

Clarity Independent School

Bridge Farm Barn, Woodhill Road, Sandon, Essex CM2 7SG

Inspection date

14 September 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(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(h)

- This independent school standard (the standard) was not met at the inspection in September 2022 because, as stated in the inspection report, the curriculum vision was not coherent or understood by parents and pupils. The curriculum plans did not extend to key stage 4.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in June 2023, leaders stated that they intended to review the curriculum, but how they were going to do this was not clear enough. It was not clear how they were planning to monitor the development of the new curriculum.
- There is now a complete curriculum for key stage 4. Pupils are working through this curriculum towards recognised qualifications in core subjects. Plans outline clearly what pupils should learn, in what order and how this will be assessed. Staff understand these plans and how to adapt them for individual pupils when needed.
- Leaders have made sure that parents understand what their children are studying through documentation and parent meetings.
- This standard is now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(b)

- This standard was not met at the inspection in September 2022 because policies around behaviour and safeguarding were not being followed. Not all concerns were responded to appropriately. Leaders had not provided appropriate training for staff.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in June 2023, leaders stated that they were going to train all staff appropriately and review the policies. However, it was not clear enough how leaders intended to assure themselves of the quality of training and how well staff would implement leaders' safeguarding policies.
- Many policies have now been updated, including those for behaviour and safeguarding. They now follow government guidelines and meet statutory requirements. All staff have had comprehensive training, including an understanding of how to keep pupils safe if they were to present with challenging or violent behaviour. Staff understand the policies

and follow procedures well.

- Staff record safeguarding concerns in detail and ensure that leaders are quickly notified of any concern. Leaders work closely with local authorities and other services to keep pupils safe. They have made appropriate referrals where needed.
- Staff meet daily to review behaviour and safeguarding incidents. Risk assessments are updated frequently to reflect adjustments to how they support pupils to behave.
- Leaders have developed robust systems to check on staff members' understanding of school systems, particularly safeguarding. Leaders challenge each other's responses to incidents to ensure that no risks to pupils are missed.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraphs 11, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- This standard was not met at the inspection in September 2022 because there was not an up-to-date health and safety policy or appropriate risk assessments.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in June 2023, leaders stated that the policy would be reviewed, staff trained and an audit commissioned by a health and safety expert. However, it was not clear enough how leaders would check on staff's understanding and the implementation of the policy.
- There is now an appropriate health and safety policy in place. Leaders have checked staff's understanding of this. External audits have been put in place.
- Comprehensive risk assessments cover all aspects of the school's work. Individual pupils have their own risks considered closely, for example when going on school trips.
- These standards are now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(h), 32(3), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(f)

- This standard was not met at the inspection in September 2022 because leaders had not provided the information required in the standard to parents and the local authorities.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in June 2023, leaders stated that these would be reviewed and provided, although the timescales were too generous.
- All the appropriate information is now readily available on the school's website and provided to local authorities as required.
- This standard is now met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(c)

- This standard was not met at the inspection in September 2022 because the complaints procedure was not up to date, nor had appropriate timescales.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in June 2023, leaders stated that this would be updated. However, it was not clear how quickly this would be done.
- The complaints policy is now fully updated and available to parents. It is used appropriately and a written log is held.
- This standard is now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- This standard was not met at the inspection in September 2022 because the proprietor had failed to ensure that the standards were met. Key documentation was not readily available or up to date. Staff had not had enough training to ensure that pupils' well-being was upheld.
- The evaluation of the action plan in June 2023 noted that the actions lacked enough detail about how the proprietor would ensure standards were met on an ongoing basis. The timescales were not precise enough.
- The proprietor has ensured that all required documentation and policies are now in place. These documents, and the actions that they outline, are closely matched to the needs of the school and pupils. They provide a clear steer to staff to help them make good decisions in a range of common and novel circumstances.
- Staff have all had substantial training, especially around safeguarding and behaviour management. A well-organised induction programme supports new staff to also develop this knowledge. Leaders check on staff's understanding. They observe practice in the classroom to ensure policies are being implemented correctly.
- The proprietor has begun to make greater use of external advice and challenge to ensure that progress continues. This has helped the school to improve apace. Leaders have an increasingly acute understanding of the quality of the provision and knowledge of 'what works well' for their pupils. Leaders are prepared to listen to challenge and seek support willingly. They are well placed to develop the school in the future.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- This standard was not met at the inspection in September 2022 because the school did not have an appropriate accessibility plan. The curriculum did not meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- The evaluation of the action plan in June 2023 noted that the proprietor intended to develop the documentation. However, not enough consideration had gone into what this would look like for the school environment and curriculum.
- The proprietor has ensured that all required documentation and policies are now in place. Staff consider the needs of individuals when planning their lessons.

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(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 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(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly.

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.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.
- 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.
- 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 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request;
 - 32(1)(h) where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006[16]) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13;
 - 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which-

- 33(c) sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint.

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	146804
DfE registration number	881/6073
Inspection number	10303640

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 special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Clarity SEN Consultancy Ltd
Headteacher	Mrs Debbie Hanson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000 to £67,000
Telephone number	01245408606
Website	www.clarity.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@clarity.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	21 to 23 September 2022

Information about this school

- The school's registration with the Department for Education was approved in June 2019. It opened as an independent school, catering for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, in September 2019.
- The school is registered to take pupils from age six to 16.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils' needs include those related to autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- All school placements are funded by local authorities.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in September 2022, when it was judged to

be inadequate. During a standard inspection in February 2020, the school was judged to require improvement.

- The school does not use any 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 inspector spoke to the proprietor and other senior leaders. She spoke to a range of staff. The inspector spoke with pupils during lessons and at recreation times. She spoke to a representative of one of the local authorities that place pupils in the school.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of record-keeping, including attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector checked the single central record and a range of safeguarding records.
- The inspector checked a range of policies and discussed how they were implemented in the school with the proprietor and members of staff.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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