

New Skill Centre

Wolsey House, 2–5 The Drift, Nacton Road, Ipswich IP3 9QR

Inspection date

16 November 2021

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i)

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a written policy on the curriculum. The policy includes leaders' vision and aims for the curriculum. It describes the outcomes they expect pupils to achieve during their time at school and what staff will do to ensure this happens.
- There is a long-term plan of what pupils will learn in each key stage in place. There are schemes of work for all subjects. These schemes of work take into account the different ages and abilities of pupils, and the information contained in their education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- The standard is now met.

Paragraph 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)

- The proprietor has taken action to improve the quality of teaching. New teachers have been appointed. New curriculum plans for all subjects are in place. Weekly training is provided to enable staff to develop their teaching.
- Teaching is well planned. Pupils' books show that teachers follow the schemes of work planned for each term. Pupils learn new knowledge and develop a range of literacy and numeracy, and practical, skills. Learning is taught in an orderly way so that pupils can recall and use learning they have done previously.
- In lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge. They develop positive relations with pupils. Pupils respect staff and behave themselves. During discussions, staff deal sensitively with pupils' views and questions raised. This helps to motivate pupils, encourage them to think for themselves and show interest in their work.
- Teachers assess at regular intervals how well pupils are doing. Staff report on the progress made by pupils each term. They mark pupils' work and give them good-quality written feedback about how well they are doing and what they could do to improve.
- The standard is now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 12

- The proprietor has taken necessary steps to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- The school now complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Checks have been made of the newly refurbished premises. New emergency lighting, fire doors and signage have been installed. Fire extinguishers are regularly checked and maintained. Fire drills are carried out each term to test the evacuation of the building. An Emergency Fire Plan is published on the school's website.
- The standard is now met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- A written risk assessment policy is in place. This is used to inform daily checks of hazards and risks on the premises. Checks of the school's health and safety procedures and the arrangements made to keep pupils safe are carried out each term by leaders and the proprietor.
- Implementation of the policy is reviewed in regular meetings between the headteacher and the proprietor. Risk assessments are amended when new hazards are identified. For example, the policy was amended following effective action taken to reinforce the perimeter fencing.
- The standard is now met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b) 24(2)

- The proprietor has ensured that suitable premises and accommodation are provided.
- Significant investment has taken place to refurbish and extend the school. A room for the medical examination and treatment of pupils is in place. It has a sink with hot water and is next door to a toilet. The room is always available solely for attending to pupils' medical needs.
- The standard is now met.

Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c)

- New toilets have been installed with washing facilities and an adequate supply of hot and cold running water.
- Cold water suitable for drinking is always available in the kitchen used by pupils. They are provided with their own water bottles to fill up and use during the day. The tap for drinking water is clearly marked as such.
- The standard is now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c)

- The proprietor has not ensured that information about what pupils will learn is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils. Information about exactly what pupils will learn in the subjects they study is not published on the school's

website. There is no information about how pupils' learning is enriched by providing them a broad range of curricular experiences.

- Information about teaching is shared with parents and prospective parents. Policies for the curriculum and special educational needs and/or disabilities explain how teachers will plan learning matched to the abilities and interests of pupils. They include information about the different approaches taken by staff to enable pupils to gain new knowledge and increase their understanding.
- Information about safeguarding pupils and the actions taken to promote their welfare is available on the school's website. This includes an updated safeguarding policy and the procedures followed by staff to keep pupils safe. Further policies for health and safety, behaviour management and overseeing pupils' mental health and well-being all include actions to keep pupils safe. A policy to manage the risks attached to operating the school during the COVID-19 pandemic is also in place.

■ The standard is not met.

Paragraph 32(2), 32(2)(b)(ii)

- The school's address, telephone number, the name of the headteacher and the name and contact details of the proprietor are all published on the school website.

■ The standard is now met.

