



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Progress monitoring report

School name	Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley
DfE registration number	919/6109
Inspection dates	10 –11 November 2015
Reporting inspector	Paul Armitage
Supporting inspector	Christine Graham

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 two independent professional inspectors who monitored the school's progress in meeting the independent school standards outlined in the school's Action Plan. At the request of the DfE, and following concerns raised, the inspectors also examined the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Context of the inspection

This inspection took place on 10th – 11th November 2015 following a commission received on 23rd October 2015 from the DfE. The first request from the DfE was to check the progress of actions which the school had identified in its Action Plan of 2nd October 2015. The school had prepared an action plan because it was inspected by SIS on the 24th – 26th March 2015 when it did not meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 relating to: the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (Part 3 paragraphs 11 and 16 (a)); the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (Part 4 paragraphs 18 (a-c), and 21); the suitability of the premises and the accommodation (Part 5 paragraphs 24(1)(b) and 25) and the quality of leadership and management (Part 8 paragraphs 34 (a)(b) and (c)).

The DfE also asked inspectors to examine the quality of the school's safeguarding procedures following safeguarding incidents at the school and complaints from parents.

The school was given no prior notice of this inspection.

Evidence of progress in relation to the action plan

Part 3, paragraph 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.

This standard is met. At the previous inspection the school was asked to ensure that members of staff wear identification badges to increase security at the school. All adults seen during the inspection were wearing badges. Visitors to the school are provided with visitors' badges at reception after a rigorous signing-in process.

Part 3, paragraph 16 (a). This standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy.

This standard is not met. Although there have been some improvements since the last inspection weaknesses remain. The school has successfully adopted the 'Evolve' commercial scheme for conducting risk assessments of educational visits. The trip leader collects all the required information appropriately and the subsequent documentation is completed and signed off by a senior member of staff with good understanding of arranging educational visits. These arrangements are effective. The estates manager visits all parts of the premises on a weekly basis, assesses risks to pupils' health and safety and records them. This action is effective and has improved the safety of the school buildings and grounds. The school's accident record shows that very few accidents occur.

However, at the last inspection, inspectors identified that many of the risk assessments were out-of-date and that some were no longer applicable. The school has still not addressed this problem. It is still the case that many have not been reviewed for some time and there is no overall monitoring of the effectiveness of the risk assessments.

Part 4, paragraphs 18 (a-c), and 21. These paragraphs in the standards relate to the procedures for safe recruitment, checking and vetting of staff and the recording of checks on the school's single central register.

This standard is not met. The school's single central register (SCR) covers the checks required in 'Keeping children safe in education' and includes the other elements of the recruiting process such as medical checks and references. The SCR includes full and part time staff as well as volunteers and contracted staff such as cleaners. However, the SCR and the recruitment process as a whole do not meet the standard because there are gaps in the register and supporting information is missing. In some cases the arrival of information may be pending, although this is not made clear, and in others, the school has the information but has not entered it. In some instances the school's officers were uncertain whether someone was still working at the school or not. Some required information such as references, has not been obtained. The recording of interview discussions is not systematic. In the case of the cleaners who were employed by an agency, the register showed that they had all had DBS checks but there was no indication that the school had checked with the agency whether the other required checks had been done. During the inspection the school contacted the contractor and received written confirmation that the checks had been made, but school staff had not sought the information themselves, as they are required to do, before admitting agency staff into school. A major weakness in the management of the recruitment and vetting process is that no one member of staff is responsible for both updating the register and obtaining the supporting information for inclusion in a personnel file.

Part 5, paragraph 24(1)(b). The standard is met if the proprietor provides suitable accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.

This standard is met. The medical room is now suitably equipped and contains a toilet.

Part 5, paragraph 25. The standard is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

This standard is met. The car park access to the school now has a gate. The school's garden now has a suitable fence between it and the public area.

Part 8, paragraphs 34 1 (a)(b) and (c): The standards concerning the quality of leadership and management are met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Standard 34 1 (a) is met. In the previous report, the inspectors were concerned that not all trustees' posts had been filled and that staff with management responsibilities did not have sufficient time to fulfil their roles. Improvements have been made. Trustees now have appointed roles and workloads are being taken into account when asking people to take on aspects of school management. For example, teachers are given out-of-class time to undertake curriculum development and other activities and there is a more sensitive approach to the workloads of administrative staff. The arrangements are not perfect and there are still issues of communication between staff that can lead to conflicting decisions, but senior staff are very aware of this and are working towards a solution. A new management structure is being developed which will acknowledge the collegiate structure of a Steiner school but also establish manageable roles and clear accountability for the outcomes of the work that is done. It will go before the Trustees shortly for approval. This represents improvement and progress against the action plan, albeit at a rate slower than is desirable, given that the Action Plan stated that this would be in place by 31 October.

Standard 34 1 (b) is not met. While there have been improvements made in defining roles and appointing staff and trustees to them, and staff who are leading certain aspects of the school's work are knowledgeable, they have not yet fulfilled these roles effectively because not all the independent schools standards are consistently met. The management of the school does not monitor and hold individuals to account effectively for their work.

Standard 34 1 (c) is not met. This is because safeguarding arrangements at the school, though improving, are not yet good enough to ensure that the well-being of pupils is actively promoted.

The following paragraphs cover the inspection of safeguarding pupils' well-being at the school, which was undertaken at the request of the DfE. The evidence is provided to substantiate the judgement that paragraph 34 1 (c) is not met.

