

Seadown School

1a Farncombe Road, Seadown House, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 2BE

Inspection dates

14–16 May 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

- Those responsible for leadership and governance do not fully understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe.
- Safeguarding is ineffective because weaknesses in procedures could potentially put pupils at risk of harm.
- The curriculum does not provide secondary pupils with impartial careers guidance.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to work at full capacity, particularly in the secondary department, when they are suitably focused on their learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The proprietor and those responsible for governance have not acted quickly enough on the recommendations of the previous inspection. They do not have the skills and knowledge to hold leaders to account.
- Some required policies are not in place or do not reflect the school's current practice.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is good. Teachers plan practical activities that help pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills well.
- Primary pupils make good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics and science. When they are focused on their learning, secondary pupils make strong progress in developing their functional skills.
- Leaders have created a well-organised, and respectful environment where pupils can be themselves. The introduction of a pastoral team has improved behaviour throughout the school. For many pupils, behaviour and attendance have improved over time.
- The curriculum is interesting and gives pupils a wide variety of useful experiences and encourages them to have a healthy lifestyle.

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?

- Improve safeguarding procedures, by ensuring that:
 - leaders and governors understand and follow the latest statutory guidance, as outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2018)
 - the single central record of recruitment checks is well maintained
 - safeguarding training for staff accounts for the particular needs of pupils and the context of the school and its locality.
- Improve leadership and management, by ensuring that:
 - those responsible for governance have the knowledge and skills to hold leaders to account
 - policies are up to date and reflect the school's current practice
 - the curriculum includes impartial careers education for secondary pupils.
- Maximise the progress that pupils make, especially in the secondary classes, by ensuring that they are challenged when they are focused on their learning.
- 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

- Leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. Their self-evaluation of the school is over optimistic.
- Leaders have not ensured that they have kept up to date with changes to safeguarding guidance. External advisers employed by the proprietor have not highlighted weaknesses in current practice.
- The school's curriculum is largely based on the national curriculum and is therefore broad and balanced. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to give more emphasis to teaching key skills to secondary-aged pupils. However, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum includes impartial careers advice.
- Throughout the school, the curriculum offers pupils interesting activities to develop their skills and knowledge and prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well. Visits and trips are used appropriately to enhance the curriculum. For example, a trip to the local lifeboat station helped pupils to understand the importance of water safety.
- There has been some turbulence in staffing arrangements. The headteacher has been careful to maintain her expectations about the quality of teaching. As a result, there have been changes to the teaching team. Despite these changes, leaders have maintained the good quality of teaching across the school. During the inspection, leaders could accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching.
- Leaders have made changes to the staffing structure to introduce a pastoral team to support behaviour. As a result, the number of major behavioural incidents is reducing. However, the current practices in school to analyse both positive and disruptive behaviour are not reflected in the school's behaviour policy.
- Documentation required by the independent school standards, such as the risk assessment policy, are not in place, despite the school's overall approach to risk assessment being sound.
- Parents and carers who completed the online survey are positive about the school. One parent wrote: 'The school has greatly improved the self-confidence and self-worth of my son which has greatly improved the other areas of his life including the academic side.'

Governance

- Governance is still developing, despite being a priority for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Leaders told inspectors that there have been some improvements to governance. However, leaders do not yet feel that they are fully held to account. As a result, there are unmet independent school standards.
- Governors do not have the skills and knowledge to carry out their role effectively. They do not understand the independent school standards or the latest statutory safeguarding guidance.
- While governors do visit the school regularly, the majority of visits focus on financial or

building and premises matters. Where safeguarding visits take place, governors do not have the specific school-based knowledge to challenge leaders about the right things.

- Governors have laudable intentions. They would like pupils to be 'equipped to cope with life' when they leave school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Staff receive annual safeguarding training and have regular discussions in relation to incidents that have happened in school. However, staff have not had specific safeguarding training about contextual safeguarding relating to the specific needs of pupils in the school or the local area.
- The majority of recruitment checks are carried out before staff start work. However, these checks were not recorded correctly on a single central register at the start of the inspection. Checks about eligibility to lead and manage independent schools had not been completed or recorded for leaders.
- There are no clear lines of responsibility for maintaining the single central record of recruitment checks. Gaps are evident because the checks are carried out externally from the school by a human resources manager but entered on the register by school leaders. Governors do not check the record. Errors in the single central record were rectified during the inspection.
- Leaders and governors do not have a strong understanding of the latest statutory safeguarding guidance. For example, they do not understand the changes to rules about childcare disqualification, and nor do they understand their responsibility to report certain concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Procedures to record and evaluate the use of physical intervention have been strengthened and improved following the outcome of an investigation into the use of physical intervention.
- Leaders work well with other professionals and families to safeguard the most vulnerable pupils. However, records for individual pupils are stored in different places and formats, without a clear chronology of concerns.
- Record keeping about admissions and pupils who have left the school does not demonstrate that leaders follow their responsibilities to check that children are not missing from education.
- During the inspection, it was clear that staff do all they can to care for and safeguard pupils. Current pupils feel safe and happy at school. However, the weaknesses identified in safeguarding systems and record keeping have the potential to put pupils at risk of harm.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school website as required and reflects the latest statutory guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers work hard to develop extremely positive relationships with pupils. This helps to maintain an atmosphere and culture that are conducive to learning. The initial work by adults to develop this trust and respect sets solid foundations for positive learning.
- Teaching assistants also foster friendly and positive relationships with pupils, and this enables them to give pupils calm and supportive reassurance to ensure that they remain engaged in learning.
- Despite the significant behavioural and emotional needs of the majority of pupils, classrooms are characterised by positive behaviour and a desire to learn and make progress. Teachers encourage pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects
- Teachers use practical and memorable activities very well to engage pupils and develop their knowledge and skills. For example, pupils followed complex instructions to extract DNA from a strawberry. As well as improving their scientific knowledge, this activity also encouraged pupils to become more resilient and methodical.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. This enables teachers to plan carefully the next steps in learning for each pupil, for example, in harder tasks that require the application of previous learning. Alternatively, teachers plan activities that take pupils out of their comfort zone, for example by requiring them to explain or demonstrate their learning to the class.
- Teachers' questioning is focused and effective in helping pupils to recall and apply their knowledge in a range of subjects.
- When teachers follow the school's policy by giving pupils precise feedback, especially verbally, it enables pupils to make the strongest progress. Where teachers are less specific in their expectations, or do not use precise vocabulary, it restricts pupils from making as much progress as they could.
- Leaders have developed an assessment system that allows teachers to identify gaps in learning and plan activities to fill these gaps. Some teachers are not yet using this to full advantage to set pupils suitably challenging tasks that build on previous learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because weaknesses in safeguarding systems could put pupils at risk of harm. However, there are some strengths in the school's work to promote pupils' personal development.
- Pupils are encouraged to take sensible risks and become independent and responsible learners.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles through the provision of a healthy breakfast and through the daily whole-school run along Worthing seafront to the pier and back. Pupils enjoy the whole-school swimming sessions each week.
- Bullying is extremely rare at Seadown School. Although pupils are sometimes unkind to