Paragraph 32(3), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(f)

- The curriculum policy is shared on the school's website. The policy and procedures provide information to parents and prospective parents about the overall aims of the curriculum and the procedures leaders and other staff will follow to enable pupils to learn effectively.
- Details of the school's complaints policy and procedures are published on the school's website.
- The standard is now met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(f)–33(k)

- The proprietor has ensured that a complaints policy and procedure to deal with complaints from parents are in place.
- The policy and procedure include information about the next stage to take if parents are not satisfied with the response to the complaint.
- It describes how panel hearings will be held, and who can attend these meetings, including parents and a panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school.
- It explains the procedures for investigating a complaint, maintaining written records and making this information available for inspection on the school premises.
- It explains how findings of investigations will be made available to the complainant, whether the complaint has been fully resolved and the actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint.

- The implementation of this policy has not been fully tested as the school has not received any formal complaints since the previous inspection.
- The standard is now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor has not ensured that school leaders have taken the necessary action to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Not enough has been done to provide information to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils about the curriculum and what pupils will learn in each subject during each key stage.
- At the previous inspection, the school's website was underdeveloped. Leaders have made some improvements, but currently the website remains a priority for further development. This work is under way and leaders anticipate that all information, including details of the curriculum, will be available to parents on the school website by next term.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has made significant improvements to the school. Buildings have been refurbished and new facilities added. Leadership is much more established and pastoral leadership has been strengthened. Newly appointed staff and improved curriculum planning have strengthened the quality of education provided.
- Less progress has been made in establishing governance for the school. Work is under way to enlist people with experience in education and care to form an advisory panel to oversee governance.
- The standard is 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. 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	146332
DfE registration number	935/6013
Inspection number	10210655

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 school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	22
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Centre for Care T/A New Skill Centre
Chair	Jo Kerley
Headteacher	Mr Mark Winston
Annual fees (day pupils)	As per Suffolk Local Authority Higher Needs Funding
Telephone number	01473 290 276
Website	www.newskillcentre.com
Email address	mark@newskillcentre.org
Dates of previous standard inspection	12 to 14 November 2019

Information about this school

- New Skill Centre registered with the Department for Education (DfE) as an independent special school on 8 April 2019.
- The school's registered capacity is for 40 pupils aged 11 to 16 years. Two of the 23 pupils on roll in the main school are dual registered with their mainstream school and attend the centre for two days each week.

- The school is registered to cater for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those relating to autism spectrum disorder, cognition and learning, emotional and social development, communication and interaction, sensory and/or physical needs, and physical disability. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- During this inspection, leaders indicated that a further 22 pupils aged 16 to 19 currently attend the school. The age and number of these pupils exceed the school's capacity. This is not recorded on the government's get information about school's (GIAS) website.
- The proprietor has asked the DfE for a material change inspection. However, the proprietor has not informed the department that the age range and numbers of pupils attending the school has already changed.
- The proprietor body is a private limited company, consisting of one director and one shareholder.
- The school does not have a governing body. It is in the process of setting up an advisory panel to oversee its work.
- The school shares its site with an established provision for older students and adults who have learning disabilities, and those in need of rehabilitation following medical treatment.
- The school does not make use of any alternative, off-site provision.
- The school does not use supply staff.

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.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, a pastoral leader and the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector toured the school with the headteacher to see the work carried out to ensure that the standards relating to premises and accommodation are fully met.
- He visited lessons in English, mathematics, science, cookery and personal, social and health education to observe pupils at work.
- He reviewed a range of policies and documents, and other information shared by leaders.
- He met with three designated leaders for safeguarding, and reviewed the school's single central record.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

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].

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; and
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

The school now meets the following requirements of the 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 with an EHC plan.
- 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(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; and
- 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

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 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 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 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; and
 - 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.
- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 28(1)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water; and
 - 28(1)(c) cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is:
 - 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)(c) particulars of the policy referred to in paragraph 2; and
 - 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 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 the 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); and
 - 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

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