

Manorway Independent School

The Old St Justus Church, Strood, Rochester, Chatham ME2 2HG

Inspection dates

7–8 December 2021

Overall outcome

The school meets 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)(b)(i), 2(2)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(h)

- At the school's full standard inspection in December 2019, the requirements in the paragraphs of the independent school standards relating to the quality of education were not met. This was because inspectors found pupils' learning to be disjointed. Temporary staff were unaware of what pupils knew or could do and written plans for what pupils should learn in different subject areas were not delivered well.
- Leaders have reviewed the full range of policies and plans relating to the school's curriculum. The overarching curriculum policy is supplemented by individual curriculum policies which, in turn, are supported by detailed termly plans. The school's curriculum offer is now documented thoroughly. The timetable ensures that pupils have plentiful opportunities to acquire speaking, listening and numeracy skills, including across a range of subjects and activities.
- Pupils' learning needs are known and considered by leaders and the staff who work with them. Overarching plans are continually adjusted according to each pupil's specific needs. Requirements and advice set out in education, health and care (EHC) plans are adhered to.
- There is now a greater focus on reading. Staff know that the ability to read fluently is vital to each pupil's success, both immediately and in the longer term. New resources have recently been purchased to ensure that pupils have access to books that match their phonics knowledge well. Staff have differing degrees of expertise in phonics. Leaders have prioritised further staff training to ensure that, regardless of the age of the pupils they teach, all staff are confident to teach and support early reading effectively. Pupils read daily in school, aloud to staff and quietly to themselves.

Paragraph 3, 3(c), 3(d)

- At the last standard inspection, leaders had not ensured that teaching was planned to allow pupils to make good progress. Expectations of staff were too low.

- Although there have been further changes to staffing, the rigorous oversight and support of the headteacher has reaped positive change. The headteacher conveys her ambition that all pupils will gain from attending Manorway Independent School. There is a clear intention that pupils will learn to read well, will engage in a broad, stimulating and challenging curriculum, and will experience trips and opportunities to broaden their horizons and prepare them for their next steps in education. Staff support the headteacher's vision and their aspirations for pupils have been raised.
- All staff understand that new learning must build on what pupils already know and can do. Staff have an increased awareness that each pupil brings a different set of educational experiences, frequently generating barriers additional to the known special educational needs. Staff know that the approach they take is critical to engaging pupils in their learning.
- Formal and informal assessments are built into the school's routine. During the monitoring visit, pupils in all classes were undertaking formal assessments across the breadth of the curriculum. Pupils engaged in these assessments in a focused manner, encouraged by staff to demonstrate their new learning. Ongoing formal and informal assessments are reviewed by the headteacher and staff and used to adjust termly planning.
- With the routine oversight of the headteacher, staff plan and adjust daily learning in response to pupils' understanding, participation and progress. This detail is reflected clearly in pupils' workbooks. During this monitoring visit the inspector scrutinised pupils' learning in English, mathematics, science, geography and physical education. Pupils' workbooks throughout the school demonstrated that curriculum plans are being adhered to and pupils are accessing the full curriculum offer.
- The school now meets all previously unmet standards in Part 1.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The safeguarding requirements relating to this standard were met at the last full inspection in December 2019 and also at the material change inspection of July 2020. Safeguarding requirements continue to be met.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. The safeguarding policy has been updated to reflect most recent guidance and is published on the school's website. Staff are vigilant and are clear about what actions to take to protect vulnerable pupils.
- The school continues to meet the standards checked in Part 3.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(b)

- Aspects of Part 5 were not met at the previous standard inspection because pupils did not have sufficient opportunities to play outside.
- The school has since moved to a new site with sufficient outdoor space for pupils to play. Some outdoor improvements, such as the laying of artificial grass, are underway. Leaders know that the outside area, while of a good size, is not enticing and would benefit from further improvement.

- The school now meets all previously unmet standards in Part 5.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(b)

- Part 8 was not met at the standard inspection of December 2019 because leaders had not ensured that the independent school standards were consistently met. Leaders and those responsible for governance had an insufficient understanding of the standards in school. Previous improvements had not been sustained and, in particular, the planned curriculum was not being implemented well enough.
- Since that time leaders have instituted a new regime for monitoring and checking that the independent school standards are met. Those with responsibility for governance have ensured that they understand the independent school standards and are therefore able to apply more effective scrutiny in their roles. This greater scrutiny and understanding are reflected in the minutes of governing body meetings. Collectively, leaders have a clear focus on improving the school further and plans are in place to support this.
- The headteacher has a detailed knowledge of the school curriculum and how it is delivered in each classroom. She uses a range of information, such as scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and dialogue with pupils and staff, to determine what is going well and what must be a priority for further improvement. Staff training is routine but has continued to be hampered by staff turnover.
- Leaders have ensured that previously unmet aspects of Part 8 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 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;
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 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.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 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)(b) pupils to play outside.

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

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| Unique reference number | 142411 |
| DfE registration number | 887/6009 |
| Inspection number | 10214052 |

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.

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| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 8 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 15 |
| Number of part-time pupils | None |
| Proprietor | Manorway Academy |
| Headteacher | Juliana Dugbatey |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £15,600 to £23,000 |
| Telephone number | 01634 713 344 |
| Website | www.manorwayindependentschool.com |
| Email address | office@manorwayacademy.com |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 3–5 December 2019 |

Information about this school

- Since the standard inspection of December 2019, the school has moved to new premises. A material change inspection to consider the new premises took place in July 2020, when standards in Parts 3, 4 and 5 were judged to be met. Unmet standards in Part 1, relating to the quality of education and teaching, were not considered as part of the material change inspection in July 2020.
- A new governing body has been established. The group includes the headteacher.
- Since the last full inspection, a number of staff have joined and left the school. Recruitment is underway for permanent class teachers and an experienced special educational needs coordinator.

- Pupils are admitted to the school via two local authorities. All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils have an EHC plan.
- 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 standard inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, staff and pupils. The inspector scrutinised a wide range of policy and curriculum documentation and looked at a significant sample of pupils' work in English, mathematics, geography and physical education. Meetings with staff included discussions about the curriculum and how it is delivered. Discussions were also held about formal and informal assessments and the efficacy of these.
- Visits were made by the inspector and headteacher to each class and a range of learning activities and assessments were seen taking place.
- The single central record and safeguarding arrangements were reviewed.
- This inspection also included consideration of the school's material change request to increase the number of pupils that the school is registered to admit.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a material change to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

The outcome of this part of the inspection is: the school is likely meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.

- Leaders wish to increase the school roll from 15 to 20. The request is appropriate in the context of the provision and the findings of this progress monitoring inspection. Leaders have ensured that the school has the capacity to increase the maximum number of pupils up to 20. The school is likely to meet the independent school standards if the request is approved.

Information about the material change inspection

- The material change aspect of this inspection was considered as part of the progress monitoring inspection. The inspector took into account the impact that additional pupils would have on pupils currently at the school, as well as other relevant factors regarding the request.

Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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