

Rudolf Steiner School

Langley Hill, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire WD4 9HG

Inspection date

27 February 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(c), 3(d) and 3(g)

- The requirements of this standard were not met at the previous inspection because the quality of teaching was too variable across the school. Not all teachers planned lessons in line with leaders' expectations. For example, they did not consider carefully enough the needs of pupils who have additional learning needs. Work was frequently unchallenging and teachers' assessment of the progress made by pupils was still in its infancy.
- The headteacher identifies that there is still some way to go before the quality of teaching is good enough for all pupils at the school. He rightly identifies that teachers' competencies still vary widely. A number of teachers are receiving planned support from senior leaders. This is starting to have an impact on individual practice, but improvements are still at an early stage.
- Considerable work has been undertaken to improve the way teachers and leaders assess pupils' progress. The school's assessment strategy now extends across a range of subjects and leaders are able to use the information it provides to identify where improvements need to be made, for example to reading in the lower school. However, work still needs to be done to ensure the accuracy of these assessments. Similarly, while some teachers use this information well to inform the next stages in their planning, this is not the case across the school. This inconsistent practice undermines leaders' best efforts to improve the quality of educational provision overall.
- This standard remains not met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- This standard relates to the safeguarding of pupils at the school. The requirements of this standard were met at the previous monitoring inspection.

- This standard is not met. Leaders have failed to ensure that all new employees have been thoroughly vetted prior to taking up their post. They have accepted applications that fall far short of a professional standard and have not taken up appropriate references. Once again, leaders have potentially put pupils at risk by not assuring themselves of the suitability of the staff they employ.
- The school's own records show, and leaders testify, that despite extensive training and discussions about safeguarding, there are occasions when staff do not act in the best interests of pupils. When this happens, staff refer instances to senior leaders, who seek appropriate guidance from the local authority.
- This standard is not met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- This standard was met at the previous inspection. However, following concerns raised with the Department for Education, inspectors were required to evaluate whether this standard continues to be met.
- The school's records show that there have been eight concerns raised by parents since the previous inspection. The majority of these relate to the quality of teaching and learning. Each of these was resolved informally and quickly, with the headteacher retaining oversight of the process.
- Those formal complaints currently being investigated at the school were instigated prior to the previous inspection in November 2017.
- Leaders follow the school's complaints policy and demonstrate a genuine determination to try to resolve parental concerns. In the majority of cases, this is successful.
- This standard is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34 (1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34 (1)(c)

- This standard was not met at the previous inspection, as leaders had failed to ensure that those standards relating to the quality of teaching and learning were met. Additionally, while the standards that relate to safeguarding and complaints were met in November 2017, the sustainability of these improvements had not been tested. Improvements were fairly recent and were reliant on new, temporary leadership.
- Crucially, leaders have failed to sustain the improvements to safer recruitment practice. These failings have been long-standing at this school. Recent appointments demonstrate an unacceptable standard of practice. The application process is not completed professionally. The school's policy on recruiting new teachers has evidently been ignored. This represents a worrying reversal of the new safeguarding culture emerging at the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders have made some improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Assessment information has started to highlight the relative strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision, and individual teachers are now being held to account for their work. However, pupils still do not receive a regular diet of good-quality

learning opportunities based on what they already know and can do. Consequently, these aspects of the independent school standard remain unmet.

- This standard is 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	117631
DfE registration number	919/6109
Inspection number	10045532

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	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of students in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	334
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	20
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley Association
Chair	Peter Harrington
Headteacher	Tim Byford
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,577 to £9,857
Telephone number	01923 262505
Website	www.rsskl.org
Email address	receptionist@rsskl.org
Date of previous standard inspection	13–16 December 2016

Information about this school

- The Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley is registered as a mixed independent day school. The school aims to create 'knowledgeable, but also inwardly free, secure and creative adults.'
- Trustees are currently advertising for a substantive headteacher. The consultant headteacher has committed to remaining in post until this permanent post is filled.

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.
- Inspectors observed learning alongside senior leaders in a small number of lessons. This was specifically to check on the work they are undertaking to improve the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors considered a range of safeguarding information, including the school's electronic referral system for recording concerns, checking recruitment procedures and examining attendance records.
- Inspectors examined the school's records of parental concerns, including records that relate to the progress of historical complaints.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders and the chair of trustees. These discussions focused on the independent school standards that were not met at the inspection in November 2017, and on how the school deals with any concerns or complaints raised by parents.
- Inspectors considered 58 anonymously completed responses from pupils to a questionnaire. Inspectors also considered seven direct communications from parents. It was not possible to consider responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as there were no new responses since the previous inspection.

Inspection team

Philippa Darley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Yaxley

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(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(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; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7. The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

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