

# Kingsmere School

C/o Priory Education Services Ltd, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

**Inspection dates**

5 November 2019

**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

*Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(g), 4*

- The previous inspection found that leaders were not ensuring that teaching at the school enabled pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress. Teaching did not motivate pupils to show interest in their work, think for themselves or work hard. It did not involve well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time. Staff did not show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of pupils and ensure that these were taken into account in the planning of lessons. Procedures to assess pupils' work and monitor their progress were underdeveloped. This continues to be the case.
- Not enough has been done to strengthen teaching. Limited staff training has taken place. Some staff have left the school. This has restricted the development of agreed approaches to plan learning suited to the different ages and abilities of pupils. Effective teaching of English and the development of pupils' writing noted at the time of the previous inspection have slowed due to staffing changes.
- A recent review of provision by proprietary staff this term prompted action to improve the quality of teaching. Specialist teachers of science and English have been appointed. Three more assistants have also been appointed to support pupils' learning in lessons. These arrangements are very new. At this early stage, the headteacher has not monitored the effectiveness of new staff.
- Initial signs are promising. Relations between staff and pupils are good. Pupils speak positively about new staff and what they are doing to help them learn. Visits to lessons by inspectors noted that specialist teaching in science is enabling pupils to make progress. In mathematics, suitably challenging work is set for pupils of different abilities. Pupils show confidence in mathematics and are making progress. Teachers and support assistants work together to question pupils, help them to check their answers and present their work neatly.
- Inspectors found that early improvements noted in core subjects are not matched in subjects taught in the afternoons. Pupils engage in a range of activities, including food preparation, art and design, computing and a new vocational learning course. Not all

of these activities are sufficiently challenging for pupils. Expectations of staff are not high enough to enable pupils to remain engaged in learning and make sufficient progress.

- Currently, there is no framework in place to assess pupils' work systematically. Procedures to assess pupils on entry to the school to provide a baseline for measuring pupils' progress have been revised. Tutors are expected to administer these initial assessments and share this information with other staff. These arrangements have not been implemented at this stage.
- This standard remains unmet.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)*

- A complaint received by Ofsted relating to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils prompted further investigation of this standard. Inspectors found that effective arrangements are made by leaders to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- At the previous monitoring inspection, safeguarding was found to be effective. However, the lack of staff charged with managing the administration and day-to-day operations of the school meant that there were gaps in the records maintained to ensure pupils' safety. A new full-time business manager has been appointed to improve this and to relieve the headteacher of the many administration duties she currently has. This arrangement is new this term and is not yet fully established.
- Some recent improvements have been made. For example, information about safeguarding concerns raised in school, and about the actions taken to resolve these concerns, is collated more effectively. This work is ongoing and not fully complete.
- Pupils told inspectors that school is a safe place to be. They feel safe in school because they are cared for and well supervised. They know who to approach if they have any concerns.
- There were concerns prior to the inspection that pupils were accessing inappropriate websites on school computers. The headteacher confirmed that two incidents have happened in the past year. Action has been taken to control pupils' use of the internet. Proprietary staff acknowledge that these changes need testing fully to ensure that the computer system remains secure. Pupils who met with inspectors said that the system is secure. They have to ask staff before accessing the internet and are supervised at all times.
- This standard remains met.

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

- A written policy that sets out the rewards and sanctions used to promote pupils' good behaviour is published on the school's website.
- The policy is implemented effectively. Pupils value the rewards system and know what they have to do to accrue the 'Kingsmere Crowns' awarded for positive behaviour and attitudes. They also understand the consequences of poor behaviour. They feel that these procedures are applied fairly by staff, including the occasional use of exclusion

from school for serious misbehaviour.

- Leaders do not maintain records of incidents of poor behaviour in sufficient detail. Incidents are recorded by each member of staff. However, demands on the headteacher's time have prevented her from collating this information. Behaviour records are not evaluated to inform the school's actions to improve behaviour.
- This standard, which was met in the previous inspection, is no longer met.

#### *Paragraph 10*

- A suitable anti-bullying strategy is published on the school's website. However, leaders do not maintain any records of incidents of bullying. The headteacher feels that there is no bullying in the school. This view is not shared by pupils. They feel that bullying does take place, mostly verbal abuse or being unpleasant towards each other. When this happens, they know which member of staff to approach to help them sort things out.
- Leaders do not evaluate the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying strategy. Without this information, they are unable to show what works well or what else needs to be done to eradicate bullying.
- This standard, which was met in the previous inspection, is no longer met.

#### *Paragraph 11*

- A suitable health and safety policy is published on the school's website. The policy is implemented effectively to keep pupils safe. The school site is managed appropriately. Risk assessments for each pupil are in place to ensure their safety in school and when travelling to and from school.
- This standard remains met.

#### *Paragraph 14*

- There were concerns prior to the inspection that referred to the levels of supervision in the school. This was looked at closely by inspectors. They found that pupils are properly supervised. In lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes, there is sufficient supervision to support pupils' learning and manage their safety and welfare. In most cases, at least one member of staff has responsibility for two pupils.
- Some pupils have one-to-one support throughout the school day to protect them and others. No pupils are allowed in classrooms or in social areas without supervision. Behaviour on the staircase is closely observed. Pupils told inspectors that they observe the school rule of letting others come up or down before they use the stairs.
- This standard remains met.

### Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

*Paragraph 18, 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(ii), 18(2)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3)*

- The school's single central record of pre-employment checks is complete and accurate. The proprietor ensures that all necessary checks are made and recorded when appointing new members of staff. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection

relating to transferring information stored centrally by the proprietor onto the school's own single central record have not improved. Although all of the necessary checks have been made, there are still gaps in the records maintained in school. These gaps were filled during the inspection. Leaders acknowledge that significant scope exists to refine this process further so that all safeguarding information is readily available.

*Paragraph 19(1), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii)*

- The school's single central record includes all of the necessary checks made when appointing temporary supply staff.

## Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraph 32(1)*

- The school's policy and procedures for safeguarding pupils are published on the school's website and are available to parents and carers.
- This standard remains met.

*Paragraph 32(3)(d)*

- Information about how the proprietor maintains a record of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour and the how effectively the school's anti-bullying strategy is implemented is not fully shared on the school's website.
- This standard, which was met in the previous inspection, is no longer met.

*Paragraph 32(3)(f)*

- Information about how the proprietor provides parents with details of the school's complaints procedure on the school's website is not effective. The policy is not appropriate.
- This standard, which was met in the previous inspection, is no longer met.

## Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)*

- The school's complaints policy is published on the school's website. It includes most of the requirements of this standard but is a generic document common to all settings operated by the proprietor. Much of it is technical or legal jargon which is difficult for parents to read and understand.
- The policy does not relate directly to the school's context. It does not explain clearly and coherently to parents what they should do if they wish to make a complaint.
- Suitable arrangements and guidance are in place for pupils to make a complaint within school. Pupils know that they can approach the headteacher or an independent listener if they want to make a complaint.
- This standard, which was not examined in the previous monitoring inspection, is not

met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)*

- At the previous inspection, the proprietor was not ensuring that persons with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrated the skills and knowledge needed to meet all of the independent school standards. This continues to be the case.
- The action plan to tackle the issues raised in the previous inspection was rejected by the Department for Education (DfE). There were no appropriate criteria to measure the impact of proposed actions. Timescales were not realistic. The implementation of the plans placed almost all responsibility for making improvements on the headteacher. A new action plan has not been submitted. Instead, school leaders have produced their own plans to bring about rapid improvements.
- Until very recently, the school's capacity to improve has remained limited because the headteacher has had to teach regularly and manage basic duties in the absence of full-time administrative support staff. She has not had sufficient time to bring about the changes needed.
- Governors have acted to increase leadership capacity and strengthen teaching by enabling the headteacher to appoint new staff and a full-time business manager. An experienced member of staff has been promoted to support the headteacher in her leadership duties. The responsibilities of this new post have not been determined.
- Governors have re-evaluated the school's work and are working on revised plans for improvement. All of these developments are very recent. More time is needed to enable leaders to gauge the full impact of this. Not all policies on the school's website are up to date.
- This standard remains unmet.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	131260
DfE registration number	873/6039
Inspection number	10127969

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 school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd
Chair	Michelle Smith
Headteacher	Lynne Keating
Annual fees (day pupils)	Information on request
Telephone number	01354 610 503
Website	<a href="http://www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk">www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:Lynne.Keating@priorygroup.com">Lynne.Keating@priorygroup.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	20–22 February 2018

### Information about this school

- The school provides education for boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Most pupils have been excluded or are at risk of being permanently excluded from mainstream school.
- It is located in a rural setting in Cambridgeshire.
- It is registered with the DfE to take a maximum of 12 boys.
- Pupils join and leave the school at different times of the year.
- The school uses the following alternative provision: Sunset Care Farm, Thetford.

- The school consists of a headteacher, four teachers, five support assistants and an instructor.

## 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 since the previous monitoring inspection. It was also to evaluate the effectiveness of the school’s procedures for safeguarding pupils and looking after their welfare.
- The inspection was the second progress monitoring inspection since the last full inspection in February 2018. It was also an emergency inspection following a complaint received by Ofsted. It was carried out at no notice.
- The DfE rejected the school’s action plan in October 2019.
- Inspectors visited lessons in English, science, mathematics, art, food preparation, computing and vocational learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of pupils’ work in English, mathematics and science.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s action planning, monitoring records, incident log and policies and procedures relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, a group of pupils and two representatives of the proprietor.
- Inspectors held telephone discussions with two local authorities and two children’s care homes.
- No questionnaires were used to survey the views of pupils, staff or parents.

## Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Cindy Impey	Her Majesty’s Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet 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(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
  - 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; and
  - 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.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupils' performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour among pupils by ensuring that-
  - 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.

## **Part 6. Provision of information**

- 32(3) The information specified in this subparagraph is-
  - 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13; and
  - 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(b) is made available to parents of pupils; and
  - 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with subparagraph (e).

## **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 roles so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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