

# Inspection of Manorway Independent School

The Old St Justus Church, Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Kent ME2 2HG

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Inspection dates: 15 to 17 November 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils join Manorway Independent School having struggled in their previous settings. Most have developed negative views of school and education. Staff at Manorway work hard to make pupils feel welcome and part of the school community.

Pupils who were at school during the inspection told inspectors that they felt more comfortable at Manorway than at their previous schools. Despite this, too many older pupils have very poor attendance. Over time, leaders have not tackled this effectively.

This low attendance means that older pupils who do come to school are socially isolated in lessons and at break- and lunchtimes. There is a more positive picture for pupils in key stage 2. These pupils attend regularly and have the chance to work alongside each other and develop friendships.

Pupils who attend regularly value the relationships they have with school staff. They try hard to live up to the high expectations that staff have of them. Pupils recognise that they often struggle to regulate their behaviours. They know when they have made a mistake and will often apologise. While staff are clearly very committed to pupils, the approaches staff use to manage behaviour are inconsistent. Pupils are physically restrained too routinely.

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

Since the previous graded inspection, leaders have taken steps to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Although several classes are taught by unqualified or trainee teachers, there is more stability in staffing. Some teachers have expert knowledge in the subjects they teach, and this is having a positive impact on the quality of education that pupils receive in these subjects. This was particularly evident in mathematics and in personal, social and health education (PSHE).

In other subjects, including English, teachers are less experienced. While there are curriculum plans in place, there is a lack of coherence in terms of what pupils learn over time, and little thought has been given to how the curriculum at key stage 2 prepares pupils for key stage 3 and beyond.

Leaders have introduced a digital early reading programme to support those at an early stage of learning to read. Staff have had some training in the teaching of phonics, but their knowledge and understanding are not secure. This affects how well pupils achieve. Staff and leaders have focused on promoting pupils' love of reading, and careful thought is given to the texts that will engage older pupils in their English lessons. However, beyond this, work to develop pupils' interest in books is still at an early stage. Many staff do not have strong knowledge of children's literature or how to promote reading effectively.

Leaders have developed a clear approach to assessment. In the strongest subjects, this enables staff to identify the right next steps for pupils. In other subjects, the assessment processes set out in school policies are not always being followed, and assessment is less effective.

Attendance for pupils in key stages 3 and 4 is consistently too low and shows little signs of sustained improvement. The headteacher has recognised that attendance is a key concern and has recently been supported by the local authority's attendance service to try to address low attendance more effectively. However, work here is also at an early stage.

Most pupils at the school have specific behavioural needs. Pupils require a high level of specialist support from staff to help them to self-regulate. Senior leaders do not train staff well enough to enable them to support pupils effectively in this regard. During the inspection, inspectors saw staff working hard to manage pupils' challenging behaviour. Although some individual members of staff have strong behaviour management skills, their approaches are inconsistent and sometimes unhelpful for pupils in the long term. Senior leaders do not analyse information about how behaviour is managed carefully enough. Consequently, leaders have an insufficient understanding of what pupils' behaviour is like across the school.

Staff describe physical restraint as being used too routinely. However, the recording of physical restraint is inconsistent. For example, leaders are not clear about how many instances of physical restraint have taken place this academic year or last. Some behaviour records scrutinised by inspectors described restraint that was potentially inappropriate. There were also examples of differing and contradictory accounts of the same incident being recorded. This was not being identified or challenged by the headteacher prior to inspection.

Although leaders and staff have carefully considered how to support pupils' personal development positively, it remains underdeveloped. While there is now an outdoor play area, pupils are not supported well in learning how to stay healthy through an active lifestyle. Pupils do not socialise together or benefit from being part of a community because leaders avoid bringing pupils together, including for collective worship. This is because leaders are concerned about pupils' behaviour. Leaders have made some improvements to pupils' personal development. For example, a new, strengthened PSHE and personal development curriculum was introduced in September, and some pupils enjoy horse riding, climbing and the trips leaders organise.

While the headteacher and chair of the governing board are committed to the school's pupils and want the best for them, they do not have the capacity to run the school effectively. For example, the headteacher is the sole director of Manorway Academy, which is the proprietor of the school. She is also, at present, the only trained designated safeguarding lead at the school. She does not have the capacity to fulfil the duties and responsibilities associated with each of these roles effectively.

A governing board was established to strengthen governance. However, members of the governing board are inexperienced in their roles. There is a lack of clarity between the chair of governors and the headteacher about who is responsible for what. The headteacher was not clear that, as sole director of Manorway Academy, she is responsible for ensuring that the independent school standards are consistently met. As a result, she has not been properly checking and assuring herself that all the independent school standards are met. For example, she has not been assuring herself that the school's health and safety policy is implemented effectively. The school does not comply with the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act because its accessibility plan is not fit for purpose.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Last academic year, the headteacher rightly identified that safeguarding arrangements at the school were not effective. The designated safeguarding leads in post at this time were not performing their roles effectively, and in some instances were failing to identify risk where it clearly existed. As the headteacher described it, 'They were attending safeguarding training, but it was like they were not learning anything.'

