

York Steiner School

Danesmead, Fulford Cross, York, North Yorkshire YO10 4PB

Inspection dates

25 February 2020

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i)

- The previous inspection in May 2019 identified that the curriculum was narrow, not well planned and over-prescriptive.
- The new school leadership team wrote an action plan that states that new curriculum plans will be written to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. The action plan states that these documents will be available on the school website.
- As leaders stated in their action plan, a basic overview of the school's curriculum is now available on the school website.
- Senior and subject leaders have written curriculum plans and schemes of work for all areas of the curriculum. In some subject areas, such as English and mathematics, the planning for the curriculum is much stronger. In other subjects, such as history and art, planning is either overcomplicated or too basic. Coverage of the curriculum is clear in most subjects, but not when and how it links to previous learning.
- A special educational needs coordinator is in place to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive suitable support. These pupils have individual provision maps to help staff to meet their needs.
- The education manager carries out regular quality assurance of teaching and learning. This is to check that pupils, including those who are the most able, are receiving good-quality teaching to help them achieve.
- The education manager and the trustees have taken appropriate steps to ensure that the previously written curriculum has been substantially revised so that it is clear what pupils will learn and in which classes. The education manager recognises that there is still more work to be done to ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively to ensure maximum impact on pupils' learning.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraph 2(2), 2(1)(a), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)

- The inspectors in May 2019 identified that secondary-aged pupils did not have access to high-quality, impartial careers advice, therefore limiting their ability to make informed choices about their next steps.
- The action plan states that several actions will be implemented, including a new careers education coordinator, making links with another school and implementing a new careers programme.
- All pupils have begun to take part in a new careers programme. Visitors, such as a member of the police service and a doctor, have been into school, informing pupils of different routes to different kinds of employment opportunities. A careers coordinator is now in place. Some older pupils have taken part in individual discussions to support them in understanding the different career pathways that may be available to them.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g), 4

- Inspectors at the inspection in May 2019 found that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was inadequate. Teachers' use of assessment was poor, work was often too easy for pupils and teachers' subject knowledge was often weak.
- The school's action plan notes that baseline assessments and a system to track pupils' progress will be introduced. Termly meetings will ensure that teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make. A phonics screening check will be introduced for pupils in class 1.
- Some teachers have taken on subject leadership roles. These teachers then support other teachers with a view to ensuring pupils make better progress. Teachers I spoke to during the inspection said that they found knowing who to turn to for support in teaching a subject had helped improve the quality of their own teaching.
- The education manager is carrying out regular quality assurance of teaching. She is regularly completing lesson visits, looking at pupils' work and meeting with teachers to discuss pupils' progress.
- An assessment system, although in its infancy, is now in place. Some baseline assessments are taking place in some subjects, mainly English and mathematics. The education manager is aware that further monitoring of the effectiveness of this assessment system is needed to make sure that all teachers are using it to plan learning accurately. Staff are confused about the difference between attainment and progress. This makes some of the assessment information unclear.
- These standards are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The school's safeguarding policy is up to date according to the most recent government guidelines. It is available for parents and carers to download, as found at the previous inspection in May 2019.

- At the previous inspection, inspectors identified that too many pupils were not clear about how to keep themselves safe online. The school have developed an e-safety curriculum to ensure all pupils are informed about how to keep themselves safe.
- At the inspection in May 2019, inspectors identified that pupils' attendance was low and school leaders were doing too little to tackle low attendance. School leaders have introduced new strategies to try to improve pupil attendance. For example, changes have been made to the school day and parents and teachers receive information to ensure they promote good attendance. A new commercial system has been purchased so that senior leaders can track attendance more carefully. However, at the time of the inspection, there was no indication that these actions were having a positive impact on pupils' attendance. The trustees are aware that this needs careful monitoring and further actions taken if attendance does not improve.
- These standards remain met.

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

Paragraphs 18, 19, 20, 21

- All appropriate checks have been made on adults who have unsupervised access to pupils. A record of these checks is in place. Some minor administration errors were discovered and rectified during the inspection. Appropriate steps are taken to make sure that the school is a safe environment and that the site is secure.
- All aspects of safeguarding were deemed to be effective at the previous inspection.
- These standards remain met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)(c)

- The inspectors were not satisfied at the previous inspection that physical education (PE) changing facilities for pupils, particularly secondary-aged pupils, were adequate. Some pupils had to change in an open classroom which afforded little privacy.
- Senior leaders detailed in the action plan that additional changing facilities, including showers, would be available by the autumn term 2019.
- Suitable changing and shower facilities are now in place which afford privacy for pupils when changing for PE.
- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b)

- Inspectors at the inspection in May 2019 judged that the medical room was situated too far from a toilet and so did not meet these standards.
- Senior leaders have included in their action plan details of alterations to the building to ensure that toilet facilities will be close to the medical room.
- A second medical room is now available for pupils to use. This new room is now close to toilets and is private and comfortable for any pupils that may need this facility.

