

Wathen Grange School

Church Walk, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 1PZ

Inspection dates

26 January 2017

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 3 and 3(a)

- At the previous inspection in April 2016, the curriculum did not adequately cover all the areas of learning as technology was not taught. As a result, computing was not taught. The most able pupils did not have access to higher-level qualifications. In addition, pupils did not do well in a range of subjects primarily due to a high turnover of staff.
- The action plan evaluation in August 2016 stated that it was unlikely the school would meet the standards as the proposed actions lacked specific detail. In addition, it was not clear how the school was going to monitor, evaluate and review the actions taken.
- The proprietor and leaders have successfully implemented appropriate actions to address the previous failings relating to the quality of education provided.
- Staffing is now stable. Pupils who spoke with the inspector said that the quality of teaching has improved as a result of fewer staff changes. Pupils said that they are grateful for this improved stability in staffing.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor and school leaders have introduced the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). An outside provider delivers the ECDL. All pupils follow the course. Information provided by the school shows that the majority of pupils are developing their knowledge and skills to use information and communication technology well.
- Pupils have opportunities to plan, make and evaluate a range of products. They use and work with tools, equipment and materials in other subjects. In art, for example, pupils have made toys that have moving parts.
- The curriculum remains suitably broad and balanced and appropriately covers all of the required areas of learning. The emphasis is on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The most able pupils have opportunities to study for higher-level qualifications, for example, in English, mathematics and art.
- Information provided by the school shows that pupils, including the most able, do well across a range of subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. A scrutiny of pupils' work during this inspection confirmed that pupils achieve well from sometimes very low

starting points.

- Pupils' reading skills are particularly well developed. Information provided by the school shows that pupils' reading ages have increased sometimes by as much as six years in less than a year.
- Staff prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Information provided by the school shows that the vast majority of pupils who leave the school successfully secure a place at a further education college, start training or find employment.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that the school now meets these standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 10

- At the previous inspection in April 2016, weaknesses were identified in the school's: anti-bullying policy, in particular with reference to prejudicial bullying; child protection records; checks on staff's suitability to work with children, in particular the checks made on the barred list and the checks on prohibition from teaching.
- The action plan evaluation in August 2016 stated that it was unlikely the school would meet the standards as the proposed actions lacked specific detail. In addition, it was not clear how leaders were going to monitor, evaluate and review the effective implementation of the actions taken.
- The proprietor and leaders have successfully implemented appropriate actions to address the previous failings relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that the child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements and are informed by, and reflect, the current guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The proprietor implements the range of policies, for example behaviour and anti-bullying, effectively. However, at the time of this inspection the school's most up-to-date safeguarding policy was not on the school's website. Up-to-date copies of the policy are available for parents and others on request.
- The arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school are detailed and thorough. Suitable procedures, appropriate child protection training and detailed risk assessments, including for individual pupils, underpin safeguarding at the school. As a result, there is a culture of vigilance. Staff effectively identify and support pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties or those at potential or actual risk of harm. Leaders keep the records of child protection concerns securely. Staff suitably monitor and analyse the records to make sure actions meet the needs of pupils and their families and any issues are thoroughly followed up internally or by contacting the appropriate external agency.
- The designated safeguarding leader has secure knowledge, understanding and expertise to carry out this role suitably. He has recently attended relevant training. All staff complete frequent child protection training, including how to identify pupils at risk of radicalisation or child sexual exploitation. As a result, staff understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting pupils. For example, staff quickly and effectively address incidents of pupils' poor or unsafe behaviour.

- The checks on staff's suitability to work with children are detailed and thorough.
- Leaders have updated the anti-bullying policy. It contains suitable information about all forms of bullying including prejudice-based bullying. The anti-bullying policy dovetails well with the behaviour policy and it is clear that the school does not tolerate bullying in any form.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of the different forms of bullying. Pupils who spoke with the inspector were clear that the school does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. Pupils said that bullying incidents are infrequent but quickly and effectively dealt with by staff if they happen. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that staff are supportive, caring and responsive to their needs.
- Information provided by the school shows that the number of bullying incidents is declining. There are very few pupils who repeat bullying behaviour. This indicates that the school's follow-up work is effective.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that the school now meets these standards.