The headteacher has now assumed the role of designated safeguarding lead at the school and is trying to bring about much-needed improvement. However, this has not yet been achieved. There is no designated deputy safeguarding lead, which means that in the headteacher's absence, no one is trained to step in to protect pupils. The headteacher has introduced a new recording system to try to improve record-keeping for safeguarding. However, staff, including the headteacher, are not using the system as intended.

Safeguarding records are in disarray. Important records are kept in several different places, including in notebooks and in individual email accounts. Safeguarding documents from last year are inaccessible because passwords to the files have been lost. Some records are available in paper form, but the headteacher told the lead inspector at inspection that she had forgotten she could access these paper records. The headteacher was frequently unable to provide evidence that she had taken the right steps to secure help for pupils who need it.

The school business manager performs the checks on staff as set out in the independent school standards and records these on the single central record. However, leaders have identified that wider safer recruitment procedures are not being followed consistently. This was reflected in personnel files that inspectors reviewed during the inspection. The chair of governors told inspectors that she recognised that personnel files were 'in a mess'.

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

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

- Safeguarding systems are not effective. The designated safeguarding lead does not ensure that relevant statutory guidance is consistently followed. All safeguarding systems and records need to be reviewed to ensure full compliance with statutory guidance, including Annex C of 'Keeping children safe in education' (2022), so that pupils at risk are quickly identified, and leaders responsible for safeguarding ensure that pupils get the right help.
- Those responsible for governance, including the director of the proprietor body, do not ensure that their own procedures for safer recruitment are consistently followed. They do not, for example, have two satisfactory references for recently employed members of staff. Those responsible for governance need to have proper regard for the requirements and guidance set out in part 3 of 'Keeping children safe in education' (2022) and ensure that safer recruitment procedures are consistently adhered to.
- The proprietor and those responsible for governance do not ensure that the independent school standards are consistently and securely met. Nor do they fulfil all their wider statutory duties, including in respect of safeguarding. It is not clear that they have the capacity to do this at present. Strengthening the capacity of leadership and governance is an urgent priority.
- The attendance of too many pupils in key stages 3 and 4 is consistently low. Leaders need to address this poor attendance with urgency in order to bring about sustained improvement.
- Physical restraint is used too routinely because staff do not always understand how to de-escalate when pupils are dysregulated. Behaviour management is often too reactionary, with staff waiting for pupils to show very clear signs of distress before intervening. More widely, staff are not trained well enough to support pupils to develop the self-regulation skills that they will need in the future effectively. Inconsistencies in approach are particularly unhelpful, given the needs of pupils at this school. Senior leaders need to review the school's approach to behaviour management, including physical restraint, to ensure a consistent and safe approach to behaviour management.
- Staff supporting those pupils at an early stage of learning to read do not have sufficient expertise in the teaching of phonics. More widely, staff do not have the expertise they need to promote pupils' engagement with, and love of, reading. Senior leaders should ensure that all staff receive further training in supporting those at an early stage of reading, and in how to develop and promote pupils' love of reading effectively.

## 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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142411
<b>DfE registration number</b>	887/6009
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10244413
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	20
<b>Proprietor</b>	Manorway Academy
<b>Chair</b>	Nicola Harwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Juliana Dugbatey
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£15,600 to £23,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 713344
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@manorwayacademy.com
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 to 5 December 2019

## Information about this school

- Since the previous standard inspection in December 2019, the school has had a material change inspection in July 2020 and a progress monitoring inspection in December 2021.
- The school predominantly caters for pupils with an education, health and care plan and with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils may also have additional diagnoses, such as autism spectrum disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. All pupils have struggled in their previous settings and many have been out of education or had interrupted schooling.
- The headteacher is currently listed on 'Get Information about Schools' (GIAS) as the proprietor. However, the proprietor is Manorway Academy. The headteacher is the sole director of Manorway Academy.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school had an operational website. At present, the school's website is not in operation. The school does provide the safeguarding policy to parents and carers on request.
- The school uses no 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, who is also the sole director of the proprietor body, and the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics and PSHE. 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. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the quality of education provided in other subjects and looked at books from a range of subjects.
- Inspectors carried out other activities to check whether the school meets the independent school standards. These included a check of the school premises and wider work to comply with health and safety laws (including fire safety). Inspectors considered the school's approach to risk management.



- Inspectors judged the effectiveness of safeguarding by meeting with leaders, discussing records of concerns and subsequent actions, and speaking with pupils and staff about this aspect of the school's work.
- No responses were submitted to the staff survey. Inspectors provided the opportunity for staff to speak directly with inspectors during the inspection. Two responses were submitted to Ofsted Parent View for inspectors to consider.

### **Inspection team**

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

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

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 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;
  - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;

#### **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.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
  - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively;
- 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].

#### **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 the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act because its accessibility plan does not set out, over a prescribed period, how the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum will be increased. Nor does it set out how the physical environment will be improved to enable disabled pupils to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school.

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