

# Begdale House School

Begdale Road, Elm, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 0AZ

**Inspection date**

28 April 2022

**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)*

- At the inspection in October 2021, these paragraphs were not met because there were weaknesses in the planning and implementation of the curriculum. Some subject plans did not identify the important knowledge that pupils should learn.
- Leaders and the proprietor have revised the curriculum policy. They ensure that pupils are now working towards achieving accredited qualifications in the subjects that they study. Leaders are broadening the range of subjects in which qualifications are available.
- Leaders ensure that yearly overviews and schemes of work are now in place for each subject. Yearly overviews vary in quality and detail about what pupils will learn. The underlying schemes of work are more detailed and are linked to the qualifications towards which pupils are working.
- In most cases, schemes of work identify the knowledge that pupils should learn. However, in a few subjects, such as physical education, these schemes still do not precisely identify the subject knowledge that pupils should learn.
- Leaders have increased the frequency of their checks on teachers' planning and visits to lessons. Although these are being used to identify where further improvements are required, leaders have not yet ensured that schemes of work in all subjects fully consider pupils' needs and that the curriculum is implemented effectively.
- Although improvements against the requirements in the paragraphs for this standard were seen, the standard remains unmet.

#### *Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(g)*

- At the inspection in October 2021, these standards were not met because staff had not received the training and guidance needed to help them plan effectively for pupils' learning over time. Some teachers lacked the subject knowledge required to teach across a range of subjects. Teachers did not always teach knowledge in a logical order to

help pupils deepen their understanding and make strong progress in all of the subjects they study. Additionally, assessment was not sufficiently developed across all subjects. Teachers did not routinely check the knowledge that pupils could remember from previous learning, or anticipate gaps in pupils' knowledge due to long periods out of education. Staff did not always use information from assessments to adapt their plans or teaching.

- Leaders' improvement plans include providing subject training and development opportunities for staff, revising subject plans for teaching and assessment, carrying out initial assessments when pupils join the school, and conducting a range of activities for monitoring the quality of education provided.
- Staff have taken part in subject forums with teachers from other schools that have the same proprietor. In this way, staff have received additional support to improve planning, teaching and assessment. Teachers can also access online training to improve their subject knowledge.
- In the subjects where staff have had training and have received feedback from leaders, improvements are evident. However, teachers have not had training across the range of subjects they teach, so these improvements are not evident across the range of subjects in the curriculum.
- In each subject, there are now ways of assessing pupils' attainment and progress at different points in the school year. In some subjects, these have only recently been established. Results from assessments in these subjects are not yet being used to adapt planning or teaching or to track progress. Pupils who are new to the school have completed assessments that help teachers identify their starting points and gaps in their knowledge in each subject. Leaders provide teachers with information to help them plan learning for individual pupils. However, for some pupils, this information is not precise enough to enable teachers to adapt lessons to support learning that effectively focuses on pupils' individual learning targets.
- The paragraphs included in this standard remain unmet.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)*

- At the inspection in October 2021, these standards were met.
- The school's safeguarding procedures remain effective. The safeguarding policy reflects the most recent guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE). The policy is available to parents and carers and is published on the school's page on the proprietor body's website.
- Leaders and the proprietor body ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority. Staff are acutely aware of the potential risks to pupils' safety. They are clear about how and when to report concerns. Leaders act on concerns promptly. Actions are clearly recorded and external agencies are involved appropriately to keep pupils safe. Pupils learn how to recognise a range of risks. They say that they feel safe and trust staff to act on any concerns.
- The paragraphs included in these standards continue to be met.

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

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i)–(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i)–(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i)–(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)–(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a)–(b)*

- At the inspection in October 2021, these standards were met.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that all of the required checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work in the school are completed thoroughly and are accurately recorded.
- The paragraphs included in these standards continue to be met.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(f)*

- At the inspection in October 2021, these standards were not met because in the previous academic year, the proprietor body had not provided parents with an annual report that gave information about pupils' attainment and progress in the main subjects taught.
- The proprietor has ensured that there is now a standard template for an annual report for parents. This gives information about pupils' attainment and progress in all of the subjects that they study. It also provides additional information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning. Procedures are in place so that the proprietor body can check that an annual report has been provided. This now ensures that all of the information that independent schools are required to provide is available.
- The paragraphs included in this standard are now met.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- These standards were not met at the inspection in October 2021 because leaders and the proprietor body had not ensured that all the independent school standards were met. School leaders, governors and the proprietor body had an overly generous view of the quality of education provided by the school.
- The action plan submitted by the proprietor body was evaluated in January 2022 and deemed as not acceptable because timescales for actions were not realistic. Actions lacked appropriate measurable success criteria. The plan did not explicitly address all of the unmet standards. The proprietor body and school leaders have not produced a revised action plan. Instead, they have incorporated actions to address the unmet independent school standards into their school improvement plan.
- Actions in the school improvement plan to address the unmet standards are generally appropriate. However, some actions need to be more precise and explicit in how they will address the unmet standards. For example, there is one broad action related to revising schemes of work and assessment processes. Success criteria for actions are identified, although it is not clear how some of these will be measured or how those monitoring the plan will know whether leaders are on track to bring about the improvements they intend. Timescales for completing actions are more realistic, as leaders and governors

recognise that more time is needed to bring about and embed the improvements that are needed.

