

Springboard Education

55 South Street, Lancing, West Sussex, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 8AN

Inspection date

14 March 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 2(2), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(f)–2A(2)

- The previous standard inspection in July 2022 found that the independent school standards (the standards) around personal, social and health education (PSHE) were unmet. The curriculum for this area was not planned or taught logically or sequentially. There was a lack of appropriate independent careers guidance. Leaders had not consulted parents and carers about the relationships and sex education policy.
- Leaders' action plan to tackle the weaknesses identified outlined a series of suitable steps. These included seeking expert guidance and support, as well as providing staff with the necessary training. It also involved commissioning external input for impartial careers guidance for pupils.
- PSHE is taught on a weekly basis according to the school's planned curriculum. Long-term plans show how important areas such as health, diversity and personal safety will be explored and revisited over time. Work is also underway to monitor the impact of the curriculum on pupils' engagement and learning. The PSHE programme gives pupils opportunities to gain recognised awards.
- Leaders have invested in training for staff to develop their subject knowledge and confidence. The aim is to ensure that teachers take a flexible approach, adapting the curriculum in the light of pupils' response and needs. This has already happened in relation to drugs education, for example.
- An external and impartial careers specialist works with pupils to explore possible opportunities and create individual plans. Leaders are also brokering arrangements for work experience, some of which has already started. They are alert to creative possibilities, such as internal placement options for certain pupils, or through offering 'work-based training' elsewhere, for example as baristas. The school's careers advocate is now rightly ambitious to develop provision to match the entitlement for pupils in maintained schools elsewhere.

- Leaders have consulted parents, as well as pupils and staff, on the school's relationships and sex education policy. The policy is published on the school's website and makes provision for parents to request their child to be excused from sex education. Staff have been specifically trained in delivering this curriculum content, which is scheduled to be taught next term at age-appropriate levels across the school.
- The school meets all the requirements that were checked in this part.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(v)

- Previously, beyond PSHE, leaders had not ensured that pupils benefited from a coherent personal development programme. Pupils' experiences were found to be 'somewhat haphazard'. The action plan showed how leaders intended to embed the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils throughout the school. This included developing an assembly and tutor time programme and inviting different outside speakers to talk to pupils.
- The creation of staff advocates for well-being and other aspects of personal development reflects how the headteacher prioritises these areas for pupils and staff alike. Links have been made between PSHE and a planned assembly programme and tutor times, with suitable attention paid to the protected characteristics and fundamental British values. The police have already visited to work with pupils and, in time, leaders intend to involve other outside speakers.
- Leaders prioritise building strong relationships with both pupils and their families to strengthen the feeling of community. A new 'Springboard Way' highlights the school's values of happiness, belonging and unity, resilience and determination, and independence.
- The school meets all the requirements that were checked in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- The July inspection found that safeguarding records were disorganised and not fit for purpose. Training for staff had not been focused enough on the specific safeguarding risks faced by pupils at this school. The action plan indicated a change of designated safeguarding lead and further training for staff. It also outlined actions to review and update policies and processes, and strengthen leaders' checks on safeguarding arrangements.
- There was no doubting the culture of care at the time of the last inspection. This is now coupled with a tighter, more rigorous and systematic approach to safeguarding. An electronic system for keeping and organising safeguarding records is established and well used by staff. Records show that staff are vigilant, alert to contextual safeguarding risks and know how to raise and act on concerns. Leaders are prompt in their response, communicating in a timely manner with parents and other professionals. Through weekly safeguarding meetings, any 'open' or 'awaiting response' actions are tracked and pursued as appropriate.
- Critically, in the context of this school, leaders' risk assessment is responsive, nimble and robust in managing unfolding situations. Staff are well trained and understand these

processes and the potential risks involved for young people. Leaders continue in their determination to further improve practice, strengthening records further by recording the reasons for key decisions, for example.