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

Paragraphs 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i) to 21(3)(a)(viii) and 21(3)(b)

- At the previous inspection in April 2016, the checks on staff's suitability to work with children were not complete. The single central record had omissions with respect to the recording of checks against the barred list and prohibition of teaching.
- The action plan evaluation in August 2016 stated that it was likely the school would meet these standards as leaders had already made the necessary changes to the single central record.
- The proprietor and school leaders have successfully implemented the action plan and addressed the previous shortcomings relating to the checks made on staff's suitability to work with children. The designated safeguarding leader fully understands his responsibility to check the suitability of all staff and adhere to government requirements, particularly for prohibition and barred list checks.
- The checks on staff's and supply staff's suitability to work with children are thorough and robust and meet current government guidelines. Systems for the appointment of staff are in place with many of the checks taking place at the point of application or interview. For example, interviewers check candidates' understanding of safeguarding policy and procedures through a range of relevant questions.
- The single central record is in place electronically and contains all of the required information. It is fully compliant. The single central record lists all of the staff and supply staff currently working at the school. The employment agency checks the supply teachers' suitability to work with children. The school records this information appropriately. Leaders check the identity of supply teachers when they arrive at the school.
- A scrutiny of staff's personnel files confirms that the school has carried out all the necessary tasks to check staff's suitability to work with children.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that the school now meets these standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the previous inspection in April 2016, not all of the independent school standards were met. The school's overall effectiveness was judged inadequate. The school's curriculum did not cover all of the required areas of learning. For example, technology was not taught. The school's self-evaluation was out of date and did not reflect the school's current strengths and weaknesses. The single central record had omissions with respect to the recording of checks against the barred list and prohibition from teaching. Leaders did not keep child protection records well. The school's anti-bullying policy did not contain all of the necessary information. There was a high turnover of staff. These issues had a negative impact on pupils' progress, welfare, safety and achievement.
- The action plan evaluation in August 2016 stated that it was unlikely the school would meet all of the standards as the proposed actions lacked specific detail. In addition, it was not clear how leaders were going to monitor, evaluate and review the effective implementation of the actions.
- The proprietor and leaders have successfully implemented appropriate actions to address the previous failings. The requirements for parts 1, 3 and 4 are now met. As a result, the requirements for part 8 are now met.
- School leaders demonstrate an appreciation and awareness of how to provide an effective education for pupils who have found mainstream education difficult to access. They have appropriate knowledge, understanding and expertise to make sure pupils do well academically and socially from sometimes very low starting points. However, the proprietor is overly reliant on the school leaders and does not check their performance frequently enough.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders use the information to inform subsequent improvement plans appropriately. These plans address the school's weaknesses effectively. The improvements in the quality of education, welfare, health and safety and checks on staff's suitability to work with children demonstrate this.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets 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. 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 3 and 3(a).
- Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 10
- Paragraphs 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i) to 21(3)(a)(viii) and 21(3)(b)
- Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

School details

Unique reference number	134614
DfE registration number	937/6104
Inspection number	10025555

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	Secondary
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Viron Mangat – Complete Care (Warks) Ltd
Chair	Viron Mangat
Acting headteacher	Rob Maddox
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,950
Telephone number	01827 714 454
Website	www.wathengrange.com
Email address	v.mangat@wathengrange.com
Date of previous standard inspection	26–28 April 2016

Information about this school

- Wathen Grange School offers day provision for a maximum of 20 pupils aged 11 to 16 years with social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties.
- There are currently six pupils on roll, all boys. Four pupils are in key stage 4 and two pupils are in key stage 3.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- All of the pupils currently on roll have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. All of the pupils have previously had a disrupted education. Solihull, Bristol and Leicestershire local authorities place pupils at the school.

- Since the previous standard inspection in April 2016, the headteacher has left the school. An acting headteacher is in post for four days a week.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This unannounced progress monitoring 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.
- The school was inspected in April 2016. Not all of the regulations were met and the school's overall effectiveness was judged as inadequate.
- The school submitted an action plan outlining its proposals to address the unmet standards. This action plan was evaluated in August 2016. The action plan was judged to require improvement.
- This is the first progress monitoring inspection since the full inspection in April 2016.
- The inspector observed pupils' learning and scrutinised their work in a range of subjects.
- The views of pupils were considered through individual and group discussions.
- The inspector scrutinised documents including: the school's self-evaluation document; development plans; information on current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance; the checks made on staff's suitability to work with children; school policies and the school's curriculum and associated schemes of work.

Inspection team

Peter Humphries, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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