

Cross Keys Learning

Suite 1 & 2, The Lead Centre, Dane Valley Road, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 3JJ

Inspection date

12 July 2023

Overall outcome

The school does not meet 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)(e)–2A(1)(g)

- At the last standard inspection, although provision for relationships and sex education (RSE) was in place, the need to consult with parents and carers about the policy and publish it on the website had been overlooked.
- Leaders addressed these shortcomings immediately. The RSE policy was reviewed. Parents and carers were consulted on its contents. The policy is now published on the school's website.
- These independent school standards (the standards) are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- At the last standard inspection, safeguarding was judged to be effective and all relevant standards relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff were found to be met.
- The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and complies with current guidelines. Arrangements to safeguard pupils remain effective. These standards continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(b)

- At the time of the last inspection, leaders' evaluations of the school and their plans for improvement were unwieldy. The school lacked strong governance, particularly in the oversight of the quality of education the school was providing, including aspects such as teaching pupils to read. Some pupils were not attending the school as often as they should. Not all of the standards were met.
- A lot has been achieved since the last standard inspection. The school is moving quickly in the right direction. Directors and current leaders are reflective and have worked hard

to address the issues identified in September 2022. An independent consultant has been employed as a school improvement partner. Changes include a new headteacher and a restructuring of the school's leadership team. Two new phase leaders have been appointed. A new assistant special educational needs coordinator joins the school soon to add capacity. New teaching staff have been appointed. Some staff have left or are leaving.

- Leaders constructed an action plan as required by the Department for Education (DfE) as a consequence of the last inspection. The plan has largely been achieved, although some elements, notably around governance and the revised curriculum, still need time to embed. A new self-evaluation and improvement plan is in place. It covers aspects identified at the last inspection as needing to be improved. It also highlights the additional priorities for improvement leaders have identified.
- A new governing board has had initial meetings. The structure of the board has been agreed and membership is nearly complete. Terms of reference are in place. A planner for governors' work for the next academic year has been drawn up. A professional clerk has been appointed to support governors in their work. Not all checks on governors had been applied for or completed at the time of this monitoring inspection. Because the governing board is very much in its infancy, it is not yet possible to judge the impact of its work to hold leaders to account for the quality of provision across the school.
- Leaders were in the process of reviewing the curriculum at the last inspection. This work has continued but taken a new direction after the appointment of the current headteacher. A new policy is in place. A curriculum map is available. New schemes of work and plans are in the final phase of development. Leaders intend to fully launch the revised curriculum model for the start of the new school year 2023.
- Leaders have taken action to address gaps in provision to teach pupils to read. A new phonics programme is in place. Key staff have been trained to deliver the programme using the resources and assessment materials that it provides. The school has also changed how it supports pupils to read across the curriculum. A reading 'map' is in place for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Similar provision will be introduced for older pupils for the start of the new academic year, linked to the revised curriculum.
- Leaders have worked hard to reduce pupil absence. Their work includes supporting families and pupils who struggle with attendance, including brokering the support of outside agencies and professionals. Levels of absence are reducing, significantly for some pupils. Leaders know more needs to be done and continue to prioritise this area of the school's work for improvement.
- Significant improvements are clear to see. Safeguarding remains effective. The joint directors and current leaders are determined to improve the school further. However, despite the reason to be positive, it is too soon to judge that part 8 is now fully met because different elements of leaders' work are not yet embedded. In particular, the oversight of those in positions of governance, including the directors, and the new governing board's effectiveness at holding leaders to account have not yet been fully tested. For this reason, part 8 is 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. 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	145574
DfE registration number	886/6149
Inspection number	10284568

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 special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Cross Keys Learning Limited
Chair	Sharon Mount/Stephen Fuller
Headteacher	Marvin Simpson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,900
Telephone number	07884144 625
Website	www.crosskeyslearning.com
Email address	sharon.mount@kms.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	27 to 29 September 2022

Information about this school

- Cross Keys Learning provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many have missed significant amounts of time in education prior to joining the school.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in September 2022.
- The proprietor body consists of two directors. A new governing board has just started its work. A new headteacher has been appointed since the last standard inspection.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

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 conducted without notice.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement with unmet standards at its last standard inspection in September 2022. As a result, the proprietor was required to produce a statutory action plan by the DfE on 22 November 2022. The action plan was assessed by Ofsted on 20 February 2023 and found to be acceptable by the DfE on 29 March 2023.
- The inspector held a range of meetings with the senior and middle leaders, the chair of the governing board and both directors of the proprietor company. The inspector held a telephone conversation with the headteacher who was absent during the inspection on compassionate leave.
- The inspector toured the main school site, including visiting classrooms and other communal areas. During the tour of the school, the inspector talked to staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered a range of policies, plans and other documentation linked to safeguarding and the standards. Minutes and other records relating to governance were taken into consideration. The inspector also reviewed the school's single central record and met with three of the school's safeguarding leads.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

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 un-met 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.

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

Part 1: Quality of education provided

- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
 - 2A(1)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b);
 - 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.

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