

Hall Cliffe School

Dovecote Lane, Horbury, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 6BB

Inspection dates

19 January 2023

Overall outcome

The school does not meet 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 and 7(a)

- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy that reflects current statutory guidance, and many aspects of leaders' arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are thorough. The management of the school's check on the suitability of staff is strong.
- Leaders ensure that staff undertake appropriate safeguarding training. This includes the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputy DSLs, who have all completed essential training for the role. Staff know how to spot the signs of abuse. All staff understand the importance of reporting any concerns about a pupil's welfare, however small their concern might seem. The pastoral team meets regularly to discuss vulnerable pupils in order to identify any extra support that is needed.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. The site is secure, staff accompany pupils throughout the school, there are pupil-specific risk assessments and individual plans to support behaviour. All entrances and exits are appropriately secured a suitable perimeter fence is in place and well maintained.
- However, there are aspects of leaders' work to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils which are not effective. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the first aid policy are not implemented effectively. National, statutory guidance in terms of admissions and attendance, namely The Registration (Pupil Registration) regulations 2006, are not followed. Risk assessments are not completed adequately and the policy for this is not implemented as prescribed. Where risks are identified, leaders do not take swift action to mitigate the risks. As a result, pupils are at risk of harm.
- These standards were met at the previous inspection but are now judged to not be met at this inspection.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c) and 10

- Leaders have recently updated the behaviour policy. Appropriate sanctions are adopted when necessary. This policy is implemented effectively.
- The school's behaviour policy sets out the sanctions for misbehaviour. It also details examples of serious misdemeanours and how incidents should be reported and recorded. The policy clearly outlines the procedures that staff should follow.
- Positive behaviour support, including de-escalation and physical intervention training, is provided for all staff. This is because leaders know that pupils are likely to have specific behavioural, social and emotional needs. This additional training ensures that all interventions follow set rules and protocols. All incidents of restraint are recorded so that discussions with pupils and staff can take place to address any identified issues. The number of these interventions is declining.
- Leaders keep records of the sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour.
- The anti-bullying policy details the school's anti-bullying strategies. It includes information about the signs and symptoms of bullying that staff should be alert to. It also describes how members of staff should respond to any bullying incidents or allegations of bullying. The policy highlights the different types of bullying and makes references to how pupils will be taught about these within the school's curriculum.
- This standard was met at the time of the last inspection and continues to be met.

Paragraph 11

- More recently, leaders have not ensured that the necessary health and safety checks are consistently carried out. The school's health and safety policy lacks detail of roles and responsibilities. Leaders should ensure that they carry out their health and safety responsibilities effectively so that pupils are kept safe.
- At the school's Horbury site, inspectors found potential risks in a number of classrooms and specialist teaching areas. This included broken Perspex with sharp and splintering edges, items that could be used as sharps on the floor in the primary phase and dangerous chemicals accessible in the disordered science store and preparation room. A fume cupboard was found unlocked and accessible by pupils when instructions detailed that this must remain locked.
- Leaders undertook immediate action to rectify these issues while inspectors remained on the school site. However, many windows remain damaged and there are sharp edges accessible by pupils. Electrical and data trunking remains damaged. This gives pupils access to wiring which should be safely concealed.
- Inspectors did not find any issues relating to this standard at the school's sister site, Jubilee Way in Grange Moor.
- This standard was met at the previous inspection but is now judged to not be met at this inspection.

Paragraph 12

- During the inspection a fire door, leading from an area of particular high risk, was found to have been locked. Leaders took immediate action to restore access to this fire exit. They also rectified their procedures to eliminate any further reoccurrence. This standard was met at the previous inspection but is now judged to not be met at this inspection.

Paragraph 13

- Leaders have a clear first-aid policy and associated procedures. Staff mostly follow these, for instance, checking on a monthly basis that first aid boxes are in place. However, since the beginning of November 2022 this has not happened. Checks that were made were superficial. They failed to identify that many essential medical supplies, for instance, saline eye wash in the science labs, were three years out of date. Leaders have begun to take action to rectify this. This is to ensure that the policy is implemented effectively, and that first aid can be administered in a timely and competent manner.
- This standard was met at the previous inspection but is now judged to not be met at this inspection.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils are supervised well during lessons and in less structured times such as break times and lunch. Leaders operate a 'duty rota' for breaktimes and lunchtimes. This rota places adult cover across all of the areas that pupils can choose to spend their free time. Leaders take into account the information found on pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans when considering staff to pupil ratios. It is clear to inspectors that there are plenty of staff at the school who demonstrate positive relationships with pupils and one another.
- This standard was met at the time of the last inspection and continues to be met.

