

Inspection of The Seeds School

Unit 6, The Bridges Business Park, Horsehay, Telford, Shropshire TF4 3EE

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 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?

The school gives a second chance to pupils who have experienced difficulties and disruption in previous learning. Pupils are supported and looked after by staff who want the best for them. However, leaders' checks on some aspects of safety lack rigour.

Vocational courses are rich and purposeful. In this aspect of their learning, pupils are supported by skilled staff who prepare them well for their next steps. Consequently, pupils learn, remember and can do more. Pupils are rightly proud of their achievements. However, pupils do not learn basic skills well enough because learning does not build on what they already know. Pupils do not do as well as they could in English, mathematics and other academic subjects.

Support for those pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) requires improvement. Not all teachers know enough about their specific needs and do not provide the right support for them.

Pupils occasionally display negative behaviours, including unacceptable language towards peers and adults. They do not always respond to the requests of staff, resulting in off-task behaviour and missed learning.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They make friends at school and say they feel safe. Bullying is rare.

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

Leaders want pupils to experience success. They are meeting this ambition successfully with pupils' vocational training, such as construction, catering and hairdressing. However, they are less successful at improving pupils' basic skills, such as those in English and mathematics.

Pupils engage well in practical areas of the curriculum. They succeed in vocational aspects because teachers are highly experienced and have thought carefully about the content and the order to teach it. Pupils know they are working towards clear end goals, and their knowledge and skills build successfully over time. They are particularly proud of their achievements in construction and speak about their learning with informed confidence.

In some subjects, such as history and geography, pupils' learning is more limited. They do not have opportunities to study in sufficient depth. Pupils are interested in topics and 'facts of the day' that relate to historical content, for example the Great Wall of China. They do not, however, build well-sequenced knowledge in these areas.

All pupils have SEND. Leaders have made sure that teachers are aware of pupils' individual needs. However, teachers have not received sufficient training to help them to adapt learning for pupils with the most complex needs. This means that planned learning is not always successful.

The school's ambitious curriculum is designed to lead to purposeful qualifications. However, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is suitably adapted to meet pupils' varied needs. Work in pupils' books is sometimes jumbled and does not follow a pattern or sequence. Pupils do not routinely catch up with missed work. This leads to gaps in their learning, and they do not do as well as they could. The work in pupils' books does not reflect the intended ambition of the school's curriculum.

Many pupils are reluctant readers. In response to this, leaders have invested in books that appeal to pupils' interests. However, they have not considered how well pupils can read the books, or how to support them to make the best possible progress with reading. Staff have not had sufficient training to help them support less fluent pupils with their reading.

Pupils occasionally display negative behaviours, including unacceptable language towards peers and adults. While staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour, pupils do not always comply with their requests. This leads to off-task behaviour and missed learning. Pupils and staff say that bullying is not tolerated. Pupils who met with inspectors said they feel safe at school.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Teachers have considered the key content that pupils need to learn, and curriculum plans are further supported with individual learning opportunities where needed. This means that teachers can be responsive if they need to address a particular topic of concern. Pupils learn about respect and tolerance, including towards those who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. However, pupils do not routinely demonstrate respect towards peers or adults.

By the time they leave, most pupils are ready to access vocational college courses that have been organised by the school. Pupils receive impartial careers advice to help them make informed choices.

Leaders ensure that statutory guidance relating to relationships and sex education is followed. They have produced a comprehensive policy and consulted with parents and carers. Pupils learn about safe relationships, consent, and the other key aspects required by the guidance.

The proprietor has not ensured compliance with the independent school standards. The school does not have an accessibility plan so does not comply with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. At the point of inspection, procedures for ensuring fire safety were not up to date and leaders could not demonstrate that the water system was safe. Pupils did not have access to changing and showering facilities at one of

the school sites. Leaders' checks, including the proprietor's, on compliance with the standards are not rigorous enough. These unmet standards have a direct impact on the welfare, health and safety of pupils. At the time of the inspection, the proprietor took swift, decisive action to put appropriate measures in place. For example, leaders have arranged for showers to be installed in summer 2022.

The proprietor is committed to the well-being of staff. Staff say they feel supported and valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The safeguarding policy is on the school's website and reflects current guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Staff are trained and know how to recognise children who are at risk of harm. Procedures are clear and followed with tenacity where there are concerns about the safety of a child. Leaders check and record that staff are safe to work with young people. However, leaders' checks on the safety of the premises and relevant risk assessments have not been carried out rigorously enough.

Leaders have not made frequent enough checks on pupils attending alternative provision in order to ensure they are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A number of independent school standards are unmet. These standards relate directly to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The proprietor must ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities and adopt processes to ensure that the standards are met consistently and that the premises are fit for purpose. In addition, the proprietor should produce an accessibility plan to ensure compliance with the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- Some areas of the curriculum are not well developed. In several academic subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they could. This is because learning is not based on what pupils already know and can do. Leaders should make sure that learning is well sequenced so that pupils' knowledge and skills build securely over time.
- Pupils who have more complex SEND do not learn as well as they could. This is because staff do not have the expertise to support pupils with complex conditions. This means that some work does not meet particular needs. Leaders should ensure that staff receive appropriate training and are able to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils do not read often enough because leaders have not ensured that pupils can read the material available. A number of pupils are not able to read fluently, and the school is not doing enough to support them. Leaders should ensure that

pupils have access to suitable books. They should also ensure that staff know how to support weaker readers to develop reading fluency, comprehension and confidence.

How can I feed back my views?

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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	146164
DfE registration number	894/6011
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10220436
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Steve Knight
Headteacher	Robert Pritchard
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,500
Telephone number	01952 630710
Website	www.the-eds.org
Email address	enquiries@the-eds.org
Dates of previous inspection	18 to 20 June 2019

Information about this school

- The Seeds School is an independent day school for pupils aged 14 to 16. The school offers places to pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils are referred to the school from placing authorities, including Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire and Staffordshire.
- The school opened in 2019. It was last inspected in June 2019 when it was judged to require improvement.
- The school operates from two sites, one in Telford and one in Walsall. The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider.

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.

- Inspectors met with the proprietor and headteacher.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including reading, mathematics, PSHE education and vocational learning. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject leaders, considered curriculum guidance, visited a sample of lessons, talked to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their work and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- A meeting was held with the designated safeguarding leads to review the school's processes for recording and managing concerns. The school's single central record of checks made on staff before they start work at the school was also scrutinised. Inspectors checked the school's risk assessments.
- Inspectors toured the school premises and checked for compliance with the independent school standards. They checked several policies, including those for curriculum, behaviour, anti-bullying, health and safety and complaints.
- Responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, staff and pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Mann	Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

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.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

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.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

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.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school does not comply with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 as there is no accessibility plan in place.

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