

# The Island Project School

Diddington Hall, Diddington Lane, Meriden CV7 7HQ

**Inspection date** 4 August 2016

**Overall outcome** **Independent school standards met**

## Context of the inspection

- This inspection was undertaken at the request of the Department for Education, the registration authority for independent schools. The inspection was unannounced. At the school's last full inspection in January 2015 all standards were judged to be met.
- At an emergency inspection in October 2015 five standards were found not to be met.
- The main purpose of this inspection was to monitor the school's progress in implementing its action plan in response to the emergency inspection in October 2015; it was evaluated in January 2016 and found to require improvement.
- The inspector was asked to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan and to check that parts 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 of the independent school standards were met.
- This is the first monitoring visit of the school since the emergency inspection in October 2015.
- The inspector met with the school principal, the proprietor, a trustee and members of the school administrative staff.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of school documents and reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.

## Main findings

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- At the emergency inspection of October 2015 the school was found to be not compliant in part 3 of the independent school standards, paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures 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.
- The emergency inspection in October 2015 found that the school's safeguarding procedures did not reflect the latest statutory guidance from the Secretary of State, as published in 'Keeping children safe in education' (July 2015). The school's safeguarding policy had not been revised nor staff provided with the required information. The safeguarding policy published on the school's website was not compliant.
- Since the last inspection, the school principal has reviewed and updated the safeguarding policy and child protection policy. These are now fully compliant with guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- These updated policies are now on the school website and easily accessible.
- The policy has been issued to all staff, who understand it and use it in their work at the school.
- The plan is updated in a timely manner and is approved by the school's proprietor, and trustees and will be updated annually in line with statutory guidance.
- The school has been assiduous in the monitoring of the quality of safeguarding arrangements, seeking advice from the local authority and other relevant bodies, such as the NSPCC.
- Staff are trained in specific techniques to manage the safeguarding of children with autism because all of the children at the school have diagnoses of autistic spectrum disorder.

- Records were seen that show that staff have received all relevant safeguarding training. They have undertaken additional training to further develop their knowledge of safeguarding.
- The school has four appropriately trained designated members of staff in charge of safeguarding. The lead designated member of staff in charge of safeguarding is at an appropriate level of seniority.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

- At the emergency inspection October 2015, the school was found to be not compliant with part 6 of the independent school standards. The school was required to complete all prior appointment recruitment checks required by current legislation. It has now done so.
- The school has taken swift and effective action to improve its single central record and its checking procedures. As a result, the single central record is now fully compliant with statutory guidance and is well managed. The school is now fully aware of all the required checks and has developed an efficient system for ensuring that the training of staff is up to date.
- The proprietor now undertakes a regular review of the single central record and ensures that the school principal and administrative staff manage it in line with latest statutory guidance.
- There are random spot checks conducted by the school principal and proprietor on both the single central record and staff personnel files to ensure that they are compliant with statutory regulations.
- The school has now updated their safer recruitment policy. It ensures that the proprietor carries out all checks required in statutory guidance.
- Personnel files are kept rigorously. They are detailed, cover legislative requirements and are regularly reviewed and monitored.

### **Provision of information**

- At the emergency inspection in October 2015, the school did not comply with part 6, paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c) and 32(1)(h). The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's website; and that, where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority 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. The emergency inspection in October 2015 found that the school had not taken these actions.
- The school has now revised and reviewed its safeguarding policy and published it on the school website. It now fully meets all the regulatory requirements published in 'Keeping children safe in education' (July 2015).
- The school has now drawn up a statement of income and expenditure with respect to all pupils in receipt of statutory funding. The school's records make it possible for a local authority or the Secretary of State, upon request, to see how statutory funding is spent for each pupil.
- The school has systems in place to ensure that the accounts are properly audited and managed by the trustees and the school principal.
- Records are kept with precision. This makes it easy to see how much statutory funding for each pupil comes into the school and how it is spent.

### **Manner in which complaints are handled**

- At the emergency inspection in October 2015 the school had not met part 7, paragraph 33, 33(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i) and 33(j)(ii).
- The standard is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints. At the emergency inspection in October 2015, the school had not published a complaints policy.
- There is now a full complaints policy. It meets the requirements of statutory guidance. It can be downloaded from the school website. This means that parents can make complaints.
- The policy describes how complaints will be treated efficiently and fairly. For example, an independent member of the complaints panel can be involved at an appropriate stage.
- The school has now put in place processes by which it can keep written records of any complaints, findings and recommendations, whether upheld or not.

- The policy now makes it clear that a copy of findings and recommendations is available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and school principal.

### **Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- At the emergency inspection in October 2015 the school was found to be not compliant with part 8, paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c).
- This standard is met because the school principal and proprietor has ensured that all independent school standards are now met. This is because the school has put into place all the actions from its plan.
- The school principal and proprietor are driven by a strong moral purpose. This is communicated to and shared by their staff, so the improvements they have made are robust and effective.
- The school principal has a detailed and comprehensive action plan monitoring process. This is updated weekly by the school principal and proprietor. As a result, the improvements required by the emergency inspection have been made.
- Leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities and, as a result, all standards previously unmet are now met.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

#### **Inspection team**

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector  
Angela Westington

Ofsted Inspector  
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

#### **Information about the school**

- The Island Project School is an independent special school for pupils aged 5 to 19 in Solihull.
- The school is approved by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Children's and Families Act for SEN priority 1 autistic spectrum disorder pupils.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has with 31 pupils on roll aged between 6 and 19 years, eight of whom are in the sixth form. The school's capacity is 45 pupils. The school has off-site sixth-form provision near Birmingham. It does not make use of alternative providers.
- Pupils come from five local authorities within the region.
- The school's ethos is founded on a belief that 'whilst it is true that it is a legal obligation for the local authorities to provide an appropriate education for these children we cannot expect that each authority will have the expertise, space and funding to run units and specialist schools', so the school aims to offer 'specialised schooling' in techniques such as 'applied behavioural analysis' and 'picture exchange communication system'.
- The school was opened as new provision in November 2007.
- At the time of the inspection in January 2015 the overall effectiveness was found to be good. However, an emergency inspection was conducted in October 2015. An action plan was drawn up and the evaluation of this in January 2016 found it to require improvement.

**School details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135453
<b>Inspection number</b>	10017613
<b>DfE registration number</b>	334/6010

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Day special school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	31
<b>Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form</b>	8
<b>Proprietor</b>	Carol Howe and Jacqui Walters-Hutton
<b>Chair</b>	Jacqui Walters-Hutton
<b>School principal</b>	Sarah Gallagher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2015
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£42,500 to £67,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01675 442588
<b>Fax number</b>	N/A
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:s.gallagher@theislandproject.co.uk">s.gallagher@theislandproject.co.uk</a>

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