

# Oakwood School

20 Main Street, Glenfield, Leicester, Leicestershire LE3 8DG

## Inspection dates

22–24 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The school does not meet all the independent school standards.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding records are accurate.
- Senior leaders do not review school policies regularly enough to ensure that they are up to date and provide appropriate information.
- Until very recently, recruitment procedures, including the recording of recruitment checks, have been ineffective.
- Leaders have not taken action quickly enough to resolve an identified fire risk.
- The premises do not meet the necessary requirements for independent schools, including those that relate to pupils' care and welfare.
- Staff do not receive sufficient information about how to assess risk when taking pupils off site. Risk assessments to help manage pupils' behaviour are out of date.
- The proprietor has not undertaken effective checks on the school's safeguarding and recruitment procedures.
- Some pupils in key stage 4 do not make as much progress as they could.

### The school has the following strengths

- The co-headteachers have high expectations for their pupils. They are determined that the pupils should behave and achieve well.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching, providing timely feedback and training that help teachers further improve their classroom practice.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use information about pupils' prior attainment and behaviour to plan effectively for pupils' learning. Teachers mostly have good subject knowledge and set pupils challenging work.
- Positive relationships with staff help pupils to engage well with their learning.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make strong progress from very low starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. The well-targeted support they receive helps pupils to manage their behaviour more effectively over time.
- In most cases, pupils' attendance improves due to the effective support they receive from staff.
- Pupils study a broad curriculum that enables them to develop their knowledge and skills across the full range of subjects.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent

School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the school's procedures to keep pupils safe and to monitor their welfare, by ensuring that:
  - arrangements to keep pupils safe reflect the latest guidance
  - leaders maintain accurate safeguarding records
  - staff's records of their safeguarding concerns are accurate and clearly written
  - the proprietor and senior leaders respond in a timely manner to resolve any health and safety risks that either they, or other professionals, identify
  - staff receive formal training about all safeguarding concerns, including those that relate to sexual harassment and sexual violence and to domestic abuse
  - leaders undertake all recruitment checks for those responsible for governance and for staff, including supply staff, and record these appropriately
  - senior leaders regularly review risk assessments of pupils' behaviour to provide accurate and up-to-date guidance to assist staff in supporting pupils.
- Rapidly improve the impact of leadership and management, by ensuring that:
  - senior leaders know the independent school standards thoroughly and ensure that the school meets these standards consistently
  - all policies are up to date, and provide staff with detailed and appropriate guidance
  - there are regular checks on the safeguarding procedures that lead to timely action when procedures are found to be insufficiently robust
  - there are regular checks on the school's recruitment procedures to make sure that all appropriate checks take place
  - the premises meet the independent school standards
  - systems for measuring risk are clear and identify what actions staff must undertake to reduce any risks that they identify
  - the proprietor and those responsible for governance undertake training to improve their understanding of their responsibilities and duties
  - those responsible for governance hold leaders to account for the effectiveness with which they bring about the necessary, rapid improvements
  - staff receive further opportunities to undertake training led by other organisations, including local schools, to develop further their classroom practice.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, to ensure that all pupils, particularly those in key stage 4, make consistently strong progress, by ensuring that teachers:
  - move pupils on to more challenging work in a timely manner
  - are precise in their use of subject-specific language and concepts, particularly in English and mathematics.

- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- The proprietor has not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- For some time, the school's leaders have not had sufficiently secure understanding of the independent school standards. This has led to the school not consistently meeting a wide range of standards, including those related to: the premises; recruitment procedures; the recording of recruitment checks; the admission register; risk management; first aid; health and safety; and complaints.
- Senior leaders resolved most of these failings during the on-site inspection, once the inspector had brought the unmet standards to their attention.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that the school's policies are up to date, including those that relate to pupils' welfare.
- During the on-site inspection, the inspector found that the premises did not cater fully for pupils' welfare as there was no first-aid room or shower facilities. This has been the case since the school moved to the site.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that safeguarding procedures comply with national guidance and the school's own safeguarding policy.
- The newly appointed co-headteachers are determined that pupils receive the necessary support to manage their behaviour effectively and achieve well. Staff have responded enthusiastically to this new leadership.
- Through their regular visits to lessons, senior leaders have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching. They provide detailed feedback to help teachers improve their classroom practice further.
- Senior leaders have ensured that staff meet weekly to discuss their teaching and review the curriculum. Teachers work closely with each other to share good practice. They observe each other teach and, increasingly, attend externally run training.
- A new behaviour policy, which focuses on rewarding pupils for their positive behaviour, has supported pupils effectively to manage their behaviour. Senior leaders are quick to assist staff when they are supporting pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour.
- Senior leaders regularly check on pupils' achievement, including through looking at the work pupils complete. Senior leaders ensure that pupils who are not making secure progress receive further support, often on a one-to-one basis.
- A recent review of the curriculum has ensured that pupils in all key stages study the full range of subjects. Leaders have ensured that there is a strong focus on securing key stage 2 pupils' phonics knowledge, so that they can read and write effectively. Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 work towards achieving awards from external organisations, including appropriate qualifications for key stage 4 pupils. This enables pupils to celebrate success, grow in confidence and prepare well for their next steps.
- Wide-ranging extra-curricular activities complement the curriculum well. Visits to museums enable pupils to extend their learning beyond the classroom. Meeting residents

of a care home allows pupils to learn about people who live in the local area.

- There are regular opportunities for pupils to become secure in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about different beliefs and have visited a synagogue and a church. Pupils raise money for national charities and learn about current affairs, including human trafficking and obesity, through the 'school awareness days'.

## **Governance**

- The proprietor and those responsible for governance do not have a secure understanding of the independent school standards. They have failed to ensure that the school meets these standards consistently.
- The proprietor has failed to undertake appropriate checks on the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding and recruitment procedures.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the co-headteachers have received sufficient training or time to be able to fulfil their responsibilities, including in relation to safeguarding.
- The proprietor failed to ensure that there was a timely enough response to resolve an identified fire risk. In this, the proprietor did not hold senior leaders suitably to account.
- In moving the school to its current site, the proprietor failed to identify that the premises did not meet the independent school standards and were unsuitable for use as a school.
- The proprietor is committed to ensuring that pupils receive effective support to manage their behaviour and engage with their learning. In this, the proprietor is determined that pupils achieve well and prepare effectively for life in modern Britain.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- At the start of the inspection, the school's safeguarding policy did not fully reflect the latest guidance. Safeguarding leaders resolved these failings by the end of the inspection and ensured that the up-to-date policy is available on the school's website.
- Senior leaders have not maintained accurate safeguarding records.
- On occasions, safeguarding leaders' responsibilities as the co-headteachers have limited their capacity to fulfil their safeguarding duties.
- The co-headteachers have not taken timely enough action to resolve a risk that an independent fire risk assessment of the school identified. This put pupils unnecessarily at risk. The co-headteachers resolved this concern during the inspection.
- Staff have a secure understanding of the different types of abuse, the signs to look for, and the actions to take if they have a concern. However, staff's knowledge of some safeguarding matters is not secure, including in contextual safeguarding and sexual violence and sexual harassment. Staff have not received any formal training on domestic abuse.
- Staff are vigilant of their pupils' welfare and do pass on any concerns that they may have to safeguarding leaders. However, safeguarding leaders have not ensured that all staff record their concerns accurately and clearly.

