

# Inspection of Colours Academy

Redlake Trading Estate, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0EZ

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Inspection dates: 14–16 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have failed to create an effective culture of safeguarding. As a result, some pupils do not disclose serious concerns about their safety to staff. The school site is unsafe.

The quality of education is poor. The curriculum is not designed to meet the needs of all pupils. Some pupils are not supported effectively to learn to read. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with education, health and care (EHC) plans, do not learn well. Many cannot access the curriculum successfully.

Some parents have a positive view of the school. However, there are serious systemic weaknesses. Leaders have failed to meet the basic requirements set out in the independent school standards. Leaders do not provide staff with the training they need to meet the social, emotional and academic needs of the pupils attending. The curriculum does not support pupils' personal development well enough.

Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Pupils are usually well mannered. However, sometimes pupils call out and interrupt in lessons or lose concentration. There are limited things for pupils to do at social times. Pupils told inspectors that bullying does not happen.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, has not ensured that the independent school standards are met. Fundamental processes and policies are not established or implemented effectively to keep pupils safe. Therefore, pupils are at risk of harm. Leadership capacity is weak.

Leaders are not alert to the risks posed by the school site. For example, pupils can gain access to the neighbouring industrial units through an unlocked door where electrical wiring is exposed. School gates are unlocked. Staff do not supervise pupils vigilantly at the drop-off point in the morning and afternoon. Pupils can access the high-speed main line railway line through a broken fence. The risk assessment policy is not effective. Risk assessments do not identify all obvious risks accurately or identify appropriate actions to mitigate them.

Leaders do not check that their policies and procedures to protect pupils' welfare, health and safety are being implemented successfully. For example, pupils can access scalding hot water in the food technology kitchen and in the toilets by the gym. There are no showers in the changing room and no washing facility in the medical room. Dangerous chemicals are left unlocked in the staff kitchen, which is accessed by pupils. The fire prevention arrangements at the school are not fit for purpose. The proprietor has not made sure that fire doors

and fire equipment are accessible at all times. One fire door has been closed by a metal shutter. This is not safe.

Leaders have not ensured that the quality of the curriculum meets requirements in all subjects. The curriculum does not take into account the needs of all pupils, particularly pupils who have EHC plans. The content of the curriculum in some subjects is not implemented in a way that all pupils can access. Staff do not use their checks on what pupils can and cannot do to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Many pupils have significant gaps in knowledge. The curriculum does not identify and address this adequately. Some staff do not have the subject knowledge they need. As a consequence, the quality of adult support is weak, and pupils do not get the extra help they require to progress.

Curriculum plans are not well sequenced in some subjects. The curriculum is poorly implemented and does not structure pupils' knowledge and skills effectively year on year. This limits what pupils know and remember. Some school resources and facilities are poor in quality. For example, there are no adequate resources for physical education (PE). The outside space does not enable pupils to learn the sports outlined in the curriculum.

Leaders do not prioritise reading. Staff have identified the need for a phonics programme to teach pupils to read. However, staff have not received the appropriate training and there is no phonics programme in place.

Pupils' attitudes vary. When the curriculum meets pupils' needs, pupils listen, take part and demonstrate positive attitudes. When the curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils, particularly those with EHC plans, their attitudes to learning dip.

Pupils usually behave well around school and demonstrate empathy and kindness towards each other. They embrace diversity and are respectful of different views. However, the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum does not enable pupils to learn about the world around them as effectively as it could. The curriculum plan sets out the importance of learning about fundamental British values. However, its implementation is not fully effective. For example, staff do not correct pupils' misunderstandings about democracy.

The proprietor does not ensure that complaints are investigated appropriately and with rigour. The complaints scrutinised by inspectors were left unresolved.

Leaders do not keep the admissions register up to date. Behaviour logs are maintained but lack clarity and accuracy. Attendance has historically been highly erratic, which has had a significant impact on pupils' learning. Leaders have not acted with tenacity to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.

The school's accessibility plan does not meet the requirements of paragraph 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Leaders have not made sure that safeguarding arrangements meet the latest guidance from the Secretary of State set out in 'Keeping children safe in education', 2021.

Staff do not identify concerns promptly. Leaders have not ensured that all staff understand how to report a concern about a pupil who might be in danger. Documentation about safeguarding is disorganised and not followed up. Leaders do not routinely make referrals to external agencies when they have information that a child may be at risk. Leaders do not refer staff who may be a risk to children to the designated officer.

Leaders have not established a culture of safeguarding among pupils at the school. As a result, pupils try to cope with situations that are unsafe rather than disclose their concerns to members of staff.

Safer recruitment processes are poor. Leaders do not carry out all the necessary recruitment checks before staff start working at the school. The proprietor does not check the information held on supply staff by their employment agency or record agency staff who work at the school on the single central record.

