

# Inspection of Fountain Head House School - Saltash

The Saltash Campus, Church Road, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4AE

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Inspection dates: 17 to 19 May 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Good**

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?**

Pupils experience a poorly planned curriculum. Leaders do not check that teachers teach all of the subjects they should. In addition, there is no clear curriculum thinking that links pupils' learning in each subject across the age range covered by the school.

Pupils in the early stages of learning to read are not well supported. There is no agreed approach to how phonics is taught. This does not affect the children in the early years as they are all pre-verbal and are supported well.

Pupils' personal development is not well considered. Leaders do not check that teachers cover all parts of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, which results in older pupils not getting sufficient careers advice and guidance.

Pupils develop warm, caring relationships with staff. The atmosphere around the school is welcoming and friendly. Well-trained staff provide effective support if a pupil becomes unsettled. Despite leaders' shortcomings in regard to safely recruiting staff, pupils say they feel safe and know staff will listen to their concerns.

In the early years, staff deliver well-organised learning. As a result, children engage enthusiastically in well-planned individual learning programmes. This supports their personal, physical and social development well.

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

The proprietor does not have an accurate understanding of the quality of education at the school. It has not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. Standards relating to the curriculum, PSHE, careers advice, safeguarding and leadership and management are unmet.

There are significant weaknesses in the quality of education. The school's leadership has failed to implement the curriculum and schemes of work seen at the time of the pre-registration inspection. Furthermore, leaders have not set up a phonics scheme to help pupils learn to read. Leaders do not have a well-thought-through approach to teaching reading. This hinders pupils as they begin to learn to read. However, in the early years, where the children are pre-verbal, the school's approach to developing speech and language is secure.

Since opening, leaders have focused on implementing a consistent behaviour management system throughout the school. Staff establish routines that help pupils settle and successfully take part in lessons. This has resulted in a warm, friendly atmosphere around the school. Staff manage behaviour well in lessons. Staff build trusting relationships with pupils. During breaktime and lunchtime, relaxed, happy pupils play well together. There are friendly, respectful relationships between pupils. When a pupil finds it difficult to cope, staff deal with the situation expertly. Staff care

for the pupils and support each other. As a result, behaviour is a strength in the school.

Due to the weak curriculum, individual teachers have resorted to teaching lessons based on experience gained in other schools. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They try to adapt learning to meet the needs of pupils. However, weaknesses in the curriculum mean pupils do not know more or learn more. Teachers do not use assessment effectively to check what pupils know. As a result, teaching is not consistently adapted to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders do not coordinate the curriculum well or oversee the quality of education effectively. As a result, it is unclear what pupils need to know in each subject. In addition, leaders do not know how pupils will develop their knowledge over time. This means that pupils do not learn content in a logical order. As a result, the school does not support pupils to achieve as well as they could.

By contrast, children in the early years get off to a good start. Children in the early years are pre-verbal. Leaders engage effectively with speech and language specialists to support children in developing their communication skills. Leaders have a well-considered approach to teaching. The curriculum is well sequenced, and adults are ambitious for children to succeed. Teachers plan sessions to support the children's learning according to the agreed curriculum. Each child has an individual plan.

The programme to support pupils' personal development is not well planned. Leaders have not established a system of oversight that checks that teachers plan lessons covering all areas of PSHE. As a result, leaders do not have a well-thought-out approach to careers advice and guidance for older pupils. However, the school's pastoral team helps pupils to develop resilience and self-confidence. Individually, teachers promote equality and diversity through their teaching. As a result, pupils understand the importance of respecting people with different lifestyles or from different cultures. Pupils show respect for rules. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

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

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The school's system for recruiting staff lacks rigour. The recruitment process does not pay regard to government guidance. Leaders have not ensured that the required pre-employment checks for new employees are completed.

Leaders provide staff with regular safeguarding training. Staff have secure knowledge of possible risks of harm that pupils may face. Staff share concerns with leaders through established routines. Leaders follow up on any concerns raised and work well with other agencies to ensure pupils get the support they need.

The school's safeguarding policy is available on its website. It reflects the latest national guidance.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Safeguarding arrangements are not effective. Leaders do not have a secure understanding of statutory safeguarding guidance in relation to recruitment of staff. The single central record contains significant gaps. As a result, leaders are not sure that all necessary checks have been made before the appointment of new employees. This puts pupils at risk. Leaders must improve their knowledge of statutory guidance and implement this stringently to keep pupils safe at school.
- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Leaders should know and understand all the standards and take action to ensure they are met consistently.
- The curriculum is not well planned and sequenced in all subjects. As a result, it is unclear what pupils need to know in each subject and year group. This means that pupils do not learn content in a logical order. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is well planned to enable pupils to develop secure knowledge in each subject.
- There is no phonics programme in place to help pupils learn to read. Staff are not adequately equipped to help pupils at the early stages of reading. Leaders should ensure that they plan and implement a systematic synthetic phonics programme.
- Leaders have not checked that teachers follow a well-organised curriculum in PSHE. As a result, leaders do not know where there are gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders need to establish a structured approach to teaching PSHE.
- Governance is weak. The proprietor has not ensured that there are adequate systems to check the impact of leaders' actions. This means that it does not hold leaders to account well enough to secure improvement in the school. The proprietor should ensure that more rigorous procedures are in place to check all aspects of the school's work.

## **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>	148497
<b>DfE registration number</b>	908/6012
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10230030
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	43
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Fountain Head House School Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Julie Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Thereza de Lucca
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	From £37,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 853891
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fhhschool.co.uk">www.fhhschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@fhhschool.co.uk">info@fhhschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is an independent special day school for pupils with education, health and care plans. Pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder.
- Since the school's pre-registration inspection in March 2021, the school has been led by two interim headteachers. A new, permanent, headteacher joined the school in May 2022.
- This was the first standard inspection of the school. The school was registered with the Department for Education on 7 April 2021.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## 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 met with the proprietor, the newly appointed headteacher and the interim headteachers. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of Cornwall County Council.
- Inspectors met with safeguarding leaders and reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including vetting checks on staff, employee files and the school's single central record.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including early reading), mathematics, PSHE and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team reviewed documentation, including information about pupils' attendance, and a range of evidence to consider pupils' safety, personal development and behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of evidence to check compliance with the independent school standards.

- Inspectors took into account the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- There were no responses to either the pupil or staff questionnaires.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Burgess, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tracy Hannon

Ofsted 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)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which-
    - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school's aim and ethos; and
    - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act;
  - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
    - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
    - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
    - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.
- 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.

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

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

#### **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)(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(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(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)(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)(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 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.

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