

Draycott Moor College

Draycott Old Road, Draycott-in-the-Moors, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST11 9AH

Inspection dates

24–26 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Senior leaders and the proprietorial body have failed to ensure that key independent school standards are met.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. There are pupils who have been left unsupervised while being educated off site. There has been poor planning for these pupils' attendance, welfare and behaviour.
- Some risk assessments are not fit for purpose and this means that vulnerable pupils are not well supported. There has been inadequate liaison with other agencies. Consequently, the needs of some pupils have not been met.
- There have been errors in the school's record keeping of checks on staff. The proprietorial body has not monitored the school's safeguarding procedures well enough.
- There have been too many incidents of very poor behaviour at the school over the past year.
- The proprietorial body and school leaders have not properly determined the school's admission number. This is because there has been poor communication between the proprietorial body and school leaders.
- Too many pupils are absent from school for too long. The safety of these pupils is at risk.
- Some school records are difficult for leaders to find. The turbulent recent past of the school has meant that systems for planning, recording and tracking of pupils' progress and welfare are not adequate.
- There is no accessibility plan for the school. The school has not met its obligation to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The school has the following strengths

- Some teaching and learning are imaginative, thoughtfully planned and engage the pupils well.
- The outcomes of pupils at the school since September are improving rapidly.
- The new headteacher is passionately committed to improving the school. She is supported by a new corporate director at Horizon Care and Education, the proprietorial body. Although also new in post, the corporate director has begun improving the school's systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all its systems.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Immediately improve safeguarding arrangements by ensuring that:
 - all pupils are supervised properly so that they are safe wherever they are taught
 - risks assessments are in place that identify and address the potential risks associated with the specific needs of individual pupils
 - there are rigorous procedures in place for maintaining a single central register that complies with requirements
 - safeguarding policies and procedures reflect the most up-to-date statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- Immediately improve leadership and management so that:
 - school systems for managing safeguarding are properly managed, monitored and rigorously checked
 - the school's behaviour policy is effectively implemented to ensure rapid improvements in pupils' behaviour
 - the oversight of pupils' behaviour and welfare means that pupils are secure and safe whether learning at school or in other settings
 - record keeping is improved so that important information can be easily retrieved and shared speedily by leaders to therefore make improvements
 - the school has an accessibility plan to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
 - those with responsibility for governance have a clear strategic oversight and effectively hold leaders to account for the quality of behaviour and safety
 - the school liaises effectively with other agencies to ensure the good behaviour and safety of pupils whether at the school or in other settings.
- Immediately improve pupils' behaviour so that:
 - incidents of poor behaviour reduce rapidly
 - pupils behave well both while in school and when attending off-site educational provision.
- Significantly improve pupils' rates of attendance by working tenaciously with pupils, parents and carers and other agencies.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils
 - The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
 - The proprietor must promote good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that the behaviour policy is implemented effectively (paragraphs 9 and 9(b)).

- The proprietor must ensure that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff (paragraph 14).
- The proprietor must ensure 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 appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure 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 (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).
- Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010:
 - The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to fulfil duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders have failed the pupils of this school significantly. Leadership and management of safeguarding, in particular are inadequate.
- The leadership of personal development, behaviour and welfare is also inadequate. For too long, the school has suffered from a lack of robust oversight and implementation of a coherent behaviour strategy.
- Current school leaders, who are only recently in post, are committed to the improvement of the pupils in their care. There have been many changes in leadership and management over the past two years. The current headteacher has been in post since March 2016. She has tried to put in place new systems for managing pupils' safeguarding and behaviour. However, the impact of these changes is still insecure.
- There is a genuine sense of collaboration among the staff. There are purposeful relationships with many pupils and an increasingly attractive learning environment, especially in classrooms where staff go to great lengths to create helpful learning displays. Although staff say that the welfare and safety of pupils is the highest priority, too many of the systems for keeping pupils and staff safe are not fully in place.
- The school's published safeguarding policy did not take account of the Secretary of State's most recent guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016). At the beginning of the inspection, widespread omissions were found in the single central record of staff, governors and volunteers. By the end of the inspection, leaders had rectified these weaknesses.
- Leaders have little information about the progress or attainment of pupils before July 2016. The headteacher has tried to put into place systems for assessing pupils currently at the school. She has designed assessments to establish baselines when pupils first start at the school. While progress is improving for most pupils, leaders are unable to report with any accuracy on the progress made by pupils who left in 2016.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is carefully planned to develop pupils' social skills as well as their academic learning through sessions designed to help pupils understand themselves and their behaviour. Pupils say that they value their education and say that it helps them grow in self-confidence and aspiration.
- The school has an extensive extra-curricular programme, which includes a range of sporting activities as well as outings to local museums, churches and other faith centres. Pupils see these activities as rewards for their good behaviour and they feel that it helps them focus in lessons.
- For pupils on the school's outreach and 'virtual school' programme, the curriculum is weak. It is not planned, delivered or measured effectively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well across the curriculum and over time through multi-faith assemblies and school competitions. British values are also promoted well through the citizenship programme, which integrates topics such as laws and justice, youth crime, self-image and gender equality with the academic curriculum.