- These standards are now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(f)

- Inspectors at the inspection of May 2019 identified that annual reports did not give parents enough information about their child's progress and attainment.
- The school's action plan states that new style reports will be adopted by October 2019.
- A new style report has been developed which includes a grade system for informing parents about pupils' progress and attainment. This document is new and still being reviewed so that it is fit for purpose.
- These standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The previous inspection identified weaknesses in leadership and management. Leaders were not fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school.
- The action plan states that a more rigorous system is in place to monitor and challenge the leadership and to make leaders and teachers more accountable.
- The education manager regularly takes part in learning walks, pupil progress meetings and reviews with teachers to monitor the effectiveness of pupils' learning within the school. Trustees hold a teaching and learning meeting every fortnight, which gives the education manager the opportunity to report to trustees and trustees the opportunity to challenge the work of school leaders. The education manager also attends a monthly full board meeting.
- The new leadership team has worked quickly to establish many new systems and strategies to improve the quality of education in the school. It has also invested in support from external sources, commercial schemes and other schools to help them to improve the school. The education manager and trustees recognise that some of the things they have implemented need further work to ensure that they have a more positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The trustees have ensured that the school now complies with the Department for Education (DfE) requirements regarding the number of pupils the school can accept.
- Teachers stated during the inspection that they were much happier now they had a clearly written curriculum. They also noted that the more rigorous quality assurance processes had supported them in improving the quality of their teaching.
- Teachers take part in an appraisal process which identifies where they may need or want extra training or support. Teachers told me during this inspection that they felt well supported by the new leadership team.
- These standards are now met.

The school's application to make a material change to its registration.

The school is likely to meet the independent school standards if the DfE approve implementation of the material change request.

- The school is registered to accept up to 205 pupils, aged from three to 14 years.
- At the previous inspection in May 2019, inspectors identified that the school had exceeded these numbers and had 223 pupils on roll.
- The trustees immediately took steps to ensure that they did not exceed requirements and at the time of this inspection there were 203 pupils on roll.
- The DfE commissioned Ofsted to consider a material change to increase the current capacity during this inspection.
- I found, during this inspection, that the building is adequately maintained, and classrooms are spacious and well resourced. There are adequate toilet and changing facilities and space outside to accommodate the needs of extra pupils.
- The trustees do not intend to increase the number of classes within the school. The proposal is that the increase in registration capacity will allow all classes to be at full capacity if there should be a need.
- The trustees intend for there to be a maximum of 15 pupils in each of the five kindergarten classes and a maximum of 25 pupils in each of the eight classes in the main school. The size of the classrooms and other accommodation means that the school could comfortably accommodate up to 275 pupils if the DfE approve the material change request.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets 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. 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work—
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
 - 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are—
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that—
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school—
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including—
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that -
 - 32(1)(f) an annual written report of each registered pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught is provided to the parents of that registered pupil except that no report need be provided where the parent has agreed otherwise.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	121759
DfE registration number	816/6008
Inspection number	10143709

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 school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Number of part-time pupils	37
Proprietor	York Steiner School Ltd
Chair	Robert Butler
Headteacher	Annabel Gibb
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,000 – £6,950
Telephone number	01904 654983
Website	www.yorksteinerschool.co.uk
Email address	info@yorksteinerschool.org
Date of previous standard inspection	30 April–2 May 2019

Information about this school

- The school follows the Waldorf Steiner curriculum and accepts pupils aged from three to 14 years.
- Children in the early years and key stage 1 attend on a part-time basis. Older pupils are also registered as home educated.
- The school is currently registered to accept up to 205 pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for secondary-age pupils.

- The school was inspected in May 2019 when, following this standard inspection, it was judged to be inadequate.
- The school was previously inspected by the school inspection service. Some of the independent school standards have been consistently unmet since 2007.
- The education manager and the current trustees took up positions on 28 April 2019, two days prior to the previous inspection.

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.
- The school has applied to the DfE to make a 'material change' to its registration. The school wishes to increase the number of pupils up to 275. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.
- The inspection took place over one day and was unannounced.
- I toured the school and visited every classroom. I spoke to over 12 pupils in different meetings during the day.
- I spoke to at least two teachers while studying pupil's books and curriculum and assessment documents.
- I studied a range of documents, such as the careers policy, curriculum documents and the school's records of recruitment checks. I checked the single central record and policies and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Much of the day was spent with the education manager and an external consultant. I also had meetings with the business managers and two of the trustees, including the chair of trustees.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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