

# Inspection report

**Inspection dates**

22 November 2018

**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 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(f), 3(g)*

- At the inspection in October 2017, these standards were not met because the activities that teachers planned, the resources they used and the lack of higher-level qualifications limited the progress that pupils, especially those who are most able could make. Additionally, assessment was not sufficiently well developed across subjects so that it could be used to adapt learning.
- In the school's revised action plan, the proprietor undertook to increase the number of GCSE higher-level courses available, ensure that teachers take greater account of pupils' learning needs and histories in their planning and undertake comprehensive assessments and regular reviews of pupils' progress.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that the quality of resources across subjects varies too much. Some subject areas such as life skills, music, woodwork and functional skills have useful resources that help pupils learn. However, other subjects, including information technology, need improved learning materials.
- Pupils and teachers complete progress records to monitor how well pupils are doing. While these records provide a useful diary of work completed, the information is not as precise as it needs to be, is not sufficiently linked to individual targets and does not show how much progress pupils are making.
- Records show that the start and end of lessons are not always well defined. This stops some pupils from making the progress they should.
- Additional training and time is provided to help staff with their planning. Teachers now work collaboratively to plan activities that take account of pupils' histories, their prior learning and the group dynamics. This helps pupils to become more motivated and independent learners.
- In lessons, pupil work hard, remain on task and discuss their learning sensibly and articulately. Teachers plan a variety of activities that keep pupils interested and use questioning well to check that pupils have understood what they are learning.
- Higher-level GCSE courses are now available in subjects such as English, mathematics

and music. A few other subjects are awaiting exam board accreditation, but woodwork and horticulture still require additional work before they are ready.

- Although improvements against some of the requirements in the paragraphs for this standard were seen, the standard remains not met.

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

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

*Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)*

- At the inspection in October 2017, these standards were met.
- The school's safeguarding procedures remain effective. The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website and reflects the updated guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Safeguarding is given high priority and staff are acutely aware of the potential dangers to pupils' safety. There are clear processes in place to mitigate risks. Safeguarding records are comprehensive and detailed.
- These standards continue to be met.

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

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i)–(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3)*

*Paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i)–(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i)–(iii), 20(6)(c)*

*Paragraph 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)–(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a)–(b)*

- At the inspection in October 2017, these standards were met.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that all of the required pre-employment checks are completed appropriately, thoroughly and are well documented.
- These standards continue to be met.

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

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

- The standard was not met at the inspection in October 2017 because leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning did not focus sharply on the progress that pupils were making. Additionally, leaders and trustees did not fully understand the independent school standards and had not established a clear system of accountability for raising academic standards in the school.
- In the school's revised action plan, the proprietor undertook to:
  - develop a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities for trustees and leaders provided in a governors' handbook

- ensure that monthly monitoring visits are to be undertaken by trustees
  - commission an educational consultant to provide trustees and leaders with a better understanding of the independent school standards and make sure that monitoring visit records are developed that focus on these standards
  - carry out regular meetings between the trustees and leaders to discuss academic standards.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that trustees are developing a better understanding of the independent school standards through the training provided by an educational consultant. They now have a common template for use on monitoring visits, and the joint learning walks help trustees to assess the quality of learning more accurately. The findings listed in a previous report highlighting inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning ring true.
  - Trustees have appointed a new headteacher. They had a clear understanding of the skills, experience and qualities they were looking for, meaning the process took longer than expected because they wanted to make sure that they appointed the right person. The delay has slowed their progress against meeting some of the standards.
  - Education meetings and monthly monitoring reports provide useful information to keep trustees up to date on the quality of the school's effectiveness. Trustees know that pupils' progress remains high on the agenda for meetings.
  - The new headteacher has sensibly introduced change gradually. The headteacher has, for example, introduced a system to collect information on pupils' progress more systematically. The intention is that this will be used to show more precisely how well pupils are doing and adapt learning or provide extra help if any are struggling. However, this is still a work in progress.
  - The trustees now visit regularly to assess standards across the school. There have been five visits, involving nine trustees, to date. Their reports highlight that more work is needed to bridge the gap between the conflicting demands of educational and therapy provision so that pupils can make consistently good progress over time.
  - The constitution for the school and the decision planner have been reviewed. There are now clear processes in place and a structure to determine where powers have been delegated and who is responsible and accountable for key areas of provision.
  - This standard remains 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, as set out in the annex of this report. 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	142625
DfE registration number	873/6053
Inspection number	10080593

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 school
Age range of pupils	15 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	5
Proprietor	The Friends Therapeutic Community Trust
Chair	Paul Hodgkin
Director	Peter Clarke
Clinical director	Karen Parish
Headteacher	Gemma Plumbly
Date of previous standard inspection	3–5 October 2017

## Information about this school

- The school opened in May 2016.
- A new headteacher started at the school in August 2018.
- A director, clinical director and headteacher share responsibility for the school.
- The school is owned by The Friends Therapeutic Community Trust and led by a group of trustees who provide the governance for the school. The school provides education for up to 16 boys aged 15 to 19.
- Admission to the school is through local authority or social services referral, or as directed by the court. All pupils have complex needs relating to their vulnerability to harmful and challenging behaviours.

- The school works with pupils to recognise and reduce the risks and threats that they face and represent. The aim is to assist pupils to learn how to maintain socially and legally acceptable standards of behaviour so that they can resume independent living.
- Most pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school does not use supply staff.
- The school's inspection history:
  - In April 2016, Ofsted conducted a pre-registration inspection. Inspectors judged that all of the independent school standards were likely to be met.
  - In October 2017, Ofsted conducted the school's first standard inspection. Inspectors judged the school as requires improvement and two of the independent school standards were not met.
  - The Department issued the school with a Notice on 12/06/2018 and the school was required to provide an action plan. Ofsted evaluated the school's action plan on 15/01/2018 and judged it as unacceptable. A second action plan was evaluated on 06/04/2018 and judged as unacceptable. A third action plan was judged acceptable on 30/07/2018.

## 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 standard inspection in October 2017.
- At the standard inspection in October 2017, the school was judged as requires improvement and two of the independent school standards were not met.
- This is the school's first progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in October 2018. The DfE commissioned Ofsted to conduct this progress monitoring inspection at no notice.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the clinical director, trustees, including the director and the clerk to the trustees, and staff responsible for safeguarding.
- The inspector visited classes, accompanied by the headteacher, to observe pupils learning in class and to look at the work in their books. The inspector scrutinised documents, including the school's safeguarding policy, the single central register of employment checks and information linked to pupils' progress.
- The inspector spoke informally with pupils throughout the day about their experiences at the school.

## Inspection team

John Randall, lead inspector

Her 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 unmet at this inspection:*

#### **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(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.

#### **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 requirements contained within the following paragraphs:*

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
  - 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.

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