- A suitable safeguarding policy which takes account of the relevant guidance is published on the school's website.
- The school meets the standard that was checked in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–23(1)(a)

- When inspectors arrived to conduct the previous inspection, separate toilets had not been designated for the sole use of pupils, in breach of the standards. This was rectified during that inspection. The action plan showed that signage would be improved to show the designation of each toilet.
- Clearly labelled toilets for the sole use of pupils have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the requirements that were checked in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The previous inspection found that the proprietor had not maintained sufficiently robust oversight of the school or held leaders to account well enough. The school did not meet all of the standards. The action plan set out additional professional development opportunities for the headteacher, other leaders and staff. It also pointed to the recruitment of an independent school consultant and the intention to form a board of governors.
- Leadership capacity at the school is strengthening. Arrangements are in place for accountability through regular supervision meetings between the proprietor and the headteacher. Although the proprietor still attends some senior leadership meetings, she does not take an operational lead. These meetings are now chaired by the headteacher. The proprietor is investing widely in carefully selected and targeted training to develop leadership capacity at different levels. In addition to senior leadership training, the headteacher is benefiting from mentoring and support from an external school improvement partner, developing her knowledge and boosting her confidence.
- During this period, leaders have prioritised ensuring that the standards and all associated requirements are met and will consistently be met in the future. However, leaders are rightly determined to go beyond the minimum expectation to ensure that pupils get the best possible deal. The school has made some progress on other areas for improvement identified by inspectors. For example, the school has broadened the range of accreditations and qualifications on offer. The headteacher understands the need to press on with some of these areas with greater urgency now, particularly early reading. Leaders have researched and selected a specific programme for supporting older pupils who are not yet fluent readers and the relevant staff training is due to take place shortly.
- To form the governing body in line with the ambitious timeframes set out in the action plan looks tight at this stage. However, the proprietor has proactively taken important steps towards this goal. She is rightly taking care to recruit suitable people to the

governing body, seeking both the knowledge and the passion she believes is critical. The range of potential and likely candidates bring a wealth of relevant and varied expertise. Discussions between the proprietor and these named people are mostly at an advanced stage. The proprietor is also understandably working with the school's accountant and solicitor to establish proper terms of reference and articles of association.

- In the meantime, the proprietor is once again keeping a much closer personal oversight in order to ensure that all requirements and standards are met. Prior to the previous inspection, the school had an established track record of meeting the standards. Against a backdrop of staffing and leadership disruption and the COVID-19 pandemic, the school faced a period of unusual pressure. This is likely to have been a factor in the lapses that occurred. The proprietor is knowledgeable and realistic about the school and its recent history. She has identified why things went wrong after operating successfully for many years and is taking steps to ensure that it does not happen again.
- The school meets the standard contained in this part.

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

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which-
 - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act;
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
 - 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(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e), and
 - 2A(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.
- 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 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor-

- 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which-
- 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.

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.

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)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils.

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	135180
DfE registration number	938/6050
Inspection number	10278479

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 special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Judy Packham
Headteacher	Leanne Jarvis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,452 to £37,500
Telephone number	01903 605980
Website	www.springboardeducation.co.uk
Email address	judy@springboardeducation.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	5 to 7 July 2022

Information about this school

- Springboard Education caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Many also have other specific learning needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan and have been placed at the school by a local authority.
- The school is registered for pupils between the ages of five and 18. However, currently the youngest pupils are in key stage 3.
- The headteacher has been in post since November 2021.
- The school does not currently use alternative providers. Some pupils attend registered local colleges on a part-time basis accompanied by school staff. Occasionally, following the

advice of other agencies and in specific circumstances, some pupils on the school roll are educated elsewhere for periods of time.

- The previous standard inspection took place in July 2022.

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 standard inspection in July 2022.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection. It was conducted without notice.
- Following the previous inspection, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to prepare a statutory action plan. Ofsted evaluated the action plan on 21 December 2022. The DfE wrote to the school accepting the plan on 8 February 2023.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietor, headteacher, designated safeguarding lead and three other members of staff. He toured the school site with the headteacher and a pupil, informally meeting other members of staff and pupils. The inspector spoke with a placement officer from West Sussex local authority, and a parent at their own request. He reviewed policies, records and other documents related to the standards that were previously unmet.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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