

Charlton House School Limited

57 Midanbury Lane, Bitterne Park, Southampton, Hampshire SO18 4DJ

Inspection date

17 January 2023

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(a), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- At the last standard inspection, it was found that the safeguarding of pupils at the school was not well coordinated. Safeguarding concerns were not recorded or reviewed in a timely manner. Information received in references was not always checked and considered by leaders and those in positions of governance.
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policies are fit for purpose and follow current guidelines. Both are published on the school's website.
- A new electronic system to record safeguarding concerns was introduced shortly after the last standard inspection. Staff have been trained in its use. Leaders monitor the quality and efficacy of information recorded on the system appropriately. They act on concerns quickly. This includes working with outside agencies and other members of the local safeguarding children partnership when needed.
- The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputy DSL have attended appropriate training to undertake their roles. Staff have attended a range of safeguarding training which is updated on an ongoing basis.
- Those in positions of governance monitor safeguarding effectively. A governor whose specific responsibilities include oversight of safeguarding is in place. Governors have undertaken a wide range of training linked to safeguarding. This includes safer recruitment training, which has also been completed by key leaders and administrators.
- Procedures to recruit new staff are sound. Leaders, including those in positions of governance, understand the checks that need to be made when recruiting new staff. This includes checking references fully and complying with the latest government guidance linked to the recruitment of staff. The single central record of checks on adults at the school is complete and contains all of the information required.

Paragraphs 11, 12, and 16–16(b)

- At the time of the last inspection, the health and safety and risk assessment policies were not being implemented consistently well. Some checks were not being made in a timely manner. Additionally, required repairs to the fire safety systems had not been

arranged or completed in a timely manner.

- The school's health and safety and risk assessment policies have been updated. Leaders and governors have completed a range of additional training linked to the requirements of part 3 of the independent school standards (the standards). As a result, the school's policies are fit for purpose and are specifically tailored for this school.
- A tour of the school's premises and accommodation showed the buildings to be well maintained. Other aspects of part 5 of the standards, such as suitable lighting and provision of a medical room, continue to be met.
- Leaders and governors are aware of the requirements to maintain the school's accommodation to a reasonable level. A sub-committee of the governing body now monitors all aspects of health and safety and other requirements of part 3. This includes ensuring that key staff at the school carry out the required checks in a timely manner and act when problems need addressing.
- A fire risk assessment is in place. This was completed by an external specialist company. The risk assessment policy indicates that fire risk assessments will be completed annually. The last fire risk assessment was completed in March 2022. Minor adjustments highlighted by that assessment have been completed. Additionally, major works which were highlighted by a previous risk assessment and found to be incomplete at the last standard inspection have also been completed.
- Staff have attended fire warden training which was provided by an external specialist company. Other aspects of fire safety such as checking and maintaining fire alarms and fire extinguishers are fully in place and provided by external specialists.
- The school has a range of risk assessments which are completed in line with the risk assessment policy. These include aspects such as the school's buildings and grounds as well as trips outside of school. On the day of the inspection, most pupils were taking part in an educational visit to Southampton. An appropriate risk assessment had been carried out and signed off by leaders in accordance with the policy.
- All previously unmet standards in this part are now met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- The last standard inspection highlighted a range of problems linked to health and safety and the maintenance of some aspects of the school's premises and accommodation.
- School leaders and those in positions of governance now have a much better understanding of their responsibilities to maintain the school in order to ensure that the welfare, health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors, are protected.
- The unmet standards identified in part 3 linked to health and safety, risk assessments and maintenance of the school's premises and accommodation have been resolved. Previously unmet standards in part 3 are now met. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and have been acted on. In particular, important remedial work identified at the two previous fire risk assessments has been carried out. A range of other checks such as for legionella disease in water are also now fully in place.
- The previously unmet standard in this part is now met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(g)–33(k)

