

York Steiner School

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

Inspection dates

30 April – 2 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- School leaders have failed to ensure that all the independent school standards have been met. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils are inadequate.
- The school's curriculum follows the Waldorf Steiner curriculum. At the time of the inspection the curriculum was too narrow and prescriptive and was not consistently well planned.
- The school has not put in place an effective system to assess pupils' starting points and measure their progress over time. As a result, pupils' attainment and progress cannot be accurately measured.
- Work set for the most able pupils does not always stretch and challenge them. This has an impact on their progress over time.
- Careers education for secondary-age pupils is neither accurate nor up to date. This prevents pupils from making independent career choices.
- The current medical room is not adequate, as it is situated too far away from a toilet.
- The facilities currently used by pupils for changing for physical education (PE) are inadequate, particularly for older pupils.
- Annual reports do not give parents sufficient information about their children's progress and attainment.
- Early years provision does not plan effective learning for children older pupils, which weakens their progress in early writing and numeracy skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The very newly formed leadership team have a clear vision for future improvement.
- Pupils' personal development and well-being is a clear priority to staff and leaders.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - liaising more closely with the Department for Education (DfE) to ensure that the number of pupils on roll matches the number that the school is registered for
 - ensuring that the medical room is situated close to a toilet
 - increasing the amount of appropriate space which pupils have for changing before and after PE lessons
 - ensuring that reports written by staff clearly state the progress and attainment of all pupils
 - further developing and restructuring the curriculum so that pupils are given more opportunities to develop learning in a wider range of areas and deepen knowledge, particularly in science and English
 - developing an effective assessment system which enables staff to identify clearly the progress made by each individual pupil
 - further developing the school's e-safety policy so that pupils lower down the school develop a better understanding of how to keep safe online
 - developing and implementing further the planned system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning
 - making sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given accurately assessed support to enable them to maximise their progress by overcoming their barriers to learning
 - further developing strategies in place to increase pupils' attendance.
- Improve the quality of teaching learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers identify pupils' starting points when they plan learning
 - making sure that teachers use time effectively in lessons and increase the progress pupils make
 - ensuring that work matches the needs of the most able pupils and enables them to maximise their progress
 - increasing teachers' subject knowledge and improving pupils' progress in science and English.
- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders and governors have not ensured that the independent school standards have been met. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could, particularly in English and science.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is less strong than it should be because an effective monitoring system is not in place.
- Leaders have not put in place a system to assess pupils' progress and identify their starting points. Pupils spoken to said that sometimes they already know how to do what is being taught and have to wait for others to catch up. They also commented that at times new learning seems to be delivered too slowly and they don't always get a chance to practise new skills.
- The medical room in school is situated too far from a toilet and as such does not meet the relevant independent school standards.
- Currently, there is insufficient space for pupils to change for PE. As a result, either boys or girls are required to change in the classroom. As there are no curtains or blinds in the classrooms this compromises pupils' dignity, particularly secondary pupils.
- Although the school does not teach pupils about modern technology, an e-safety policy is in place. However, while older pupils receive updates from both staff and outside agencies including the police about online safety risks, younger pupils do not receive similar levels of training. This leaves this group without clear guidance, despite many telling the inspection team that they access electronic devices. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place, although this is not being addressed currently.
- The school curriculum follows the Waldorf Steiner model of learning. In some classrooms this enables pupils to make progress and develop some skills and knowledge. For example, in handcraft lessons pupils develop a range of skills in knitting and sewing. However, in other subject areas the curriculum does not allow pupils to gain sufficient knowledge and skills. For example, in science, secondary pupils have too little opportunity to develop practical skills.
- Leaders recognise that the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils are not where they should be. A plan has been drawn up for a monitoring system which will check on the quality of teaching and learning. However, it is in a very early stage of development.
- The school special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) identifies pupils' special educational needs and puts in place a range of support within school. However, pupils with the greatest need do not make effective progress because the school is not always able to access professional support for these pupils.
- Pupils have developed an understanding of fundamental British values. However, their knowledge and understanding of current issues is not sufficiently strong, reflecting weaknesses in the curriculum.
- Pupils' reports are written annually. However, samples looked at during the inspection showed that staff spent too little time reporting on pupils' academic progress and achievement for parents to gain a clear understanding of their children's progress.