Paragraph 15

- Incorrect attendance codes are used for approved educational activity. Pupils are marked as present rather than attending approved off-site activity when attending activities such as horse riding. As a result, the class register does not provide an accurate list of which pupils are on site. This could have serious consequences in the case of a high-risk evacuation of the school.
- The school's admissions register does not record the date on which pupils transfer to a new school. Furthermore, leaders were unable to demonstrate whether the local authority is contacted when pupil leaves the school roll. Leaders have taken immediate action to rectify this. Leaders implemented improved procedures before inspectors left the school site.
- This standard was met at the previous inspection but is now judged to not be met at this inspection.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- The school's risk assessments lack specificity. They are generic and do not demonstrate an understanding of the risks present on this school site. For example, risk assessments do not reference the on-site chapel or what may happen if a child were to abscond.
- Individual risk assessments written for the different specialist classroom areas are incomplete. Where these have been started, risks have not been assessed as the risk assessment proforma dictates. In some cases, risk assessments are not being used. Links between policy and practice are very poor. Leaders have taken immediate action to rectify this.

- This standard was met at the previous inspection but is now judged to not be met at this inspection.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c), 21(6)

- These standards were met at the full inspection in June 2021. This remains the case.
- Leaders and those involved in the appointment of staff are safer recruitment trained. They understand clearly their responsibilities relating to pre-employment checks in order to ensure staff are suitable to work with children.
- The single central record of pre-employment checks on staff contains the required information.
- Leaders and the proprietor ensure staff have the appropriate training or qualifications to carry out their duties effectively. They have ensured that a number of leaders are trained in safer recruitment.
- These standards were met at the time of the last inspection, and they continue to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- Leaders are not ensuring that arrangements are made to promote the welfare of pupils at this school. The school premises and the facilities provided therein are not maintained to a standard that ensure the health, safety and welfare of all pupils. Leaders have taken immediate action to rectify the failings found during this inspection.
- This standard is unmet.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding and child protection policies are easily accessible via the school's website. A wide range of safeguarding information is available for pupils and parents to view.
- This standard was met at the time of the last inspection and continues to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor body has not ensured that independent school standards relating to part 8 are met.

- The independent school standards are not consistently and continually being met over time. Leaders are not actively promoting the well-being of pupils.
- The proprietor has not ensured that leaders demonstrate the necessary skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles. Leaders are not effectively ensuring that the standards relating to pupil safety and well-being are consistently met. This puts these pupils potentially at risk.
- These standards are unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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, as set out in the annex of this report. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	141860
DfE registration number	384/6003
Inspection number	10270270

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	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Witherslack Group Ltd
Chair	Richard Wilkins
Headteacher	Andrew Cutts-McKay
Annual fees (day pupils)	£63,373 to £87,621
Telephone number	01924 663420
Website	https://www.witherslackgroup.co.uk/our-locations/our-schools/hall-cliffe-school/
Email address	hall-cliffe@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	8 to 10 June 2021

Information about this school

- The last full standard inspection was in June 2021. This was a standard inspection carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. At this inspection the school met all of the independent school standards that were checked. The school was judged to require improvement at this time.
- Hall Cliffe School is an independent, specialist day school. Pupils with a range of complex learning needs, social and emotional difficulties and challenging behaviours attend the school.
- There are 100 pupils on roll at this school

- The school's main site is housed in a former convent in the town of Horbury near Wakefield in West Yorkshire. A second site is within a small industrial estate in Grange Moor near Huddersfield.
- A small number of pupils attend a local horse-riding school. They are accompanied by staff from Hall Cliffe school during these times. The school does not use any further alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was conducted at the request of the DfE as a result of complaints relating to safeguarding and pupils' welfare. This inspection was conducted with no notice.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the regional operational director, the designated safeguarding lead and her deputies.
- The inspectors carried out a tour of the Dovecote Lane site in Horbury and the Jubilee Way site in Grange Moor. Inspectors were accompanied by senior leaders and the school's premises manager.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons and in other less structured times. An inspector spoke with two groups of pupils about their experiences at the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and anti-bullying, premises and health and safety. This included the checks leaders make prior to employment on staff's suitability to work with children.

Inspection team

Marcus Newby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michele Costello

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not 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
- 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].
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.
- 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].
- 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 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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