- School leaders have increased their checks on the quality of education provided. These are being used to identify any further guidance and training that staff require. However, leaders have not yet checked that staff are using information about individual pupils' special educational needs to adapt their planning and schemes of work. Nor have they established checks on pupils' progress towards achieving personal targets, which would show small steps in their learning.
- The proprietor body has increased oversight of the school further. The proprietor has appointed a former headteacher to carry out audits of the educational provision at the school. These are providing an extra insight into the effectiveness of leaders' actions and helping leaders to focus their work to bring about improvement. As a result, the proprietor body and school leaders have a more accurate view of the quality of education provided. They know what still needs to improve to meet all of the independent school standards, and by doing so, to improve the quality of education provided.
- The proprietor has ensured that leaders have continued to improve the school. Extra texts have been purchased and a small library has been established to raise further the profile of reading in the school. Leaders have purchased a commercial programme to further support the teaching and assessment of reading. Leaders are actively seeking to recruit additional teachers with subject specialisms.
- The paragraphs included in this standard remain unmet.

## **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	136236
DfE registration number	873/6028
Inspection number	10226688

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 special school
Age range of pupils	10 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Keys Group
Chair	Nicola Kelly
Headteacher	Mrs Jo Murray
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,000 to £42,510
Telephone number	01945 860055
Website	<a href="http://www.keys-group.co.uk">www.keys-group.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:jo.murray@keys-group.co.uk">jo.murray@keys-group.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	12 to 14 October 2021

## Information about this school

- Begdale House School is a small day school. It is currently registered with the DfE to admit up to 16 pupils.
- The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils are in receipt of an education, health and care plan. Pupils are funded by local authorities. Most pupils arrive having been excluded from school or having missed long periods of education.

- In October 2018, Keys Group acquired the school. The previous proprietor was Direct Care Limited.
- The current headteacher was appointed in January 2021. She is also headteacher of another school, Westfield House School, which has the same proprietor. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2020.
- The school does not use agency staff. The school does not run any off-site specialist units or provision. The school does use an alternative provider that enables pupils to study for accredited qualifications in equine care. This provider is not registered or inspected by Ofsted.
- The school operates from two buildings on the same site.
- The school's first standard inspection, under the previous proprietor, was in July 2011, when the school was judged to be good.
- A material change inspection took place in July 2014, as the proprietor had requested an increase in capacity and the age range of pupils attending the school. The school was judged as likely to meet the relevant standards if the proposed changes were to be approved.
- A standard inspection took place in November 2014. The school was judged to be good.
- A standard inspection took place in September 2017. The school was judged as requires improvement. Two independent school standards were unmet.
- In January 2018, Ofsted evaluated the school's action plan to remedy the aspects of provision that did not meet the independent school standards in the previous inspection. The plan was judged to be acceptable.
- In August 2020, Ofsted conducted a material change inspection following a request to increase the capacity of the school to 16 pupils. The school was judged as likely to meet the relevant standards if the change were to be approved.
- A standard inspection took place in October 2021. The school was judged as requires improvement. Four independent school standards were unmet.
- In January 2022, Ofsted evaluated the school's action plan to address the independent school standards that were unmet at the previous standard inspection. The plan was deemed unacceptable.

## 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.
- At the standard inspection in October 2021, the school was judged to require improvement, and four independent school standards were unmet.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in October 2021. The DfE commissioned Ofsted to carry out this inspection as an unannounced inspection.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and staff. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the regional manager of The Keys Group. An inspector spoke to a group of pupils.
- Inspectors visited lessons to observe pupils learning and to look at their work. Inspectors also reviewed a range of school documents, including curriculum plans, schemes of work, curriculum, assessment and reporting policies, and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors looked at policies, documents and records relating to safeguarding, including the single central record. Inspectors held discussions with staff and pupils to evaluate their understanding of safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kay Leach

Ofsted Inspector



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

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection*

#### **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.
- 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 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 6. Provision of information**

- 32 (1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
  - 32(1)(f) an annual written report of each registered pupil’s progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught is provided to the parents of that registered pupil except that no report need be provided where the parent has agreed otherwise

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