

Bloomfield School

178 Bloomfield Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 9ER

Inspection date

3 November 2020

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy which takes account of the latest government guidance. It is published on the school's website. However, leaders are not adhering to the policy well enough to reduce safeguarding risks. While there is no immediate risk of harm to pupils, sampling of staff files shows that references are not scrutinised well enough or followed up when insufficient information relating to safeguarding is provided.
- The proprietor body has not ensured that any safeguarding concerns about members of staff have been reported to relevant agencies.
- The senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding and her deputies are up to date with their training. They make sure that pupils who need additional help and support to keep them safe are referred quickly to local agencies. These pupils receive the help they need to keep themselves safe.
- Leaders have also ensured that staff have recently completed relevant safeguarding training. However, some members of staff are still unclear about to whom they should refer concerns about other staff members.
- While the use of physical interventions is decreasing, the standard of recording these incidents varies in quality. 11 interventions have been recorded this term, but on nearly every form the information has not been completed correctly and incident numbers are not logged accurately. Records suggest that pupils are not receiving the post-incident support that the school intends to offer. While there is evidence that leaders are quality assuring these forms, the standard of completion remains inconsistent. Leaders recognise that this record-keeping system is not as secure as it could be.
- These standards are not met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c) and 10

- School records show that incidents of poor behaviour are generally decreasing over time. Earlier this year, staff reported that pupils' behaviour deteriorated, believing that that this was because systems and expectations had been changed without consultation and expectations of pupils were unclear. The acting headteacher, who has been in post since September 2020, has re-established clear rules and expectations of pupils and staff. Staff say that this is having a positive impact on staff morale and pupils' behaviour. Pupils told the inspector that behaviour at the school is 'ok' for most of the time, and that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively by staff.
- The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy, which recognises the different types of bullying that may occur, such as racist, homophobic and cyber bullying. Pupils told the inspector that if any bullying takes place at school, the staff will sort it out. Pupils know that they can talk to staff if they have any concerns about being bullied.
- These standards continue to be met.

Paragraphs 11 and 14

- The school has a suitable health and safety policy. Additional measures have been put in place to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 (coronavirus). The environment is clean and well-maintained. Pupils are appropriately supervised by members of staff and are kept safe from harm.
- These standards continue to be met.

Paragraph 15

- This paragraph, which relates to the school's maintenance of the admission and attendance registers, was not in the original scope of the inspection.
- At the time of the inspection, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 were attending school on a part-time basis, on alternate days of the week. This has been the case since September 2020, even though the Department for Education (DfE) has stated that full-time attendance is mandatory for all pupils from this date. Although these pupils are provided with some work to complete while at home, they are not receiving their statutory entitlement of a full-time education. Pupils told the inspector that they like being part-time because they can play on their gaming devices at home. They said that they are not given much work to do. It is also likely that these pupils' individual social, emotional and mental health needs are not being met sufficiently well.
- Leaders are using the incorrect code to record the attendance of pupils who are attending part-time, so the school's attendance figures are inaccurate.
- This standard is not met.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi),

21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)

- When the single central register (SCR) was checked at the beginning of the inspection, the inspector noted several administrative errors. These were rectified on the same day, and the register was subsequently compliant with government guidelines. Leaders reported that they check the SCR every week, but were unable to provide evidence of this.
- Leaders understand and make the necessary checks on supply staff who are engaged in employment at the school.
- These standards are met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j) and 33(k)

- This part of the standards was not in the original scope of the inspection.
- The school has received a number of complaints in the last academic year. Leaders did not make these complaints available for inspection, as they had all been stored centrally. This action disregards the school's own complaints policy and the relevant independent school standards.
- A member of the proprietor body was able to provide the inspector with an oral account of the investigation into the complaints during the inspection and the subsequent outcomes. Several complaints were upheld.
- Leaders are in the process of revising their complaints policy and it is currently awaiting ratification.
- These standards are not met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The school has been through a turbulent time of late. There have been several changes of headteacher. School systems have been changed and staff and pupils have become unsettled. A number of complaints about the leadership of the school have been made. The proprietor has ensured that the complaints have been investigated and has taken the necessary actions to stabilise the school. During the inspection, staff spoke positively to the inspector about the recent changes that have been made.
- The appointment of the acting headteacher has helped to galvanise the staff, as well as re-establish routines and expectations. However, the period of turbulence has had a negative impact on the school and, as a result, leaders have not ensured that some of the independent school standards have been met consistently.
- The proprietor body has not monitored the systems and practices in the school sufficiently well since the last inspection and, as a result, pupils have been put at potential risk of harm. The school is now in a stronger position, which ensures that, on a day-to-day basis, pupils are safe.
- The proprietor body has not ensured that every pupil is receiving their statutory entitlement to a full-time education, as well as additional support for their social,

emotional and mental health needs as set out in their education, health and care plan (EHC plan).

- These standards are 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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	135518
DfE registration number	333/6004
Inspection number	10162111

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	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Horizon Care and Education Group Ltd
Chair	Paul Callander
Headteacher	Lisa Gulley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,936 – £92,157
Telephone number	0121 520 9408
Website	www.horizoncare.co.uk
Email address	bloomfieldoffice@horizoncare.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	4–6 June 2019

Information about this school

- Bloomfield School is an independent special school that caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an EHC plan. Bloomfield School is one of nine schools in the Horizon Care and Education Group Ltd.
- Bloomfield School was previously inspected in July 2019 when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- The school uses the alternative provider Nova Training, Bushbury Lane, Wolverhampton WV10 9TT to offer vocational opportunities to some of the pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE, following a number of complaints received about the school. Complaints raised concerns about safeguarding, the welfare and safety of pupils and the quality of leadership and management of the school. These concerns were considered during the inspection.
- The inspection was carried out with 30 minutes' notice to discuss the practical arrangements of the inspection and the school's measures for having visitors on site. The inspection lasted for one day.
- The school has received eight more complaints this term, all anonymous. The chief executive officer (CEO) of Horizon Care and Education has engaged an independent law firm to investigate these new complaints.
- The inspection focused on safeguarding, the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, the suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor body, complaints and leadership and management of the school, to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- The acting headteacher was appointed to the school on an interim basis in September 2020, following the resignation of the previous headteacher. She is the substantive headteacher of another school in the proprietor group. The proprietor is seeking to appoint a substantive headteacher as soon as possible.
- The inspector met with the acting headteacher and the assistant headteacher. She spoke on the telephone with the CEO and the Director of Quality for Horizon Care and Education. The inspector met with several members of staff and pupils at the school. She looked at a range of school policies, complaints submitted about the school and headteacher reports. She scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation, including the safeguarding policy, the school's single central register, staff training records, pupil records and behaviour records.

Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not 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.
- 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[13].

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which-
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is-
 - 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
 - 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and-
 - 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

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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