

Banks House School

55a Norwich Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR5 0EQ

Inspection date

11 July 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 3(a), 3(e)

- At the previous inspection, these independent school standards were unmet. The curriculum was undergoing significant redesign and was not fully established. Teachers did not have sufficient subject knowledge to teach the curriculum. This included phonics where activities did not help pupils learn to read well.
- Leaders have acted with gusto to address the issues identified at the previous inspection. The phonics programme is now taught well. Adults have received effective training to ensure they have the knowledge they need to help pupils in the early stages of reading. Adults are skilled at providing opportunities for these pupils to build their understanding of language.
- The curriculum in other subjects has been redesigned. Leaders and teachers know the knowledge, skills and experiences pupils need to learn and develop. These are set out in pupils' individual plans. The curriculum provides sufficient guidance for teachers to ensure the new knowledge and skills needed are appropriate and well structured for pupils to learn well.
- Staff now possess a clear understanding of the curriculum. They benefit from regular and relevant training to help them continue to build their subject knowledge. This helps them understand the content of the curriculum and how best to deliver it.
- The requirements of the independent school standard are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- Leaders have a clear understanding of the risks pupils face. They have ensured that all safeguarding systems and processes are clear and understood by all staff. These procedures are provided to parents as part of the school's 'welcome pack'.
- Staff are well trained and remain vigilant to any signs that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. They notice and report small changes that could be part of a bigger picture. When concerns are reported, leaders manage them well. This includes working with external agencies if needed. Leaders are tenacious in following up on concerns with

these agencies if they do not receive an adequate response.

- Adults provide high-quality care and support for pupils. The learning environment is safe and provides pupils with a vibrant space to explore and feel at home. The curriculum provides the opportunity for pupils to learn about the best ways to manage the risks they face as they move into adulthood.
- The requirements of the independent school standards continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- At the previous inspection, these independent school standards were unmet. The proprietor body was not well placed to ensure that leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, had the skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards were consistently met.
- Leaders have implemented their action plan effectively and have eradicated the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. The proprietor body has established effective systems and processes to quality assure provision. Leaders ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met and the quality of provision continues to improve.
- The advisory board provides regular challenge and support to school leaders and the proprietor body. They ensure that they seek a range of ways to validate the quality of leaders' work. This is supporting the ongoing improvements being made to the school's provision.
- The requirements of this independent school standard are now fully 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

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught.

Part 8. Quality of leadership 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	148346
DfE registration number	926/6030
Inspection number	10291285

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	13 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cascade (Banks House) Ltd
Chair	Rachel Quick
Headteacher	Dawn Wale
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,000
Telephone number	01603 441497
Website	None
Email address	dawn.wale@cascade-care.com
Date of previous standard inspection	15 to 17 November 2022

Information about this school

- The school was first registered on 23 February 2021. The current headteacher took up her position in September 2022.
- The school was judged as requires improvement in its first standard inspection in November 2022. The requirements of two independent school standards were unmet. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- The school submitted an action plan to the Department for Education and this was deemed acceptable with modifications on 3 March 2023.

- The school also operates a second site at Bright House, 51 Wendene, Bowthorpe, Norwich, NR5 9HA. The school has notified the Department for Education of this additional site.
- Since the previous standard inspection, the number of staff in the school has grown considerably. This includes the appointment of additional teachers, instructors, teaching assistants, a special educational needs coordinator and forest school leader.
- The school caters for up to six pupils aged 13 to 19 years of age. Pupils are referred by local authorities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Most pupils have experienced significant periods of absence in their previous education.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The proprietor body has established an advisory board that provides additional governance capacity.

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.
- During this unannounced inspection, the inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher. He also met with the proprietor of Cascade (Banks House) Ltd. The inspector held separate telephone conversations with the chair of the school advisory board and the school's external adviser. The inspector reviewed the single central record of pre-employment checks and a range of documents relating to safeguarding, school improvement, curriculum planning and reports from the local authority adviser.
- The inspector visited lessons and spoke with pupils. The inspector also spoke with teaching and support staff to consider the support they have had to deliver the curriculum and keep pupils safe.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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