

Inspection of Springboard Education

55 South Street, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 8AN

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Many pupils join the school having experienced trauma and disrupted education. When pupils arrive, many have low self-esteem and confidence. Some are initially distrustful of adults. Staff care deeply about pupils and build positive, respectful relationships with them. They ensure that pupils who attend the school regularly are supported well to enable them to feel safe. However, there are weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements which put pupils potentially at risk of harm.

Through pupils' behaviour, they demonstrate that they feel secure and 'at home' in school. They enjoy making good use of the social spaces during lunchtimes. Most pupils continue to need a high degree of support and guidance to regulate their behaviour and manage their emotions. Pupils are encouraged to speak to an adult if they have any worries. Staff follow up on any concerns or incidents of bullying.

Pupils and students in the sixth form enjoy opportunities to learn important life skills, for example preparing meals and budgeting. Everyone wants the best for pupils at Springboard. However, there are weaknesses in the wider curriculum and personal development programme. As a result, pupils are not achieving well enough.

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

Proprietors and leaders articulate a clear moral purpose to make a positive difference in the lives of the pupils at Springboard. Since the previous inspection, there have been many leadership and staffing changes, including the appointment of the headteacher in November 2021. Along with the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, this has led to some instability in the school. Leaders have needed to address many significant staffing issues. This has limited their capacity to improve the quality of education. Some of the key recommendations from the last inspection have not yet been addressed. Proprietors recognise that they have not checked some aspects of the school or held leaders to account well enough. This was particularly challenging during the height of the pandemic.

Over time, proprietors have not maintained sufficiently robust oversight of safeguarding. Inappropriate arrangements, such as shared toilet facilities for staff and pupils, have gone unchallenged and were only changed after inspectors identified this as a concern. This practice is also not consistent with the requirements of the independent school standards. Leaders and proprietors have wisely enlisted the help of external professionals to support them in making improvements to safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils in key stage 4 and students in the sixth form experience a range of subjects and areas of learning. The curriculums in English and mathematics set out a pathway toward functional skills qualifications and GCSEs. Teachers ensure that pupils acquire mathematical knowledge, develop writing skills and learn new vocabulary. Topics are often linked to narrative texts to promote reading and provide an interesting context for pupils' learning. However, leaders have not implemented a

structured early reading curriculum for pupils who are not yet competent readers. Some reading resources are not age appropriate. Consequently, pupils are not getting the help and support that they need to develop their reading skills, knowledge and fluency.

The wider curriculum is typically linked to pupils' individual needs and interests. Staff are guided by pupils' identified needs in their education, health and care plans. However, pupils' experiences of some subjects are often too shallow and not sufficiently well connected. Leaders have not yet identified or sequenced the knowledge pupils need to learn. This results in pupils not building their knowledge securely over time. Currently, the school offers limited opportunities for pupils to study a range of other nationally accredited qualifications.

Staff have sound subject knowledge and use this well to explain new content. Assessment processes are well established in English and mathematics. These enable staff to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning. Staff design some curriculum experiences to align with individual pupils' aspirations. One pupil commented that he values the opportunity to prepare meals as he is hoping to become a chef.

Staff help pupils to experience and celebrate success through gaining unit awards. These enable pupils to show their progress and achieve milestones in some vocational and wider curriculum subjects. This helps to build pupils' self-worth. Most pupils leave the school with planned routes to further education. However, the school does not currently provide pupils or students in the sixth form with appropriate independent careers guidance.

Staff plan valuable experiences for pupils, including some off-site visits to places of interest in the locality. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils benefit from a coherent personal development programme. Currently, leaders provide a resource that individual teachers dip into. This approach means that pupils' experiences are somewhat haphazard. Content is not planned logically or sequentially. This includes relationships and sex education and health education and opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures. Leaders have not yet consulted parents about the relationships and sex education policy. However, they plan to do this in September.

Pupils are not yet provided with the knowledge they need to keep safe and healthy or to be prepared well for life in modern Britain. This means that the school is not meeting these parts of the independent school standards.

Some pupils do not have positive attitudes to learning and are reluctant to engage during lessons. Staff effectively de-escalate behaviour incidents to minimise any disruption to pupils' learning. They deal with incidents calmly and respectfully. The new pastoral team have strengthened the support for pupils' mental health. Leaders have also brought about greater consistency in behaviour management. However, their analysis of behaviour and attendance is currently not well enough developed. This means that they are unable to meaningfully evaluate the impact of this. Despite leaders' encouragement, some pupils continue to have poor attendance. This means

that these pupils continue to experience a disjointed education.

Leaders have not made sure that the school consistently meets all the independent school standards. This includes the quality of education, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the quality of leadership. Leaders have made sure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Information is made available for parents and appropriate policies are published on the school's website, including the safeguarding policy.

