

Prism Independent School

Walker Drive, Gillington, Bradford BD8 9ES

Inspection date

4 November 2022

Overall outcome

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

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7a

- At the previous standard inspection, arrangements for safeguarding were not met because of weaknesses in several aspects of health and safety. Health and safety weaknesses remain an issue. However, there are some additional reasons why this independent school standard has not been met. These are outlined below.
- Pupils have caused damage to the 'club' site. As a result of this damage, there are now hazards in classrooms and corridors, such as sharp edges around door frames. In addition, pupils are placing themselves at risk when using physical force to cause damage to the building.
- Pupils' behaviour on the 'club' site is aggressive and, at times, violent. It places the pupils and others at risk. Some pupils told the inspector that they did not feel safe in school as a result of the behaviour of key stage 3 pupils on the 'club' site.
- The school finishes at midday on Fridays, after which pupils wait outside the school gate for their taxis. Some younger pupils' behaviour while waiting for taxis is dangerous at times. Pupils were seen chasing each other back onto the 'club' site and slamming doors.
- Signing-in procedures for visitors to the school are not adhered to on the 'club' site. This means that members of the public can easily gain entry to this site. When staff encounter visitors for the first time, they do not routinely request proof of their identity.
- Leaders do not have oversight of the welfare checks that tutors make on pupils who are educated by home tutors or those who learn remotely. This means that leaders are not able to assure themselves that welfare checks have been undertaken. They do not have a sufficient grasp of any issues that may come to light from the checks that individual tutors make.
- This independent school standard remains unmet.

Paragraph 9, 9b, 9c

- This independent school standard was met at the previous inspection. However, evidence from this inspection indicates that behaviour has declined and is not managed well, especially on the 'club' site.
- Some pupils have caused deliberate damage to the school site. This damage is noticeable.
- Staff do not have enough expertise in how to support and manage pupils when they are in crisis. They observe pupils' behaviour rather than managing it.
- Leaders do not have an overview of the sanctions that pupils have received, and nor do they have a clear understanding of what behaviours have led to the sanctions being given. This means that they cannot easily identify trends and patterns in pupils' behaviour, and nor can they evaluate the impact of any new approaches introduced.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are not met.

Paragraph 11

- At the previous inspection, this standard was not met because of weaknesses in leaders' oversight of health and safety.
- Leaders have strengthened the health and safety policy. They have also overseen a number of improvements to both sites. These are intended to improve health and safety. The improvements to the 'farm' site have been maintained. However, following repairs and refurbishments, pupils have caused new damage to the 'club' site, making some areas of this site dangerous.
- Waste is dumped around the 'club' site by members of the public. Some of this waste is hazardous. During the inspection, substances for manufacturing COVID-19 vaccines were found scattered in large quantities over the school site. Leaders had not ensured that these hazardous substances were removed in a timely manner.
- This standard remains unmet.

Paragraph 12

- At the previous inspection, this standard was not met because leaders had allowed too much time to elapse between fire safety checks.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that a fire safety check has been carried out by a registered company.
- The school has also acted on issues identified in the most recent fire safety check.
- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 14

- At the previous inspection, this standard was met. However, it is now not met.
- This is because the ratio of staff to pupils during the time when pupils are waiting outside the 'club' site for taxis on Fridays is not sufficient. More staff are needed to manage pupils' behaviour, including the behaviour of pupils waiting for taxis just beyond the school gate.
- This standard is unmet.

Paragraph 15

- At the previous inspection, this standard was not met because the admissions register did not comply with government guidance.
- Leaders have made improvements to the admissions register so that it now complies with government guidance. However, daily attendance registers are not compliant with statutory guidance. The school uses some absence codes that are not in line with guidance.
- The signing-in sheet for pupils does not provide leaders with an accurate record of which pupils are in school, which poses a risk, for example in the event of a fire. For instance, on Fridays, at the start of the day, pupils sign in or others sign them in for both the morning and afternoon sessions, even though school finishes at noon.