- Parents, staff and pupils are mostly supportive of the school and many comment favourably about how well pupils improve their self-confidence and self-esteem.
- The school has applied to change its age range from ages nine to 16 to ages eight to 19. However, safeguarding in the school is ineffective and behaviour is still not good enough. Leaders and managers have not planned, monitored or improved the school's safeguarding effectively. For example, some pupils are educated at home for five days a week, but are not monitored for four of those days. There have been fundamental errors in establishing the school's age of admission. To expand its age range and numbers on roll presents too high a risk.

Governance

- The school is not well supported by the proprietorial body, which does not have enough understanding of safeguarding nor what needs to be done to improve this further.
- The school has gone through a period of considerable uncertainty over the past 12 months with three changes of headteacher. The school is now owned and operated by Horizon Care and Education, which manages four other independent schools across the UK.
- Some positions in the proprietorial body are new. While staff in these roles are determined to improve the school, the structures for doing this have not been fully implemented.
- There have been improvements in teaching and in the planning of the curriculum but this is not the case for pupils' behaviour or safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding

- Arrangements for safeguarding are not effective and this means that pupils, including those that are most vulnerable, are at risk. This is unacceptable.
- When leaders judge an individual's behaviour to be unacceptable, the decision is taken to send the pupil home. For some pupils, this has become a long-term arrangement. Leaders do not adequately monitor the safety of these pupils.
- There has been a very high number of serious misbehaviour incidents over the past 12 months. These include assaults on staff and on pupils. Staff have had to use physical intervention on multiple occasions to ensure the immediate safety of pupils and staff.
- Attendance is too low for too many pupils. This increases the risk to the safety of these pupils.
- Some risk assessments are not fit for purpose. They identify high levels of risk but no adequate measures for reducing or managing these risks.
- The single central record is not monitored well enough by leaders, including the proprietorial body. Multiple omissions in the recording of key information leave pupils at risk of harm, as it is unclear whether staff have been adequately checked for their suitability to work with pupils.

- The school has not kept up to date with changes in safeguarding guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Out-of-date policies and information are used to train staff and give advice to visitors.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In less successful teaching, pupils are not well controlled. This leads to poor attention and inappropriate language and attitudes towards teachers and teaching assistants.
- Most books show pupils' increasing pride in their work. In some, there is graffiti, damage to the books and very little sign of improvement.
- Teaching and learning in classrooms are often imaginative and resourceful. Teachers have improved the ways in which they engage and motivate pupils. In most lessons during the inspection, pupils were observed working hard and improving their skills. Teachers think through carefully what activities will interest pupils and manage these with skill and sensitivity.
- Pupils say that marking and assessment are increasingly helpful. Since September, a senior staff member has trained all the staff with methods of marking that the school believes will lead to better outcomes. Most staff follow these policies. In some lessons, the absence of exercise books or folders makes it difficult for pupils to connect their teaching with prior learning.
- Teachers use subject knowledge well to plan work that helps pupils acquire reading, writing, mathematical and scientific skills. The school is improving its recruitment and no longer needs to rely on agency staff unless there is teacher absence.
- Teachers say that they value the training they receive. They put this advice into practice. As a result, pupils' learning is increasingly effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Too many pupils have yet to learn how to keep themselves safe.
- Absence is too high for all pupil groups. Many pupils are frequently absent. Leaders are working to tackle this but there is no sign that there are any rapid or sustained improvements. There are calls home when pupils are absent. However, when pupils have been sent home because of poor behaviour, checks on their whereabouts are inadequate.
- Pupils are not always in lessons when they should be. Some do not arrive promptly to lessons. Sometimes pupils leave lessons following a disagreement with the teacher or a fellow pupil. Staff recognise that this is a problem. Teachers usually respond quickly to return pupils to their timetabled venue. Nevertheless, when this happens, learning time is lost and pupils' safety is at risk.

