

New School Canterbury

New School Canterbury, Garlinge Green Road, Garlinge Green, Canterbury, Kent CT4 5RU

Inspection dates

18 October 2023

Overall outcome

The school meets 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 to 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- At the time of the last monitoring inspection, all of the independent school standards (the standards) in this part that were checked, together with the associated paragraphs in parts 5 and 6, were found to be met. This continues to be the case. Leaders have established a culture of safeguarding which prioritises pupils' safety and well-being.
- A wide range of initiatives to improve safeguarding arrangements, such as daily staff safeguarding briefings, regular staff training, and well-established procedures for reporting and recording any concerns, have been sustained since the last standard inspection.
- Safeguarding is given a high profile throughout the school. For instance, key safeguarding personnel, including the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL (DDSLs), are clearly identified and safeguarding newsletters provide parents with a range of helpful information.
- Staff continue to consistently follow safeguarding routines and procedures recognised at the last progress monitoring inspection. For example, they greet pupils individually at the start of the school day and are on hand to speak informally with parents at morning 'drop-off'. Pupils are confident that adults will help if they have a problem. The school premises were tidy, well maintained and orderly at the time of this inspection.
- Procedures for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns have been updated since the previous standard inspection. A review of records indicates that staff, including those appointed recently, are vigilant in noticing and reporting concerns.
- Staff training is now a routine and ongoing element of school life. Staff meetings are used to keep staff knowledge up to date, including regular opportunities to discuss different safeguarding scenarios. Newly appointed members of staff complete safeguarding training as part of the school's induction programme.
- The DSL and DDSLs have completed suitable training and are knowledgeable about their roles. They use records well to monitor individual cases and concerns, as well as looking

for any patterns over time which may indicate an underlying problem. Leaders take suitable action to ensure pupils' safety where necessary.

- Robust staff recruitment procedures are followed, and all required checks completed for new staff. The single central record is well maintained and up to date. The safeguarding policy takes account of relevant guidance and is published on the school's website.
- The standards that were checked in this part, together with the associated paragraphs in parts 5 and 6, continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(b)

- At the time of the previous standard inspection, the board of trustees was not functioning adequately. As a result, there was no proprietorial oversight of the school, and leaders were not being supported or held to account. There was a lack of leadership capacity in the school at that time and not all of the independent school standards were met.
- The last progress monitoring inspection noted significant steps taken by leaders to stabilise and improve the school. However, given the school's track record since it opened, and given the fact that some of the improvements were very new and not fully established, the standard in this part remained unmet.
- Leaders have maintained and built on improvements recognised at the time of the last progress monitoring inspection. For instance, regular headteacher reports to the board of trustees, which were introduced just before that inspection, are now a routine part of reporting procedures. These reports provide trustees with a wide range of valuable information about different aspects of the school's work, including behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Trustees supplement this information with a range of additional activities, such as visiting lessons and talking with members of staff. They are increasingly knowledgeable about the school's work and so are better equipped to hold leaders to account than previously.
- The trustees, who were relatively new in post at the time of the last inspection, have established themselves as valued members of the school community. The board of trustees provides a wide range of valuable skills and expertise in areas such as education, finance, health and safety, and safeguarding. They make an important contribution to the school's development and provide strong challenge and support for school leaders. Staff refer to stronger teamwork and more cohesive leadership now than at the time of the previous inspection, which is due, in part, to developments in the work of the trustees.
- Reliable procedures for monitoring the school's work, including the independent school standards, are now securely embedded. The headteacher commented that initiatives introduced since the last inspection are 'becoming the way we do things and the way we are'. Minutes of trust meetings illustrate the board's increasing effectiveness in holding leaders to account. The headteacher readily recognises the benefits brought by improvements in trustee roles, commenting: 'I don't feel on my own anymore – I can talk things through, and I can see things from a different perspective.'
- Numerous changes in staffing were making it difficult to introduce and sustain improvements at the time of the previous inspection. A more settled phase since then

has helped to ensure that hard-won improvements have been maintained and securely established. For instance, developments in the quality of provision for the youngest children recognised at the time of the last progress monitoring inspection have been sustained. Pupils spoke of the school being 'more organised and a bit calmer' than at the time of the last inspection. They like the consistency that settled staffing has brought.

- Staff with knowledge and expertise in areas such as finance and office administration have been appointed since the last progress monitoring inspection. The headteacher reports the notable difference these appointments have made to her work. For instance, the headteacher is now able to delegate aspects of her day-to-day role to other members of staff, giving her more space and time to fulfil her strategic role.
- Leaders have established constructive links with the local authority and other external organisations to support developments. The headteacher reports the value that links such as these have had in helping the school to review and strengthen aspects of the school's work.
- The standards that were checked in this part are 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 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 this 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	147331
DfE registration number	886/6158
Inspection number	10310355

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	Waldorf (Steiner) School
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Number of part-time pupils	11
Proprietor	New School Canterbury Ltd
Chair	Sion Thaysen
Headteacher	Beth Cuenco
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,109 to £9,240
Telephone number	01227 730067
Website	www.newschoolcanterbury.co.uk
Email address	info@newschoolcanterbury.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	18 to 20 October 2022

Information about this school

- The school offers a Waldorf (also known as Steiner) curriculum. The Kindergarten comprises children aged three to six years. There are three further classes. Class 1 comprises national curriculum Year 2, classes 2 and 3 (Years 3 and 4), and classes 4 and 5 (Year 5 and 6).
- The school's proprietor is New School, Canterbury Limited. The organisation has charitable status and is run by a board of trustees, which is responsible for providing governance for the school.

- The school has an approved exemption from some aspects of the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in October 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 inspection.
- This was the second progress monitoring inspection since the school's October 2022 standard inspection. The first progress monitoring inspection took place in April 2023.
- Following the previous standard inspection, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to prepare a statutory action plan. Ofsted evaluated the action plan on 14 February 2023. The DfE wrote to the school accepting the plan on 24 March 2023.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other members of staff during the inspection. She also met with two trustees and spoke informally with a group of staff and with pupils as she toured the school. The inspector reviewed policies, records and other documents related to the previously unmet independent school standards.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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