- Safeguarding leaders work well with external agencies to provide pupils with support. However, they do not keep accurate records of this work. As a result, safeguarding leaders do not have a sufficiently secure oversight of the information that has passed between the school and other agencies.
- Owing to insufficient training, the co-headteachers do not have a comprehensive understanding of the recruitment checks they should undertake of new staff, or of how to record these checks.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that risk assessments of pupils' behaviour are up to date. The risk assessments do not provide staff with current information about the risks related to pupils' behaviour or appropriate guidance as to how to manage these risks.
- Procedures for completing risk assessments for off-site trips are ineffective. There is no guidance for staff as to how to identify and manage risks. For example, in completing risk assessments, staff do not consider the ages and the behaviour of the individual pupils attending the trip. This limits staff's opportunities to identify and manage potential risk.
- Pupils who met with the inspector said that they feel safe at the school. They said that they can speak to adults at the school if they have a concern. They are confident that adults will take effective action to help them to resolve their concern.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers use information about pupils' prior attainment and behaviour effectively to plan work that is at the right level. This ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Positive relationships with their teachers and other adults in the classroom ensure that pupils engage well with their learning. Staff bring pupils swiftly back to the task when their attention wanders.
- Teachers build successfully on pupils' prior learning when setting new tasks. For example, in a key stage 2 mathematics lesson, pupils drew times accurately on blank clock faces, using their prior learning about time and the properties of circles.
- When teachers or other adults in the classroom identify that pupils are not secure in their understanding, they provide timely, effective support.
- Teachers ask questions well to deepen pupils' understanding. In a key stage 3 technology lesson, the teacher regularly asked pupils questions about what they were doing. His questions enabled pupils to reflect on what they needed to do to complete the task.
- Teachers regularly review with pupils what they have learned. This enables pupils to reflect on their learning and to understand how they can apply what they have learned to other subjects or tasks. For example, in a key stage 4 English lesson, pupils reflected on how they could use their creative writing skills when completing job application letters.
- Class discussions enable pupils, particularly those in key stage 4, to grow in confidence, develop their communication skills and become increasingly resilient.
- Teachers do not always move pupils on to more challenging work quickly enough. On such occasions, pupils do not deepen their learning as fully as they could.
- Teachers are not always sufficiently precise in their use of subject-specific language, including in English and mathematics.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Senior leaders have not taken sufficient action to ensure that pupils are safe. They have not maintained accurate records of the actions that they take to keep pupils safe. Furthermore, they have not acted quickly enough to resolve an identified fire risk.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Owing to the well-targeted support that they receive from the staff, they engage well with their learning and come to understand the importance of learning from their mistakes.
- Pupils learn about how to live healthy lives, including through eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Pupils learn about the risks of making unhealthy decisions, including the negative effects of smoking.
- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 receive impartial careers advice and guidance, including through attending careers events off the school site.
- Senior leaders provide effective support to key stage 4 pupils who are ready to continue their studies at a mainstream school or college. They help pupils to find out about the courses that are available to them. They support the pupils as they move to the school or college of their choice.
- Pupils learn about how to stay safe, including when online.
- Pupils learn about the different types of bullying. They learn that it is important to respect all people and to treat people kindly.
- Pupils say that staff deal effectively with the few incidents of bullying that occur. The school's records confirm this to be the case.
- Pupils learn about the need to respect all people, including those who are different to them and who may hold different opinions and beliefs to them. Pupils in key stage 3, for example, have learned about the difficulties that people with disabilities face, including in sport.
- Staff accompany those pupils who receive some of their education off site. This enables school leaders to check on these pupils' attendance, progress, behaviour and welfare.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils arrive at the school with a poor record of attendance. Many pupils have been absent for sustained periods of time. Owing to the well-targeted support that they receive, most pupils' attendance improves significantly.
- The longer they are at the school, the frequency with which pupils engage in poor behaviour reduces. This is owing to the effective support pupils receive to manage their behaviour, particularly through being able to talk with staff about how they are feeling.