The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The proprietor and leaders have failed to ensure that the independent school standards and associated requirements are met. Leaders do not have a strong understanding of the standards. They have not put systems in place to monitor the school's effectiveness and compliance with the standards. Leaders should ensure that they are suitably knowledgeable about the standards, and they design and implement systems to assure themselves that all standards are met in full.
- Leaders have failed to create an effective culture of safeguarding. This puts pupils at serious risk of harm. Pupils are not safe. Leaders must ensure that all staff understand their statutory duty to keep pupils safe, as outlined in 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- Leaders have not ensured that the welfare, health and safety arrangements in the school site are effective. The school site is not safe. This leaves pupils seriously at risk of harm. Leaders must ensure that the site is safe and secure, school risk assessments are accurate and applied, the school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order 2005), and staff supervision is adequate.
- Safer recruitment systems are poor. The proprietor has not made necessary checks to provide assurances that staff are suitable to work with children. The

proprietor must ensure that they make all necessary checks in line with current legislation and the school's single central record meets requirements.

- The quality of education provided is poor. The reading curriculum is not prioritised. Staff do not have sufficient subject expertise or resources to teach pupils who are at an early stage of reading. Leaders need to ensure that they implement an effective phonics programme, and train staff so that the teaching of early reading enables pupils to read accurately and access their work in all subjects well.
- Curriculum planning and its implementation are weak. Some subjects focus on a series of disconnected activities rather than well-sequenced lessons. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is well sequenced so that pupils gain the breadth of knowledge they need to make good progress through the curriculum.
- Teaching resources are too often poor. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have access to the facilities and resources they need to ensure that pupils learn well, and make progress, including in PE.
- The curriculum does not take account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, particularly pupils with EHC plans. This restricts pupils' learning in a number of subjects. Some pupils disengage. Leaders need to ensure that staff use assessment information, including the information in pupils' EHC plans, precisely to adapt the curriculum so that all pupils make good progress in all areas of the curriculum and behave well.
- Leaders do not ensure that staff are suitably knowledgeable about what they are teaching. Staff subject knowledge is weak, and pupils do not receive adequate support. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have the knowledge they need so that pupils' academic, social and emotional needs are met.
- The policy and implementation of the school complaints procedure are not fit for purpose. Complaints are not investigated properly. The proprietor must ensure that the school's complaints procedure meets the minimum standards as set out in the independent school standards.
- Leaders do not manage or organise school information effectively. The admissions register is not up to date. Leaders must ensure that all required information relating to admissions, behaviour and exclusions, and pupils' academic performance for the preceding year are up to date and readily available.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147614
<b>DfE registration number</b>	878/6083
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10196585
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	56
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	3
<b>Proprietor</b>	Victoria Poole-Birrell
<b>Chair</b>	Not applicable
<b>Headteacher</b>	Victoria Poole-Birrell
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£6,600
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 893526
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.colours.academy">www.colours.academy</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@colours.academy">enquiries@colours.academy</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Colours Academy is an independent school in south Devon.
- This is the first standard inspection of the school following its opening in 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There are currently two pupils in the sixth-form provision.
- There is a large proportion of pupils with EHC plans at the school.
- The proprietor has breached the terms of the school's registration. There are more pupils attending the school than the number permitted. Pupils younger than the specified age range attend the school in a key stage 2 class.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, subject leaders and some teaching staff who were present during the inspection.
- Inspectors also met with the headteacher as the proprietor.
- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: English, science, art and PSHE. This involved talking to subject leaders, teachers and pupils about the subjects. They also scrutinised curriculum plans and pupils' work and visited lessons.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements were reviewed. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the school's recruitment checks and talked to pupils about their physical and emotional safety.
- Inspectors talked to pupils at breaktimes, lunchtimes and during the school day.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the admissions register, health and safety documentation and pupils' attendance records.
- Inspectors looked at 18 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and 15 free-text responses. There were no pupil or staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires.



## **Inspection team**

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nathan Kemp

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
  - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
  - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
  - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
  - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
  - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

#### **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.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].

- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].
- 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) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
  - 18(2)(d) the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is–
  - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether–
  - 21(3)(a)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
  - 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d).

#### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils;
  - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
  - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
  - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable–

- 29(1)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum.

## **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)(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(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
  - 32(3)(a) particulars of the school’s policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions;
  - 32(3)(e) particulars of the school’s academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations.

## **Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled**

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which–
  - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
  - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
  - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
  - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is–
    - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
    - 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
  - 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and–
    - 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
    - 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

## **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.

### **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010**

- The school's accessibility plan does not comply with paragraph 3 of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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