Leaders do not have an accurate list of the staff that are on the school premises each day. This means that in the event of a fire, leaders could not assure themselves that everyone had escaped to safety. It also means that leaders are not sufficiently aware of any staff members on the premises who may be at particular risk in the event of a fire. However, regular fire safety checks are conducted by a registered private company.
- First aid recording is not consistent. Accident forms do not routinely indicate whether first aid was administered to the pupil concerned. In addition, some accident forms do not provide the required information about the nature of the first aid that was administered and whether any follow-up was required.
- These standards are not met.

Paragraphs 14, 15

- Visits to classes and the tour of the site indicate that staffing ratios are appropriate. In each class, there is a class teacher and a teaching assistant. All pupils also have a support assistant working with them on a one-to-one basis.
- Until recently, the school had a handwritten admissions register. Leaders have recently introduced a computerised method for recording admissions and there is some cross-over between the two registers. Leaders are aware of this and plan to streamline the system so that they only use the computerised register.
- The admissions register shows that when pupils leave during the course of the school year, they are sensibly removed from the admissions register until they enrol in another school. Leaders ensure that they maintain good contact with pupils who leave and are waiting for a place at another school.
- These standards continue to be met.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- There is an umbrella risk assessment policy, which outlines the school's approach to managing risks. Each pupil has an individual risk assessment which supports staff in responding to each pupil's needs.
- However, the policy is not consistently well implemented. Leaders have not developed risk assessments that are specific to the environment of Wilsic Hall School. For

example, they have not reviewed the risks posed by the climbing and play equipment in the grounds, including the swings, as well as the toasters and kettles in classrooms.

- These standards are not met.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)(c) 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a) 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b) 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5) 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c)

- The school has a single central register in place which collates information about the pre-employment checks undertaken following the appointment of a member of staff. The single central register shows that the proprietor body has undertaken most of the necessary checks that are required before a member of staff is employed.
- The single central register indicates that the proprietor body has made sure that each member of staff's identification, qualifications, and right to work in the United Kingdom have been checked.
- Records of the additional checks required on staff that have lived abroad are also included on the single central register. The single central register indicates that the proprietor body has undertaken the required checks into criminal records, barred lists, and prohibition from working in, or managing, a school.
- The single central register shows that the proprietor body has made sure that each member of staff's identification, qualifications, and right to work in the United Kingdom have been checked.
- There are detailed procedures in place to ensure that required checks are made on staff from supply agencies. There is a useful checklist to assist leaders and managers in their monitoring of this process.
- Supply staff are also provided with guidance in how best to support pupils' complex needs.
- These standards continue to be met.

Paragraphs 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 21(6)

- The single central register does not record whether the proprietor has carried out medical checks prior to the employment of new staff members.
- The proprietor has not ensured that all the necessary checks on the school's board of directors are recorded on the single central register. It is therefore not possible to verify whether or not the necessary checks have been carried out.
- These standards have not been met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(e), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(d), 32(3) 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g), 32(4)

- The school's website provides parents and carers and stakeholders with access to the required information about the school. It includes an overview of the school's ethos and the number of formal complaints that were reviewed last year under the school's formal complaints policy.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the website. It is accompanied by a document outlining the safeguarding procedures that are used within the school. The policy takes current government guidance into account.
- Other required policies and documentation are available for parents and stakeholders, with many hosted on the school's website, including the behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy and health and safety policy.
- All pupils have an educational, health and care plan, which details the support and assistance pupils require. The school also supplies all the information that is required for annual reviews that are initiated by a wide range of local authorities that pay for pupils' placement at the school.
- All standards in this part continue to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)

- There is a written complaints policy available on the website. The policy details procedures for formal and informal complaints.
- The policy also explains how the complaints process will be implemented. For example, it includes timescales for acknowledging the complaint and how any paperwork for the formal investigation will be managed.
- Leaders keep a log of the complaints that have been made under the complaints policy. The log is shared with the education board.
- All standards in this part continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- School leaders know the pupils well and are aware of their individual needs. They consider how the provision can best meet these needs. For example, they introduced some new approaches to support pupils' well-being during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.
- Leaders have plans to make some major operational changes to improve the way the school is run. These plans have not yet been implemented.
- School leaders have not ensured that all independent school standards are met. They are not aware enough of the details within each of the standards. They are too reliant

on the checks that directors and members of the education board make on the standards.

- Directors and education board members do not monitor whether the school is meeting the independent school standards carefully enough. For example, they have not made thorough checks on whether the single central register meets the relevant independent school standards.
- There are also weaknesses in the way members of the education board monitor the school's own safeguarding procedures. When safeguarding issues and incidents are reported to the education board, documentation shows that leaders' accounts of the situation are not probed. Directors accept what leaders tell them too readily. There are weaknesses in the school's overall safeguarding culture.
- The school's leaders do not monitor how consistently and thoroughly staff across the school implement the school's own safeguarding procedures. Leaders have not made sure that safeguarding records are detailed and clear. Safeguarding records do not provide the information needed for leaders to assure themselves that pupils are safe in school.
- Standards in this part are not 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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	106814
DfE registration number	371/6005
Inspection number	10183094

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 special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Hesley Group
Chair	Graham Smith
Headteacher	Geoff Turner
Annual fees (day pupils)	£73,875.75
Telephone number	01302 856382
Website	https://www.hesleygroup.co.uk
Email address	whsadmin@hesleygroup.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	11–13 December 2018

Information about this school

- Wilsic Hall School has capacity for 36 pupils. There are currently 31 on roll, all of whom have education, health and care plans.
- Pupils are taught in eight mixed-age classes. Pupils with similar needs are grouped together.

- All the pupils have complex needs. Most have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and some have a range of other diagnoses.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- The school's last standard inspection was in December 2018, when it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Hesley Group and is overseen by the directors of the Hesley Group. Governance arrangements consist of an education board which reports to the group's board of directors.
- There is a head of education who oversees the daily running of the school. The head of site oversees the head of education.
- The school recently appointed two new deputy headteachers. They work part-time at Wilsic Hall School and part-time at Fullerton House School.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was carried out following complaints received by the Department for Education (DfE) about pupils' safety and well-being. The inspection focused on whether the school meets the independent school standards relating to pupils' safety and welfare.
- The inspection was a no-notice emergency inspection. This is the second emergency inspection the school has received since its full standard inspection in December 2018, when it was judged to be good. The first non-notice emergency inspection was undertaken in February 2020. At this inspection, the school was found to meet all the standards that were checked.
- The lead inspector undertook a guided tour of the school and visited all classrooms, observing learning from a safe distance in accordance with the COVID-19 rules of the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation and policies. They checked the single central register, safeguarding arrangements and procedures, logs of safeguarding concerns, including concerns raised by staff about pupils and by staff about the conduct of other staff members. Inspectors also scrutinised behaviour incident logs, which include details of restraints.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Debbie Redshaw

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.
- 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; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

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

- 18(2)(c)(ii) the person's medical fitness;
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
- 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)(a) MB-
 - 20(6)(a)(i) is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that individual is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 of that Act; and
 - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 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(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)(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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