- Extra-curricular opportunities improve personal development. Pupils say that they value these. The school teaches pupils what it calls, 'community education'. There have been visits to a local mosque, swimming pool, the local war memorial and museum, the Manchester Museum of Science, the Hatters' Museum in Stoke, and the Birmingham Think Tank.
- Leaders have not monitored the welfare of pupils who attend alternative provision. Consequently, there is no accurate information about how pupils who have been on such provision since October 2016 are doing. Staff have high ambitions for their pupils and hope that they will all go on to appropriate further education or training. Pupils feel that their teachers have high aspirations for their future. Many pupils report that their self-confidence is growing.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- There is too much poor behaviour over time. This includes assaults on staff, assaults by pupils on other pupils, bullying, criminal damage, damage to property and other dangerous behaviours. School records show that incidents of these and other behaviours are reducing, especially since May 2016. However, in the period November 2016 to the date of the inspection, school records show that physical intervention had to be used by staff on pupils 34 times to restore order. The school has much to do to tackle poor behaviour.
- During the inspection, several instances of unacceptable behaviour occurred, including: a corridor being blocked by a pupil, preventing the headteacher and lead inspector from passing; objects being thrown during lessons; and multiple uses of foul and abusive language.
- Improvements are evident in some areas of the school. In lessons, pupils' behaviour was largely compliant and pupils contributed positively to question-and-answer sessions. Pupils show an increasing pride in their work. In exercise books, there was evidence of organised work and sustained effort. However, this was not found consistently in all pupils' books.
- Pupils are treated with respect by their teachers and other school staff. There is no doubt that teachers and other staff are committed to improving the lives of pupils. Nevertheless, the success of this work is currently far too inconsistent.
- There were no responses to the Parent View online survey. Staff questionnaires say that behaviour is improving since last year. Pupils say that they value the reward structure the school has introduced. Pupils spoken with said that they felt this helped them behave. Pupils said that they felt the school had worked very hard to improve their behaviour and help them achieve at school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- When pupils join the school, there is often little available information about their prior attainment. Consequently, leaders have little evidence of pupils' progress from their starting points.

- Pupils who attend lessons regularly make good gains in their learning. However, for some pupils, frequent absence from lessons interrupts their learning and slows their progress. This picture exists both within the school and for pupils who attend outreach or virtual school programmes. Therefore, outcomes require improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- The headteacher inherited little evidence of pupils' progress prior to July 2016. Recently introduced reading and spelling tests, along with more robust assessment in science, show that pupils have made steady progress in these subjects this year.
- Evidence from lessons and pupils' work seen during the inspection suggests that leaders' evaluations of pupils' current improved rates of progress are accurate. Pupils are making progress, especially in English and science. There was evidence of accurate spelling and punctuation. In another lesson, pupils secured knowledge about positive and negative electron attraction. Pupils in a key stage 3 lesson improved their understanding of characters in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. In books, there was evidence of challenging reading material: some pupils had been reading extracts from 'Oliver Twist'. In one mathematics lesson, pupils were being asked to make percentage calculations and in another, calculations of ratio. Here too, pupils made progress in their understanding.
- Four pupils left the school in Year 11 in July 2016. All these pupils gained functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. The absence of reliable information about prior attainment makes it impossible to determine whether this represents good progress for these pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	133989
DfE registration number	860/6026
Inspection number	10006319

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	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Horizon Care and Education
Chair	Graeme Cheyne
Headteacher	Gail Norrie
Annual fees (day pupils)	To be confirmed by the school
Telephone number	01782 399849
Website	www.horizoncare.co.uk
Email address	Draycottoffice@horizoncare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Draycott Moor College is a small, mixed 9–16 independent school in Draycott, Staffordshire.
- By the end of the inspection, the school met all requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 29 pupils. The vast majority are White British.
- Most pupils have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- The school makes use of what it calls its own virtual school provision. This is where the school sets work for some pupils to be completed at home during the day, rather than at school.
- Pupils are placed in this school mainly by Stoke-on-Trent local authority. However, Staffordshire, Wakefield and Peterborough local authorities also place pupils at this school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection comprised observations of pupils' learning in eight lessons or parts of lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher. Work in pupils' books was reviewed in lessons, including work in English, mathematics and science.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, representatives of the proprietorial body, other staff with management responsibilities and a representative from Stoke-on-Trent local authority. The inspector held meetings with groups of pupils and spoke informally to other pupils inside and outside lessons.
- The inspector looked at the school's website and a range of school documentation, including the school's improvement plans, self-evaluation, curriculum plans and risk assessments. He also looked at the school's single central record; the school's safeguarding records, including case studies of pupils about whom there had been safeguarding concerns; annual pupil reviews; and records about pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector held meetings at their request with some pupils' carers and parents. The inspector also considered 10 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- The school has applied for a material change and the Department for Education had asked for this to be considered as part of the inspection. The school has applied to change its age range from 9–16 years olds to 8–19 year olds and to increase the school capacity from 29 pupils to 36 pupils.

Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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