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Inspection of the school at Hackney City Farm

1a, Goldsmith, Row, Hackney E2 8QA

Inspection dates:

26 to 28 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are settled here. Routines and expectations for them are clear. However, leaders have not fulfilled all their statutory safeguarding duties. This means that pupils are not kept safe.

Staff work closely with pupils to help them manage their emotions. This supports pupils in behaving well on site and talking to staff if they are worried, including about bullying. However, pupils' understanding of how to stay safe is limited. Leaders have not complied with the statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). There is no curriculum in place to support pupils' understanding of respectful and healthy relationships, online safety or sexual health. This means pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils enjoy working on the farm, in the on-site shop or as 'apprentice baristas' in the farm café. They engage well in the activities provided in the classroom and around the site. Pupils talk positively about their visits to Southend or the Tower Bridge Experience. However, pupils do not follow a broad or ambitious curriculum in different subjects. This does not prepare them well for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

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

The proprietor and governing body have not secured sufficient leadership capacity for the school. The school's effectiveness has declined since the previous inspection.

The quality of education is inadequate. Pupils do not follow a sufficiently broad curriculum. They do not routinely follow scientific, technological or creative subjects unless they show interest. When they do, leaders have not considered what knowledge pupils need to learn in these areas to develop their understanding. Instead, pupils complete one-off activities that do not build on previous learning. These do not help them to learn and understand more over time or prepare them for more complex ideas.

The curriculum for English and mathematics is designed to help pupils achieve functional skills qualifications at the end of Year 11. Teachers assess pupils' understanding of the curriculum using previous examination papers before tackling any misconceptions. Little guidance or training is provided in helping pupils to learn effectively. Staff do not always have the appropriate subject knowledge to identify or explain what pupils find difficult. Misconceptions are not fully addressed or pupils given sufficient opportunities to practise what they need to learn. As a result, errors and misconceptions persist in pupils' work.

Staff understand the social, emotional and behavioural difficulties faced by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This allows staff to provide appropriate support that engages pupils positively.

Pupils behave well. They are courteous with visitors to the school and farm site. Pupils sustain concentration in the activities provided for them, engaging positively in the tasks they are set. Leaders prioritise developing pupils' character. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils learn the importance of teamwork, following rules and accepting the decisions of others. They are then expected to model these behaviours in the classroom. This supports pupils in showing respect for adults and towards each other and creates a positive atmosphere.

Pupils' attendance and punctuality is variable. Leaders make contact with families to follow up absences and lateness. On occasion, leaders send pupils home following specific incidents. These are not recorded as fixed-term exclusions in the attendance register. This constitutes leaders' illegal use of exclusion.

Pupils understand that people should be treated equally and that racist language is inappropriate. However, they are less clear about how to stay safe online or what constitutes a healthy and appropriate relationship. This is because there are no lessons in RSHE.

Pupils receive effective careers guidance. They benefit from personalised interviews and support with applications to different further education providers. Pupils access a variety of work experience on the farm site and with external organisations. For example, some pupils have completed work experience with local media and music production companies.

Leaders, including the proprietor and governing body, do not have sufficient awareness or understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have not maintained the necessary oversight of the school and, therefore, hold an inaccurate view of its effectiveness. Their priorities for improvement are not focused on addressing the school's key weaknesses. Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel that leaders listen to and value their idea and opinions.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff have not received training on keeping pupils safe. They are unclear what to do if, for example, they had concerns about the conduct of adults working in the setting. Leaders do not keep records of concerns raised by staff or with external agencies. This makes it impossible for them to follow these up in a timely way.

Leaders do not maintain a register of admissions and details of pupils who have left the school. This increases the risk of pupils going missing in education. Although pre-employment checks are made, leaders do not enter them on a single central

record in accordance with statutory guidance. This means they do not have an overview of staff's suitability to work at the school.

Leaders have ensured the premises are safe. Staff manage risks associated with working on the farm, using power tools or when cooking. Pupils are safe when engaging in these activities. However, the same consideration has not been given to managing risks during off-site visits.

There is a planned programme of activities aimed at helping pupils understand how to stay safe. This includes proposed workshops on the risks of knife crime and radicalisation. However, these have not yet been delivered to the current cohort of pupils. This limits pupils' understanding of what it means to be safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders, including the proprietor and governing body, have not fulfilled all their statutory duties relating to safeguarding. This means that pupils are not kept safe. Leaders must ensure that they keep accurate and complete records of admissions and any safeguarding referrals made within school or to external agencies. Leaders must also ensure that pre-employment checks on staff are completed and recorded on the single central record. Leaders must provide all staff with up-to-date safeguarding training. Leaders must also ensure that procedures for assessing and managing risk for off-site visits are completed.
- Leaders, including the proprietor and governing body, do not ensure fixed-term exclusions are recorded correctly. This constitutes illegal use of exclusions and puts pupils at risk. Leaders must ensure fixed-term exclusions are recorded and reported appropriately.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently broad. Pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for the next stages of their education, employment or training. Leaders must develop a curriculum beyond English and mathematics that is ambitious and identifies the important knowledge pupils need to learn. Leaders must ensure it is well sequenced so that pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise and remember what is important. This will support pupils to understand more complex ideas later.
- Leaders, including the proprietor and governing body, have not provided adequate training for staff in supporting pupils with their academic and learning needs. This means staff do not address misconceptions fully or give pupils sufficient opportunity to practise what they need to learn. Leaders must ensure staff have appropriate subject knowledge to support pupils' learning effectively in different subjects.
- There is no curriculum in place for RSHE. This means pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders must comply with the statutory guidance and enable pupils to develop their understanding of respectful and healthy relationships, safety online and sexual health.

