

The Copper Academy

The Holsworthy Business and Training Centre, Western Road, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 6DH

Inspection date

2 February 2023

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(2)

- At the standard inspection in June 2022, inspectors found that leaders had not ensured that pupils learn a curriculum that includes relationships and sex education (RSE). Leaders have introduced a well-structured RSE curriculum. Pupils now learn about healthy relationships and the importance of consent. Pupils also learn about the world around them and their roles as citizens, thereby preparing them for their next steps.
- The curriculum enables pupils to develop an age-appropriate understanding of the protected characteristics set out in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010. Parents and carers have been consulted on the curriculum and informed about their right to withdraw their children from lessons.
- Leaders have structured the curriculum to enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn how to manage their social and emotional well-being. Leaders have planned the sequence of the curriculum to enable pupils to develop safe relationships.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 15

- At the previous inspection, the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils were insufficient. This was because the proprietor had not ensured that necessary pre-employment checks were in place. Leaders had not kept a register of admissions to an acceptable standard. Leaders have now established robust safeguarding arrangements to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all pupils. All staff receive safeguarding training, alongside updated national guidance issued by the Department for Education.

Procedures to record and refer safeguarding concerns are sound. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive appropriate and timely support.

- Leaders have ensured that pre-employment checks are completed before staff take up their posts in the school. Leaders ensure that these checks are recorded accurately. Key staff have attended additional safeguarding training to ensure that they are qualified to carry out additional safeguarding roles.
- All staff have had training in physical restraint. There are currently no recorded instances where this has been used. Staff have been trained to use de-escalation strategies to defuse situations where pupils may be dysregulating.
- Leaders have implemented a register of admissions that is fit for purpose. It contains all of the required information.
- The standards in this part are met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(ii), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(iv)

- In June 2022, the proprietor had not ensured that necessary safeguarding checks were being conducted and recorded on the single central record. The single central record of checks on adults is now maintained correctly. For example, leaders carry out prohibition and barring checks and medical fitness and qualification checks for all employees at the time they join the school.
- The headteacher and chair of governors review the single central record regularly.
- The standards in this part are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- At the previous inspection, the proprietor had not ensured that the independent school standards were met in full, including some standards related to the safeguarding of pupils. Leaders had not fully understood the vetting checks required or their purpose. Leaders had not developed robust systems. Leaders did not hold themselves to account effectively due to weak self-evaluation processes.
- Since then, leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. Safeguarding arrangements are secure, and leaders maintain a tenacious focus on the welfare of pupils.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it enables pupils with SEND to learn successfully. The RSE curriculum has been structured to enable pupils to learn how to keep safe and understand healthy relationships.
- Governors receive regular safeguarding training, including updates. The chair of governors now conducts regular quality assurance of the safeguarding arrangements at the school.

- Leaders have established clear timelines to quality assure the design of the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are dedicated to ensuring that pupils, many of whom have missed a lot of schooling in their previous settings, learn well and are prepared for life beyond school.
- The standard in this part is 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 1. Quality of education provided

- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor—
 - 2A(1)(a) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with primary education at the school is provided with relationships education,
 - 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(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 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.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 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)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person–
- 18(2)(c)(ii) the person’s medical fitness;
- 18(2)(c)(iv) where appropriate, the person’s qualifications.
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual (“MB”), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if–
 - 20(6)(a) MB–
 - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend 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.
- 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)(iv) checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	148630
DfE registration number	878/6087
Inspection number	10271202

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	14 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	3
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Emma Hosie
Chair	Annie Little
Headteacher	Emma Hosie
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,750
Telephone number	07779 768661
Website	www.thecopperacademy.co.uk
Email address	emma@thecopperacademy.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	28 to 30 June 2022

Information about this school

- The Copper Academy is an independent special school. It received its first standard inspection in June 2022. It was judged to be inadequate.
- The proprietor is also the headteacher of the school. There is a small governing body.
- The school uses no alternative providers.

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 unannounced.
- Not all of the independent school standards were considered during this inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspector discussed the curriculum with the teachers of mathematics and English.
- The inspector talked to pupils and a group of staff and looked at examples of pupils' work, as well as displays and teaching resources in classrooms and in communal areas. She spoke to one parent of a pupil.
- The inspector assessed a wide range of documents and school policies. This included scrutinising the school's single central record of checks on adults.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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