Staff enjoy working at the school. Some are full of pride when talking about individual pupils' achievements and the part they have played in this. They feel valued and supported. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration for their well-being and workload. They feel that leaders and proprietors are 'visible' and approachable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff are responsive to pupils and quickly spot and refer on anything concerning. Leaders maintain regular contact with external professionals and follow local procedures. However, weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements pose potential risks to pupils. Despite knowing the risks, leaders allowed toilet facilities for pupils to be shared with staff. Record-keeping is disorganised and not fit for purpose. Staff's training has not been focused enough on the specific safeguarding risks faced by pupils at this school. Leaders have not implemented a coherent curriculum to help pupils learn how to recognise and understand risk and keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and the proprietor)

- Over time, proprietors have not maintained strong enough oversight of the school or held leaders to account well enough. They have not ensured that the independent school standards are met consistently, that the school provides a good quality of education or that safeguarding is effective. Proprietors need to establish robust processes to address these significant shortcomings.
- Significant weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements potentially place pupils at risk of harm. Leaders need to urgently improve safeguarding by ensuring that:
 - record-keeping is accurate and systematic so that leaders have a clear understanding of the chronology of concerns, the actions they have taken and the school's management of risk. They need to apply this level of rigour to their analysis of behaviour and attendance to enable them to 'join the dots' about pupils' well-being
 - they maintain oversight of the use of restrictive physical intervention and ensure that records are fit for purpose

- staff receive specific training about the contextual risks and specialist support needed for vulnerable pupils
 - toilet facilities are designated for the sole use of pupils and not shared with staff.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils benefit from a strategically planned, coherent curriculum to support their personal development. This includes careers education, relationships and sex education and health education, and opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures. As a result, pupils are not provided with the knowledge or guidance they need about how to keep safe and healthy, make decisions about their futures or be prepared well for life in modern Britain. Leaders need to develop and implement a coherent personal, social, health and economic education curriculum and ensure that pupils receive careers guidance.
- Leaders have not implemented a structured early reading curriculum for pupils who are not yet competent readers. Consequently, pupils are not getting the help and support that they need. Leaders need to implement a coherent reading curriculum and strategy for pupils who are not competent readers.
- Leaders have not identified the most important knowledge they would like pupils to learn in the wider curriculum. As a result, pupils are not building their knowledge securely. Leaders need to implement their plans to identify and sequence the most important knowledge they would like pupils to learn and remember.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to study a range of nationally accredited qualifications. This potentially limits future career or education pathways for some pupils. Leaders need to broaden the range of accredited qualifications available to pupils.

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	135180
DfE registration number	938/6050
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10220936
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Judy Packham/Jeremy Cross
Headteacher	Leanne Jarvis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,452 to £37,500
Telephone number	01903 605980
Website	www.springboardeducation.co.uk/
Email address	judy@springboardeducation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 May 2019

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Many also have other specific learning needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. All pupils have been placed at the school by one of four local authorities. School places are funded by the respective local authority.
- The school is registered for up to 27 pupils between the ages of five and 18. However, there are currently no pupils on roll below the age of 10.
- The headteacher has been in post since November 2021.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision. However, some pupils attend registered local colleges on a part-time basis. Pupils are accompanied by a member of staff to this provision.
- The proprietors are also the company directors. There is currently no governing body.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in May 2019 when it was judged to require improvement.

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 their account in their evaluation.

- This standard inspection was brought forward at the request of the Department for Education because of complaints that they had received about pupils' behaviour, safeguarding and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The wider issues raised by these concerns were considered by inspectors. The inspection was carried out with two hours' notice.
- Inspectors visited lessons, reviewed a sample of pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers informally during lesson visits. Inspectors also met with the proprietor and the headteacher to discuss the school's curriculum and other aspects of the school's work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. They considered a wide range of documents, policies and records, including the pre-appointment checks for staff. The lead inspector also met with a proprietor, the headteacher and the designated safeguarding lead who is also the leader with responsibility

for SEND. Inspectors gathered evidence about the independent school standards during meetings with leaders and a proprietor. Inspectors also considered other policies and documents and toured the school's buildings and grounds with the headteacher and the proprietor.

- There were too few responses from parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, to be considered. Inspectors took into account the school's minutes of stakeholder coffee mornings/meetings with parents and other written 'feedback' the school has received from parents.
- Inspectors met with staff and took into account the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with the local authority designated officer for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lee Selby

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(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)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act[9];
 - 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.
- 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)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools,
 - 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.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of

pupils at the school is met if the proprietor-

- 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which-
- 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.

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.

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)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils.

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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