- Leaders, including the proprietor and governing body, do not have enough awareness or understanding of their statutory responsibilities. They have not made sure the requirements of the independent school standards are met. The proprietor needs to ensure there is sufficient leadership capacity to address the weaknesses identified during the inspection. They must also ensure they are more accurate in identifying priorities for improvement and robust in holding leaders to account in making those improvements.

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

Unique reference number	141737
DfE registration number	204/6011
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10214682
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	David Brook
Headteacher	Adrian Johnson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,063
Telephone number	020 7729 6381
Website	https://hackneycityfarm.co.uk
Email address	adrian@hackneycityfarm.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 to 15 March 2018

Information about this school

- The school at Hackney City Farm operates as an alternative education provider for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school opened in 2005 within a farm that is open to the public. It gained registration as an independent school in 2015.
- This was the school's third standard inspection. The school was last inspected in 2018 and was judged to be good.
- The school is registered to admit up to 10 pupils aged from 13 to 17. None of the pupils currently on roll are in the sixth form. Four pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are referred to the school by New Regent's College in Hackney, the local authority pupil referral unit, which commissions alternative provision for key stage 4 pupils. Most of them continue to be jointly registered with the school which they originally attended.
- The proprietor is the chair of trustees of Hackney City Farm Limited. There is a board of three governors, which includes the farm manager.
- The school does not use any other alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PE and personal, social, health and economic education. To do this, they met with leaders, had discussions with staff, visited lessons and looked at pupil's work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.

- Inspectors conducted a telephone call with the chair of the governing body. They also spoke with representatives of New Regent's College. It was not possible to speak with the proprietor during the inspection.
- The inspection team reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and pupils. Inspectors also toured the premises and looked at documentation and policies to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- The views of staff, as gathered through discussions and Ofsted's surveys, were considered. There were no responses from pupils or parents to the online inspection surveys. Inspectors were able to speak with one parent via telephone.

Inspection team

Nick Turvey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sophie Healey-Welch

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)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
 - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2),
 - 2A(1)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b),
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e), and
 - 2A(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.
- 2A(2) Arrangements made by the proprietor for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b) must ensure that where a pupil's parent requests that the pupil is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of relationships and sex education, the pupil is so excused until the request is withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the head teacher considers that the pupil should not be so excused.
- 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;
- 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- 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.
- 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)(a) no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act;
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends 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;
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person-

- 18(2)(c)(i) the person’s identity;
 - 18(2)(c)(ii) the person’s medical fitness;
 - 18(2)(c)(iii) the person’s right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 18(2)(c)(iv) where appropriate, the person’s qualifications;
 - 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;
 - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person’s suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 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.
- 19(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
- 19(2)(a) a person offered for supply by an employment business to the school only begins to work at the school if the proprietor has received-
 - 19(2)(a)(i) written notification from the employment business in relation to that person-
 - 19(2)(a)(i)(aa) that the checks referred to in paragraph 21(3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vii) and (b) have been made to the extent relevant to that person;
 - 19(2)(a)(i)(bb) that, where relevant to that person, an enhanced criminal record check has been made and that it or another employment business has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate in response to such a check;
 - 19(2)(a)(i)(cc) if the employment business has obtained such a certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school, whether it disclosed any matter or information; and
 - 19(2)(a)(i)(dd) that, where that person is one for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person’s suitability to work in a school, it or another employment business has obtained such further checks as appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
 - 19(2)(a)(ii) a copy of any enhanced criminal record certificate obtained by an employment business before the person is due to begin work at the school;
 - 19(2)(b) a person offered for supply by an employment business only begins work at the school if the proprietor considers that the person is suitable for the work for which the person is supplied;
 - 19(2)(c) before a person offered for supply by an employment business begins work at the school the person’s identity is checked by the proprietor of the

school (irrespective of any such check carried out by the employment business before the person was offered for supply);

- 19(2)(d) the proprietor, in the contract or other arrangements which the proprietor makes with any employment business, requires the employment business to provide-
 - 19(2)(d)(i) the notification referred to in paragraph (a)(i); and
 - 19(2)(d)(ii) a copy of any enhanced criminal record certificate which the employment business obtains.
- 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(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(2) The register referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form.
- 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)(i) S's identity was checked;
 - 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to 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 such a direction;
 - 21(3)(a)(iv) checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications;
 - 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);
 - 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.
- 21(4) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member of staff in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007, whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (3) was made and whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained.
- 21(5) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to supply staff-
- 21(5)(a) whether written notification has been received from the employment business that-
 - 21(5)(a)(i) checks corresponding to those referred to in sub-paragraph (3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vi) and (vii) have been made to the extent relevant to any such person; and
 - 21(5)(a)(ii) an enhanced criminal record check has been made and that it or another employment business has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate in response to such a check,
 - 21(5)(b) whether a check has been made in accordance with paragraph 19(2)(e) together with the date the check was completed.
- 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 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)(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.

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)(g) any information reasonably requested in connection with an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act which is required for the purposes of the inspection is provided to the body conducting the inspection and that body is given access to the school's admission and attendance registers.

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
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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