Child Protection Policy: The school's child protection policy reflects that of the local children's safeguarding board. It currently mentions the Prevent duty and

Channel but does not give guidance to staff on the procedures to be followed. The school is currently writing modifications. It is also aware of the need to produce a risk assessment on radicalisation but has delayed this until staff have received formal training in the Prevent duty, which was due to take place the day after the inspection.

Safeguarding training: Staff are trained in safeguarding at regular intervals. Recent training covered female genital mutilation (FGM) which was understood by those interviewed. Staff also say that they are comfortable about dealing with vulnerable pupils. On the whole, staff seem flexible and willing to help pupils with special difficulties. External support from specialists is used fairly frequently.

Staff recruitment: The recruitment policy is basically a sound, useful document but would be improved by referring to all the checks that are to be made on staff before their appointment is confirmed, including a barred list check and checks on the right to work in the UK and overseas criminal record checks. The policy is not fully implemented, as omissions were found in the SCR, as noted above.

Whistleblowing: There is a new whistleblowing policy in draft form shortly to go to the Trustees for approval.

Designated safeguarding officers: The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is new in her role but has had 3 years' experience as a child protection officer. She and her deputy work efficiently and understand how to handle difficult issues. All have completed training at the right level in accordance with local requirements. Staff are clear on the DSL's role. The inspectors noted a lack of communication between the DSL and the staff dealing with complaints. There was not enough discussion about an issue which was dealt with as a complaint but should have been a child protection issue and had been wrongly filed.

Staff Code of Conduct: There is a staff code of conduct which covers a broad range of topics including e-safety issues and a 'touching' of children code of practice.

Bullying: The behaviour and anti-bullying policies appear to work well. Pupils spoken to are happy with the rewards and sanctions arrangements and pupils think they are consistent. Older pupils said that they would readily speak to any teacher if they had a problem. Younger ones said they would go to their parents. The sanctions book is correctly maintained.

E-safety: Staff and pupils are very well trained in e-safety and parents have also been invited to join training, though relatively few have done so. The school writes to parents to communicate its policy on e-safety but acknowledges that developing common lines on, for example, Facebook use, can be difficult. There are clear policies for mobile phone use and taking photographs. The school has a firewall and management says that it has worked very well. There is wifi in the ICT room and administrative office upstairs in Priory House. The monitoring, by the school, of staff use of personal laptops and mobile phones is being planned by senior management, together with a risk assessment for this action. The aim is to introduce random searches of staff laptops with the permission of the staff member concerned.

PSHEE: The school teaches about drugs, sex and relationships and British values but in the recent past, this ground has been covered within subjects rather than done

explicitly as part of a planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE). The school has now embarked on developing a more formal course in PSHEE. Elements are being tried out in different year groups and there are feedback procedures in place. Defining progress and an assessment system are part of the development. The school makes excellent use of outside speakers to talk on specific topics. Likewise, excellent use is made of educational visits. As was reported in the last inspection report, the school appears to be very successful at producing well-rounded individuals.

Staying safe: Pupils are confident in e-safety, but those interviewed were much less confident about understanding all the essential nuances of how to keep themselves safe. Older and younger pupils knew about not accepting lifts but older pupils did not know about grooming in the wider context. The school is aware of this and is addressing this in its PSHEE development.

Other matters relating to health and safety: There is a suitable first aid policy in place as well as an intimate care policy soon to go before the trustees. There is also an emergency plan. Admission and attendance records are in good order, the latter an improvement since the last inspection.

Handling complaints related to child protection matters: Over the last year there have been incidents at the school which have given rise to complaints from parents, where the school has not always taken the appropriate decisive action in accordance with its policy. The school has not investigated either fully or impartially important matters that were raised by parents nor considered them in the broader context of risk to children. There is a lack of communication between those handling complaints and those in charge of child protection. Where the school has made reference to local authorities such as the local children's safeguarding board or the police, staff have followed properly the professional advice they have been given.

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:

- ensure that staff clearly recognise when an issue submitted as a complaint is actually a child protection issue (paragraphs 7 – 7(b))
- ensure that letters and other material related to child protection issues are placed in child protection files and not in staff personnel files (paragraphs 7 – 7 (b))
- ensure that all staff fully understand and behave in accordance with the school's child protection procedures and its code of conduct and that they are perceptive enough to apply these procedures in a wide range of situations (paragraphs 7 – 7 (b))
- ensure that the school's plans to monitor of staff use of personal laptops and mobile phones are put into effect and that the planned, relevant risk assessment is written (paragraphs 7 – 7(b) and paragraphs 16(a) and 16(b))

- ensure that existing risk assessments are reviewed to ensure that they still are relevant and also address any new issues by the creation of new risk assessments. Monitor the effectiveness of the risk assessments. (paragraphs 16(a) and 16(b))
- ensure that the deficiencies in the single central register are addressed (paragraphs 21(3) – 21(5)(c))
- ensure that the procedures set out in the complaints policy are handled evenly and impartially between the complainant and the person complained about (paragraph 33)
- improve the effectiveness of the school's management to ensure that leaders and managers fulfil their roles effectively so that the independent schools standards are consistently met, (paragraph 34 1 (b))
- ensure that the well-being of pupils is actively promoted (paragraph 34 1 (c)).

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.			
Chairs of the College of Staff	Mute Brownlee and Denis McCarthy			
Chair of Trustees	Sue Peat			
Early Years Manager	Regina Walsh			
Bursar	Carol Langley			
DfE Number	919/6109			
Type of school	Independent school which is part of 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	59
	Boys:	193	Girls:	167
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	10 th – 11 th November 2015			
Inspectors	Paul Armitage (RI) and Christine Graham			