Paragraph 16, 16a, 16b

- At the previous inspection, this standard was unmet because the paperwork relating to risk assessments for trips had not been signed and there were other irregularities.
- Leaders have revamped the risk assessment policy and introduced a new online system for creating risk assessments. Risk assessments are now compliant and bespoke to the school. For example, there are detailed risk assessments in place for working with animals on the 'farm' site.
- This standard is now met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- At the previous inspection, this standard was not met because the site was not maintained well enough.
- The 'farm' site is now well maintained. Walkways are clear and clean. Classrooms are well looked after.
- However, the 'club' site is not maintained well enough. Recent damage done by pupils to this site has not been repaired, such as holes in the walls. The grounds of the 'club' site building are scattered with litter and debris, some of which is hazardous. In addition, pupils have scribbled offensive graffiti on some doors.
- This standard remains unmet.

Part 6. Provision of information

- This standard continues to be met.
- The safeguarding policy is on the website. A more up-to-date policy has been written and is in the process of being reviewed by the management committee. This draft policy references the latest government guidance on safeguarding and is available on request.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the previous inspection, the above standards in part 8 were not met. This was because there were numerous weaknesses in leaders' oversight of, and effectiveness in addressing, matters relating to health and safety.
- Leaders have made a number of improvements and some standards in part 3 are now met that were not met before. However, leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards are met consistently.
- The proprietor has not ensured that leaders have enough capacity to make sustainable improvements to health and safety, nor to check that staff adhere to health and safety procedures across both sites. Much of leaders' time is spent dealing with pupils' behaviour, especially on the 'club' site.
- Leaders do not have a well-considered plan for managing pupils' behaviour. A number of pupils have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs that are complex. Leaders have not ensured that staff have enough expertise in working therapeutically with pupils with SEMH needs.
- Weaknesses in leaders' recording of behaviour incidents mean that leaders cannot accurately evaluate what behaviour is like in the school. This limits their capacity to identify and prioritise what needs to be done to improve the way in which staff manage pupils' behaviour.
- The proprietor has started to establish more rigorous procedures for holding leaders to account. For example, members of the management committee now scrutinise information provided by the headteacher about absences and safeguarding issues. New procedures for holding leaders to account are in their infancy.
- This standards in this part remain unmet.

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, as set out in the annex of this report. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	137785
DfE registration number	380/6001
Inspection number	10249029

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 special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Number of part-time pupils	12
Proprietor	UK Youth
Chair	Rebekah Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Katie Corfield
Annual fees (day pupils)	£75 to £95 per day
Telephone number	01274 487633
Website	www.prismindependentschool.co.uk
Email address	katie.corfield@prismyouthproject.org
Date of previous standard inspection	9 to 11 March 2022

Information about this school

- Information about this school that is held on the government website 'Get Information about Schools' is not up to date. No proprietor is listed on this website. According to school leaders, the proprietor is UK Youth.
- At the previous standard inspection in March 2022, the school was graded 'requires improvement' overall.
- The school site and buildings are owned by an unincorporated charity, Prism Youth Project.

- The school operates on two sites that are a short walk away from each other: the main site, known as the 'club', where key stage 3 provision is mostly housed, and the 'farm'. Courses in construction and land-based studies/animal care are held at the 'farm'.
- About half of the pupils are single registered at the school.
- The remaining pupils are dual registered with their mainstream school and attend for a fixed period of time.
- Currently, pupils are aged between 12 and 16.
- All of the pupils who are single registered are placed at the school by local authorities. In almost all cases, this is Bradford local authority.
- Approximately one third of pupils have an education, health and care plan for SEMH needs.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This 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.
- Following the previous full inspection, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to produce an action plan, which was subsequently rejected by the DfE.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- The inspector toured both sites and held meetings with the headteacher, along with the deputy headteacher. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, a number of teachers, three tutors who teach pupils off site, the member of staff responsible for off-site education (including remote learning) and pupils from key stages 3 and 4.
- The inspector made a call to the named proprietor, who is also the chair of the management board.
- During the inspection, the inspector reviewed documents linked to the standards that were checked.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

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;
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 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 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

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.

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 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.

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