



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Emergency unannounced inspection report

School name	Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley
DfE registration number	919/6109
Inspection dates	8 March 2016
Reporting inspector	Jane Cooper

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was conducted by the School Inspection Service (SIS) at the request of the Department for Education (DfE). It was carried out by SIS in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and it follows the inspection framework agreed with the DfE. The inspection was conducted by an independent professional inspector, who looked at aspects of the school's provision as requested by the DfE.

Information about the inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) following concerns raised about pupils' safety and the management of the school.
- The DfE prescribed the focus for inspection as four aspects within the Independent School Standards covering pupils' welfare, health and safety and the leadership and management of the school.
- The findings for each of these aspects, which form the headings printed in bold type, are reported under the relevant standards below.
- The inspector did not focus on the school's implementation of its action plan following the previous inspection. This is a separate matter.
- This inspection was conducted without prior notification to the school.

Information about the school

- Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley is an independent school for girls and boys aged three to nineteen. It occupies a large site in rural surroundings in Kings Langley in Hertfordshire. The school follows the philosophy and curriculum developed through the works of Rudolf Steiner.
- There are currently 368 pupils on roll. 67 pupils attend the school part-time in the Kindergarten, not all of whom were scheduled to be present on the day of the inspection. On the day of the inspection 314 pupils were present in the school as a whole.

Inspection findings

Part 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements for dealing with allegations of abuse

The arrangements for dealing with allegations of abuse are clear and meet with current guidance. Officers at the school and the Council of Trustees with responsibility for safeguarding have close contact with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). They seek and accept guidance from the local authority when required. On the basis of the evidence available, the school is implementing its policy appropriately.

Safeguarding policy and implementation, including what is being done to get someone who is fully trained to be a designated person

The school has appropriate child protection and safeguarding policies which are on its website. It also has a clear Code of Conduct for staff. The policies cover the latest government guidance and staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding and child protection. They have been issued with, and were required to sign that they had received a copy of Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015). All staff spoken to by the inspector expressed care and concern for pupils' welfare.

A number of changes have occurred at the school which have had a negative impact on the management of safeguarding. Three members of staff who held the key posts of Education Facilitator, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL have recently relinquished their roles while remaining in school fulfilling their other duties. Both of the latter colleagues had received full and up to date training in safeguarding and child protection, as required. They had been working closely with the LADO and alongside the Chair of the Council of Trustees, who remains in post and spoke to the inspector on the telephone during the day. The Chair of Council of Trustees is fully trained and has secure knowledge of safeguarding and the procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse. The school has moved swiftly and effectively to ensure that the DSL role is covered. Two other members of staff have up to date higher level training in safeguarding, and they have taken over as DSL and deputy DSL on a temporary basis so that there is appropriate cover at the school. The Staffing Group is currently trying to identify another member of staff to train as permanent DSL. A full safeguarding training course has been booked in May for one of the Council members who is also a teacher at the school.

Supervision and behaviour at the school

The school presents an orderly learning environment in which the pupils are attending classes and are purposefully engaged in lessons and other activities. They are supervised appropriately and their behaviour is good. Appropriate cover arrangements are in place where there is teacher absence, with pupils being taught by experienced teachers and following their normal routine and programme of lessons. The school has good pastoral arrangements to support its pupils, which includes counselling support for any who are feeling anxious or upset.

Part 8: Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The security of the current arrangements for leadership and management of the school

The school is a Registered Charity and operates as a Limited Company. It is governed by a Council of nine Trustees which consists of three teachers who are members of College (see explanation below); three parents and three external members. The Council of Trustees has oversight of the school's work. The Chair of the Council of Trustees is fully trained in safeguarding and exercises effective oversight.

The school is managed by the College. This is a body which is made up of between fifteen and twenty-five members of staff who are mainly teachers but also includes other members of the support and administrative staff. The College meets regularly and is the main decision-making body. Meetings of the College are chaired by an individual, the Chair of College. This role is for a fixed period, and carries the same status as other members of the College: it does not have the same authority as a headteacher would in other schools. There is no single individual with authority to direct the College. The College is responsible for the running of the school, with smaller sub-groups known as 'Mandates' which take responsibility for certain aspects of management. For example, a small group of three teachers, one from each area of the school, is ensuring that the school's action plan to improve compliance remains on track. There are no line management arrangements in the school, except in the office where the bursar line manages administrative staff.

This structure of management is fairly common to schools in the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and has strengths where decisions are made corporately and are therefore owned and supported by all staff. The structure is reliant upon individuals supporting the system and fulfilling their roles effectively. Weaknesses in this structure can occur in making and enforcing decisions where there is discord or serious disagreement among the College and the conflict is not resolved. This is the case in Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley. Current management arrangements are not robust enough to ensure that individuals are held to account for their performance, and that the necessary authority and support is given to those fulfilling management and safeguarding roles when circumstances become difficult.

While individual members of staff at this school generally have good skills and knowledge for the aspects of management for which they are responsible, they cannot always fulfil their roles effectively where the College does not fully support them, or where their colleagues do not recognise their authority to do so. Members of staff do not all interpret and therefore implement the school's safeguarding policies in the same way. This leaves the school open to the possibility that children could be at risk, because leadership and management have not been clear enough about the interpretation of safeguarding requirements nor robust enough in enforcing the Staff Code of Conduct. The three recent withdrawals from key posts in safeguarding and school management have highlighted the ineffectiveness of the current structure.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements as follows:

- Improve the effectiveness of the school's management so that persons with leadership and management responsibilities in the school are able to fulfil them effectively in order that the independent school standards may be met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(b)).

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley			
Address of school:	Langley Hill, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire WD4 9HG			
Telephone number:	01923 262505			
Email address:	langleyc@rsskl.org			
Web address	http://rsskl.org			
Proprietor:	Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley Ltd.			
Chair of the College of Staff	Suzy Brownson and Steffi Cook			
Chair of Trustees	Sue Peat			
Early Years Manager	Regina Walsh			
Bursar	Carol Langley			
DfE Number	919/6109			
Type of school	Independent school which is affiliated to the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship			
Age range of pupils	3 – 19 years			
Gender of pupils	Male and female			
Total number on roll	full-time	301	part-time	67
	Boys:	192	Girls:	176
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	1	Girls:	2
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Type of inspection	Unannounced inspection under Section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008			
Date of inspection	8 March 2016			
Inspector	Jane Cooper			

