

The Small School

Fore Street, Hartland, Bideford, Devon EX39 6AB

Inspection dates

6 July 2016

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan. This was the school's second progress monitoring visit. It was conducted without notice.
- This inspection monitored the progress that the school has made in complying with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent schools standards'). The inspector met with the headteacher, teachers, trustees, parents and pupils and scrutinised the school's documents. The inspector observed lessons and the pupils out of lesson time.
- At the previous full inspection on 22 May 2015, the school was judged to be inadequate in all areas of its provision and several independent schools standards were not met.
- On 10 March 2016 a progress monitoring visit judged that the school had not met the independent schools standards related to the quality of education provided, pupils' welfare, health and safety, and the quality of leadership at the school. These were the focus of this inspection.
- The school submitted an action plan to the Department for Education on 2 September 2015, to address the concerns raised. The plan was evaluated by Ofsted on 1 October 2015. It was found to require improvement because the proposed actions did not fully address the unmet standards.
- The school submitted a second action plan to the Department for Education on 27 November 2015, to address the concerns raised. The plan was evaluated by Ofsted on 22 December 2015. It was found to require improvement because the proposed actions and timescales did not fully address all of the unmet standards.

Main findings

Quality of education provided

- The inspection of May 2015 and subsequent monitoring visit in March 2016 found the quality of education provided was inadequate. The particular standards not met were to provide a curriculum plan and scheme of work used to provide a good quality of education, an effective framework for assessment and to ensure all pupils make good progress.
- In line with the school's action plan, curriculum plans and schemes of work now take into account the different needs of the individual pupils. They are used effectively by teachers to prepare lessons, which are appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils. The trustees scrutinise the impact of the curriculum and ensure that it is effective through their careful monitoring of the progress that pupils make and the standards that they reach.
- Teachers are planning the work in lessons to challenge all ability levels so that good progress is made by each pupil. Pupils' work shows that skills and knowledge increase over time and that teachers are extending pupils' learning. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are corrected so that pupils can learn from mistakes made.
- The headteacher rigorously and accurately monitors the quality of teaching and learning. The school staff have willingly adapted and improved their practice. All pupils have now been set appropriate and aspirational targets which the school has chosen to review three times a year.

- Good assessment is used in all subjects to show how pupils have progressed from their starting points. At present, there are a number of different methods of recording progress in each subject. Those seen for physical education and science demonstrated very clearly how pupils were progressing. They were used by teachers to identify the next steps in learning. The school is developing a system to standardise the assessments and improve further the information gained.
- The headteacher and staff hold regular monitoring meetings to oversee the learning of all the pupils. Pupils' individual learning targets are moderated and reviewed to ensure they are challenging. Any actions that need to be taken are recorded in these monitoring meetings and are used to improve pupils' progress where progress is not rapid enough. The evidence seen in the pupils' work and in school records demonstrate that this is having a positive impact and pupils are now making good progress.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- In the previous inspection and monitoring visit, the requirements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils were not met. The particular requirements not met were, effective implementation of safeguarding procedures, a suitable risk assessment policy used effectively and to maintain admission and attendance registers appropriately.
- In its action plan the school indicated it would ensure that the guidance of the Secretary of State would be fully implemented. Arrangements to safeguard the welfare of pupils are robust and have good regard for the guidance of the Secretary of State. The policies, mandatory training and procedures are effective and up to date. They are followed and understood by all staff. This makes sure pupils are kept safe at school.
- The headteacher has appointed a deputy designated safeguarding person, who has received appropriate training for their role. This now ensures that pupils and staff always have access to appropriate advice and guidance when the headteacher is not available. The training, records and actions taken by the headteacher, or deputy, are now closely and effectively monitored by the trustee with responsibility for safeguarding.
- A risk assessment policy is now used effectively to control identified risks both in the everyday activity within the school and when taking part in off-site learning. Effective risk assessments are in place and were seen to be used correctly on the inspection, when the key stage 3 pupils were going on a school trip to Exmoor.
- Admission and attendance registers are now completed correctly. The school has taken appropriate action to follow up a pupil who left the school and had no known new address. This action demonstrates clear and effective work with multi-agency partners.

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- Those responsible for leadership and governance of the school have taken appropriate action following the previous inspection and monitoring visit. They ensure that the independent school standards are now fully met. The school's leaders and managers now have the skills and knowledge to ensure that the standards are consistently met.
- The staff, headteacher and trustees all demonstrate their commitment and enthusiasm to improve the school and work together to maintain standards.
- Leaders and trustees ensure that safeguarding procedures are now effective. Staff training and the implementation of safeguarding processes are followed correctly and in a timely manner. The school's risk assessment policy is effective in identifying and controlling risks. Attendance and admissions registers are correctly completed. The school leaders are robust in following up pupil absence to ensure pupils are kept safe.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

Inspection team

Paul Winterton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Information about this school

- The Small School is a non-selective, co-educational independent school for pupils aged 11 to 16 years.
- The school was established in 1982 by parents who wished to educate their children in a small setting.
- The aim of the school is to 'promote education in a small community where learning takes place in a nurturing and creative atmosphere, where human scale values are promoted for the development of individual talent, the acquisition of new skills and a sense of social responsibility'.
- The school is located in a former chapel and associated buildings in the village of Hartland, Devon.
- A board of trustees, including parents and staff, has the responsibility for the governance of the school.
- There are no pupils with statements of special educational need or education, health and care plans.
- The school does not make use of off-site alternative provision.
- The previous full independent school inspection was on 22 May 2015.
- The school had a monitoring visit on 10 March 2016.

School details

Unique reference number	113611
Inspection number	10020211
DfE registration number	878/6036

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Type of school	Secondary day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Proprietor	The Small School
Chair	Mary Billson
Headteacher	Helen Finn
Date of previous school inspection	20–22 May 2015
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,275–£2,100
Telephone number	01237 441672
Email address	office@thesmallschool.org.uk

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