each other, this is seldom targeted at individuals or persistent.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils are totally engrossed in their learning. This is because teaching is engaging, and pupils are given the confidence to succeed. When pupils are distracted during lessons, adults quickly and calmly bring their focus back to the work. Pupils are well supported by adults who know and respect them as individuals.
- Exclusions and the use of physical intervention have reduced. Over time, many pupils who have historically demonstrated particularly challenging behaviour have made great improvements in their conduct.
- Leaders have reviewed procedures for recording and learning from serious behaviour incidents following a recent investigation into the use of physical intervention.
- Staff feel well supported by leaders when it comes to managing challenging behaviour.
- Breaktimes are calm and well supervised. There is a range of activities for pupils to enjoy. The investment in the outdoor area has made this a pleasant place for pupils to play and socialise.
- Attendance has improved over time, markedly so for some specific pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils in the lower school make strong progress from their starting points in writing, mathematics and science. Younger pupils build and develop their existing knowledge very well. For instance, pupils could recall key facts about Sikh beliefs and customs, and apply them to everyday situations. During science, pupils built on what they already knew and remembered about states of matter. They applied this to make predictions about what may happen in an experiment.
- Only occasionally do tasks not build on existing knowledge and skills, for example when reasoning problems in mathematics do not build on pupils well-developed calculation skills, but rely on using simple addition instead.
- Upper-school pupils develop and apply their functional skills in English and mathematics well. For example, pupils who were researching Alfred Nobel used their reading, history and technological skills to find and then present information clearly and in chronological order.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read aloud when appropriate and, as a result, pupils develop confidence and accuracy in reading. As their confidence grows, pupils choose to read a variety of fiction and non-fiction. Consequently, some pupils have found a new favourite author, or a new passion or interest, such as for classic cars or conspiracy theories.
- Pupils have opportunities to work towards level 1 and level 2 qualifications, but not normally GCSEs. Leaders recognise that there are some most-able pupils who will be in key stage 4 imminently and may need to access these higher qualifications.
- As well as making good progress academically, pupils make good progress at Seadown in

terms of their personal development and confidence. This is aided by the improvements in attendance most pupils have.

- Despite the progress pupils make at Seadown, the school does not yet have a strong track record of preparing pupils to sustain placements successfully in further education.
- Teachers do not always challenge pupils as much as possible when their behaviour and attitudes are highly positive. Leaders and teachers recognise that these golden opportunities to maximise progress are not consistently exploited as well as they could be.

School details

Unique reference number	135691
DfE registration number	938/6228
Inspection number	10098843

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	6 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Terry Goble
Chair	Aimee Ryan
Headteacher	Amanda Curry
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,220 to £54,000
Telephone number	01903 608750
Website	www.seadownschool.co.uk
Email address	amanda.curry@seadownschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–13 October 2016

Information about this school

- Seadown School provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health issues. Many pupils have additional needs, such as autism spectrum disorder.
- Pupils are assigned to one of four classes that are mostly organised by age. The two lower-school classes have mainly primary pupils, while the two upper-school classes are for secondary pupils.
- All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan. There are considerably more boys than girls on roll.

- The school does not use any alternative provision for secondary-aged pupils.
- The school has a governing body that includes the proprietor, other company directors, school leaders and parent representatives.
- The last full inspection took place in October 2016 when the school was found to be good.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to carry out this standard inspection earlier in the cycle than previously planned.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school, sometimes accompanied by the deputy headteacher. He also observed pupils at breaktime.
- Meetings were held with leaders, the chair of governors and the company's human resources manager.
- The inspector spoke to pupils and staff informally throughout the inspection.
- The inspector evaluated the work in pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning and progress.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, especially documents relating to safeguarding and the independent school standards.
- The inspector considered three responses to the Parent View online survey, including free-text comments.
- The inspector took account of 18 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

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.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour; and
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- 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.

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff (“S”) appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether–
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction.

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)(a) the information specified in sub-paragraph (2) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector[14], the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate; and
 - 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.
- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 32(2)(b)
 - 32(2)(b)(i) where the proprietor is an individual, the proprietor’s full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted;
 - 32(2)(c) where there is a governing body, the name and address for correspondence of

its Chair.

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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