- At the last standard inspection, the school's complaints policy did not fully meet the requirements of part 7.
- The school's complaints policy has been fully revised. The policy now meets the requirements of part 7. It is published on the school's website. Evidence seen during this inspection shows that the policy is being implemented in an appropriate manner.
- Previously unmet standards in this part are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(b)

- These standards were not met at the last standard inspection because leaders and those responsible for governance did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge to lead and manage an independent school. Monitoring systems and clear processes were not fully in place. Safeguarding was not effective. Several independent school standards were not met.
- It is clear that a lot of work has been completed to address the problems identified at the last inspection. Governance has evolved. New governors from a range of different professional backgrounds have joined. Systems are more firmly established for governors to monitor the work of the school. This includes more regular meetings and planned formal visits to the school.
- Governors have completed a wide range of training to aid them in their work to support and challenge school leaders. This includes the safeguarding of pupils and ensuring that the welfare, health and safety of all at the school are protected.
- Despite the school's action plan being rejected by the Department for Education (DfE) in October 2022, leaders and governors have addressed the issues identified with unmet standards at the last standard inspection. Furthermore, arrangements are now in place for ongoing monitoring and oversight by the governing body.
- Discussions with directors, who also act as governors, showed that they have a much clearer understanding of their duties. They are open and reflective. They know the school well. They understand that mistakes were made in the past. They have worked with dedication to address these. They have also continued to monitor the work of leaders to improve the school further in other areas, including to improve the quality of education the school provides.
- Leaders and those in positions of governance are now demonstrating a clear understanding of their roles. The standards that were previously unmet are now met. The proprietor body is now ensuring that leaders and managers have the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure that the standards are met consistently. As a result, all unmet standards in part 8 are now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets 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. 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.

The school now meets 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.

- 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(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 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 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which–
 - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is–

- 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
- 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
- 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and–
- 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
- 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
- 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	116567
DfE registration number	852/6003
Inspection number	10259856

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 school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Charlton House School Limited
Chair	Steven Hulbert
Headteacher	Matthew Robinson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,328
Telephone number	02380 671 739
Website	www.charltonhouseindependentschool.co.uk
Email address	administrationofficer@charltonhouseindependentschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	7 to 9 December 2021

Information about this school

- Charlton House School is a small independent Roman Catholic school with a Christian ethos. Some classes are taught in mixed-year groups.
- The school's most recent standard inspection was in December 2021 when the school was judged to be inadequate and unmet independent school standards were found.
- The school was also judged to be inadequate with some unmet standards at its previous inspection in December 2019. At that time, the school was called St Mary's Independent School and also had a secondary phase, catering for pupils up to the age of 16. In May 2020, the school closed to pupils and the limited company running it went into

administration, with all staff made redundant. However, the primary phase of the school reopened to pupils aged four to 11 in September 2020, under the name of Charlton House School with the same unique reference number.

- The school is owned and run by a proprietor body called Charlton House School Limited. This is a private company limited by guarantee. Governance is provided by the named directors of the proprietor body who form what is known as the full governing body.
- The current headteacher joined the school on a temporary basis shortly before the last standard inspection in 2021. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up their substantive position for the start of the summer term 2023.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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.
- The inspection was conducted without notice. On the day of the inspection, the majority of pupils were not in school, taking part in an off-site educational visit in Southampton.
- This was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to be inadequate with unmet independent school standards at its last standard inspection in December 2021. As a result, the school was required to produce a statutory action plan by the DfE on 1 June 2022. The action plan was assessed by Ofsted on 6 September 2022 and found to be acceptable with modifications. The action plan was rejected by the DfE on 18 October 2022.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, a class teacher and the school's administration officer. He also met with the chair of the proprietor body who was accompanied by six other directors. Some of the directors joined the meeting online.
- The inspector toured the school site, including the grounds, gymnasium, classrooms and other communal areas. During the tour, he briefly met with a small group of younger pupils and staff.
- The inspector considered a range of policies and documentation linked to safeguarding, health and safety and the wider requirements of the standards. He also reviewed the school's single central record and met with the DSL and the deputy DSL.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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