

Mill School – Bury

Wellington Street, Bury, Greater Manchester, Lancashire BL8 2BD

Inspection date

25 May 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

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1)(c)

- At the previous standard inspection in July 2021, inspectors found that this independent school (this standard) was met. At the subsequent emergency inspection in February 2023, the inspector found that this standard continued to be met. However, the Department for Education (DfE) requested that this standard be checked by inspectors as part of this progress monitoring inspection.
- The proprietor body has a comprehensive safeguarding policy that makes reference to the most up-to-date guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This policy is published on the school's website. The policy includes important information about safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse and sexual violence and sexual harassment. It also includes the names of the school's designated and deputy designated safeguarding leads, as well as the proprietor body's safeguarding leader.
- Leaders have ensured that they and the school's staff closely follow the safeguarding policy. Leaders have ensured that staff have appropriate training so that they can identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report and record any welfare concerns that they may have.
- Leaders have recently introduced daily briefings and debriefings to ensure that safeguarding remains a high priority in the school. Leaders provide effective support for pupils in school and work closely with other agencies to secure additional help for pupils when required.
- This independent school standard continues to be met.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c)

- At the previous standard inspection, inspectors found that this standard was met. However, at the emergency inspection, the inspector found that paragraph 9(a) was met but paragraph 9(b) was not met. This was because some pupils behaved in an unacceptable manner in the corridors and outside the school building during lesson

changeovers and at breaktimes. The inspector also found that some staff did not have sufficient training to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. This standard was checked by inspectors as part of this progress monitoring inspection. The DfE also commissioned inspectors to check paragraph 9(c) as part of this progress monitoring inspection.

- Inspectors found that leaders have taken swift action to address the concerns about pupils' behaviour that were seen at the time of the emergency inspection. They have appointed an experienced behaviour leader and a specialist intervention leader. They have also changed how pupils are grouped to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure in lessons and around the school. Leaders have ensured that staff have had additional training to de-escalate more effectively incidents of challenging behaviour. They have also worked with other agencies to deliver specialist training in managing behaviour.
- Pupils receive appropriate support to help them regulate their behaviour more successfully. This means that most pupils behave in a calm and appropriate manner in their lessons and around the school. Leaders systematically record any incidents of poor behaviour and they follow these up appropriately with parents and carers.
- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 10

- At the previous standard inspection, inspectors found that this standard was met. At the subsequent emergency inspection, the inspector found that this standard continued to be met. However, the DfE requested that this standard be checked by inspectors as part of this progress monitoring inspection.
- Leaders have established an effective anti-bullying policy. This is understood by all staff. Leaders and staff deal with any incidents of bullying quickly and effectively.
- This standard continues to be met.

Paragraph 11

- At the previous standard inspection, inspectors found that this standard was met. At the subsequent emergency inspection, the inspector found that this standard continued to be met. However, the DfE requested that this standard be checked by inspectors as part of this progress monitoring inspection.
- The proprietor body has an effective health and safety policy in place. Leaders understand their statutory responsibilities. They have ensured that they comply with all relevant health and safety laws.
- This standard continues to be met.

Paragraph 13

- At the previous standard inspection, inspectors found that this standard was met. At the subsequent emergency inspection, the inspector found that this standard continued to be met. However, the DfE requested that this standard be checked by inspectors as part of this progress monitoring inspection.
- The proprietor body has an effective first-aid policy in place. Leaders have ensured that sufficient staff have up-to-date first-aid training. They have also ensured that first-aid kits are fully stocked and that staff record any accidents and injuries on an accident

form. There is a locked first-aid cabinet and there are locked medicine cabinets. Staff appropriately record any medicine that is administered to pupils during the school day.

- This standard continues to be met.

Paragraph 14

- At the previous standard inspection, this standard was met. However, at the emergency inspection, this standard was not met. Leaders had not ensured that pupils were adequately supervised during lesson changeovers. Nor had leaders ensured that pupils were appropriately supervised at unstructured times, for example in the corridors and outside.
- Leaders have taken urgent action to address the weaknesses in the supervision of pupils. The newly appointed behaviour leader has established a suitable duty rota for breaktimes and lunchtimes. Staff are expected to supervise pupils at these times and they do so diligently. The behaviour leader and other senior leaders have a visible presence in the corridors and at social times. They check that pupils are properly supervised at all times.
- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 15

- At the previous standard inspection, inspectors found that this standard was met. At the subsequent emergency inspection, the inspector found that this standard continued to be met. However, the DfE requested that this standard be checked by inspectors as part of this progress monitoring inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that there are appropriate registers in place for recording pupil admissions and pupils' rates of attendance. These include all the required information. Registers are maintained appropriately.
- This standard continues to be met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- At the previous standard inspection, inspectors found that this standard was met. At the subsequent emergency inspection, the inspector found that this standard continued to be met. However, the DfE requested that this standard be checked by inspectors as part of this progress monitoring inspection.
- Inspectors found that leaders have an effective risk assessment policy in place. They have appropriate, written risk assessments in place that consider how potential risks can be reduced.
- This standard 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), 34(2)

- At the previous standard inspection in July 2021, this standard was met. However, at the emergency inspection in February 2023, this standard was not met. The proprietor body and school leaders had not fulfilled their leadership responsibilities effectively. They had

not ensured that the standards relating to pupils' welfare and health and safety were met.

- The proprietor body has taken effective action to address the unmet standards from the previous emergency inspection. The proprietor body has begun to strengthen the leadership team. For example, it has made a number of new appointments to some leadership roles and to the staff body. The previously unmet standards relating to pupils' welfare and health and safety are now met.
- However, there continues to be considerable instability in the leadership and staffing teams. Some leaders are very new to role, and vacancies for key staff and leaders remain. As a result, leadership and management remain fragile. This is because leaders have not had sufficient time to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge to ensure that the standards are met consistently and securely over time.
- Therefore, the standards relating to leadership and management are not met.

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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	147349
DfE registration number	351/6017
Inspection number	10293621

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 special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Kedleston (Olsen House Holdings) Limited
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Helen Birkinhead
Annual fees (day pupils)	£59,692
Telephone number	0161 359 7788
Website	www.kedlestongroup.com/our-schools-homes/day-schools/mill-school-bury/home
Email address	helen.birkinhead@kedlestongroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	13 to 15 July 2021

Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection took place from 13 to 15 July 2021.
- The school operates from premises at Wellington House, Wellington Street, Bury, Greater Manchester BL8 2BD.

- There have been a number of leadership and staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher.
- All pupils who attend this school have an education, health and care plan. Most are for autism spectrum disorder or social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is part of the Kedleston Group.
- Leaders make use of three unregistered alternative providers.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no students in the sixth form at the school.

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 that the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its emergency inspection in February 2023.
- An emergency inspection, commissioned by the DfE, was carried out on 8 February 2023. At this inspection, the school was judged to not comply with the standards checked. Following this inspection, the DfE required the school to prepare an action plan. This was a statutory requirement. Ofsted evaluated the school's action plan on 12 May 2023. The DfE rejected this action plan.
- This inspection was conducted without notice.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders of the school. Inspectors also spoke with staff.
- The lead inspector met with two representatives of the proprietor body. She also spoke to the designated safeguarding lead and the human resources partner, who maintains the single central record.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents and policies relevant to the progress monitoring inspection. These included: documents relating to safeguarding; information relating to behaviour and bullying; health and safety information; and documents relating to first aid and risk assessments.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, in lessons and around the school. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences in school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and spoke with some parents.

Inspection team

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Elaine Mawson

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

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.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

- 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(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
- 10 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.
- 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.
- 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.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.

- 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.
- 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.

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