- The school's records show that rewards for pupils' positive behaviour are increasing in number. This is in part due to the new behaviour policy, which focuses on encouraging and reinforcing positive behaviour.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves well around the school site. Through their effective supervision, staff support pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons because of the effective support that they receive from both teachers and other adults in the room to engage in their learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils arrive at the school with levels of attainment that are well below those expected for their age or stage of education. Senior leaders and teachers ensure that the work that they set pupils enables them to catch up quickly across a range of subjects where previously they have fallen behind.
- Pupils in key stage 2 make rapid progress in developing their communication skills. This is due to the frequent opportunities they receive to develop their understanding of phonics.
- Pupils in key stage 2 make good progress in developing their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils in key stage 3 make good progress across a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, from what are often very low starting points. Increasingly, they complete work that enables them to gain awards from an external body. In achieving these awards, pupils demonstrate good attainment.
- In all key stages, pupils grow in confidence due to the effective support and good teaching they receive. Their growth in confidence contributes to pupils' strong personal development.
- Pupils develop their creative skills well, particularly through their study of art and technology.
- Pupils in key stage 4 make good progress in their subject studies, including in English and mathematics. Through this, they prepare well for the next stage of their education or training. Some pupils in key stage 4 do not make as much progress as they could.
- Pupils who left the school at the end of key stage 4 in 2018 attained well in the selected qualifications towards which they worked.
- When it is appropriate to their next steps, pupils continue with their education in mainstream education at the end of key stage 4.

## School details

Unique reference number	128078
DfE registration number	855/6021
Inspection number	10078675

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mandy Cheriton-Metcalf
Chair	Mandy Cheriton-Metcalf
Co-headteachers	Sharon Dhesi and Kevin Kinsella
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000
Telephone number	01458 271954
Website	<a href="http://www.unitedhealth.co.uk/education/oakwood-community-school">www.unitedhealth.co.uk/education/oakwood-community-school</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:Sharon.dhesi@barfordchildrenservices.co.uk">Sharon.dhesi@barfordchildrenservices.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Kevin.kinsella@barfordchildrenservices.co.uk">Kevin.kinsella@barfordchildrenservices.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	1–3 March 2016

## Information about this school

- Oakwood School is registered to provide full-time education for up to 20 pupils aged between eight and 18 years old who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties, together with associated challenging behaviour.
- The school is not currently operating at its registered premises. Rather, the school is operating at EMP House, Sapcote Road, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire LE9 4DW. It has operated from this premises since February 2018.

- Most pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- Some pupils live in the care of the local authority.
- The school works with one alternative provider to provide pupils at the school with education at a placement off site. This alternative provision is Heart of England Training Ltd in Leicester.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no students in the school's 16–19 provision.
- The two co-headteachers took up their positions in January 2019. The deputy headteacher, who has oversight of the quality of teaching and learning, took up her position in September 2018.
- The school's aim is to enable pupils to 'learn to understand, manage and improve their own behaviour, and to build positive relationships with adults and with other pupils.'
- The school's last standard inspection took place on 1–3 March 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes. All visits to lessons took place jointly with one of the co-headteachers and the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector checked the school's facilities against Part 5 of the independent school standards.
- With the deputy headteacher, the inspector looked at pupils' books across a range of subjects from all three key stages.
- The inspector held meetings with: the co-headteachers; the deputy headteacher; the proprietor; and a selection of the teaching and support staff.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime. He also met formally with a selection of pupils.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with a member of the local authority's team of officers who are responsible for safeguarding. He also spoke with a representative of an alternative provision that provides pupils with education away from the school site.
- Responses to the online parent survey, Parent View, and to the free-text service were too few for the inspector to consider.
- There were no responses to either the pupil or staff survey.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's provision, including: self-evaluation and improvement planning; behaviour and attendance; achievement; and safeguarding.
- The inspector checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.

## Inspection team

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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

### **The school must meet the following independent school standards**

#### **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.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

#### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including—
  - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
  - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility; and
- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).

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

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 32(1)(h) where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in

section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006[16]) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State;

## **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.

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