- Pupils' levels of attendance in both the primary and the secondary areas of the school were lower than for others nationally at the time of the inspection. Levels of attendance had risen from the previous year after a letter had been sent to parents to remind them of the importance of regular attendance. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to address this issue.
- At the time of the inspection the leadership team were very new to post. The board of trustees had appointed a new education manager who had been in post for less than two days but was knowledgeable about the school setting. The education manager, working closely with the trustees, had already put a plan in place which reflects a clear vision for the future of the school. This demonstrated to the inspection team that the current leadership has the capacity to take the school forward despite the low starting point.
- The board of trustees had also recently appointed a business manager who was also playing a pivotal role in bringing improvement to the school.

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

- During the inspection the DfE requested that a material change inspection should be conducted alongside the standard inspection to ascertain whether the school should be allowed to increase the numbers on roll from 205 to 250.
- Currently the school has 223 pupils on roll. This is 18 pupils above the number it is registered for. However, due to the inadequate judgements for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes for pupils and leadership and management, the school does not meet the requirements of the material change already implemented.

Governance

- At the time of the inspection, the board of trustees had only very recently formed in their current capacity. The chair of trustees had been in post for less than two days, although other trustees had been in place for longer periods of time.
- Trustees have started an analysis of the issues facing the school, including developing a closer understanding of the independent school standards. However, at the time of the inspection they were not fully aware of the breadth of areas of inadequacy within the school's performance.
- Just prior to the inspection, the trustees had commissioned a review of the school from a governance perspective, from a national lead in governance. Her insightful and effective report is to be used to inform the action plan to move the school forward.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy meets requirements and is displayed on the school's website. Parents spoken to confirmed that they knew where to obtain a copy.
- All required checks on the suitability of staff have been carried out in line with current legislation. All volunteers have received an enhanced disclosure and barring services check.

- Staff are knowledgeable about current safeguarding issues due to the quality of training they have received from both the safeguarding lead and external sources such as the local authority.
- Safeguarding files are stored appropriately. Those looked at during the inspection contained a chronology of all discussions and demonstrated the school's commitment to working with external agencies.
- The new trustees have tightened up security in the school by introducing a new system for ensuring that every visitor's identity is logged and that they are signed in and out on entry and exit.
- All these actions demonstrated school leaders' and staff's commitment to an ethos of safeguarding pupils across the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers' planning for learning does not start from pupils' current knowledge because effective baseline assessments are not carried out. Pupils spoken to confirmed this by saying that sometimes they have learned things before, but they have to carry out tasks they can already do before starting new learning.
- Learning is often too slow because teachers spend too much time developing concepts for many pupils. Work in books demonstrated this slow pace of learning clearly.
- Too often, pupils do not learn the skills they need to improve the quality of their work. When they are taught, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise these new skills, so they do not become embedded. For example, spelling and punctuation mistakes in older pupils' books went uncorrected and, as a result, were repeated frequently in some books.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is sometimes weak, particularly in science. This has a negative impact on pupils' progress over time.
- Most-able pupils' progress is slower than it should be because staff do not provide them with work that extends or deepens their learning sufficiently, for example in writing longer pieces of work or writing in a range of genres.
- Because pupils stay with the same teacher for most of their school careers, they develop strong relationships with staff.
- Pupils' oracy skills are well developed. For example, they are confident at addressing an audience and presenting to the class and others on a range of different subjects.
- Many pupils are inquisitive and keen to learn in the classroom.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are self-assured, friendly, polite and happy. They show respect for each other, staff and visitors.

- Those spoken to said that they enjoyed coming to school and were proud to be members of the school community.
- Parents spoken to said that the school's kind and caring ethos was a key factor in their choice to send their children to the school. Most agree with their children that staff know the pupils well and work hard to support their social and emotional needs.
- Pupils feel that the new post boxes around school which enable pupils to speak to staff, anonymously if necessary, are good and allow them to speak to staff about any issue they may have.
- Pupils spoken to were clear about the forms bullying takes but feel there is little bullying in school. Both younger and older pupils were clear that they knew where to turn should an incident occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour in class sometimes dips because planned learning does not interest them or is too easy or too hard. This low-level disruption was described by pupils as irritating and they felt it occasionally disrupts the learning of others in the class.
- Pupils' attendance is currently lower than it should be in both primary and secondary parts of the school. Last year attendance was even lower. Leaders are aware of this and have started to engage parents in bringing about improvement. However, they recognise that more work is needed to bring overall attendance at least in line with the national average.
- When learning set is interesting, for example in handcraft classes, pupils are engaged enthusiastically and on task, making a range of sewn, crocheted and knitted dolls, puppets and embroidered stools.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' progress and attainment is difficult to measure because the school does not have a system in place to track pupils' progress from their starting points.
- Work in books shows that older pupils make weak progress in science and English.
- Work in books also shows that the most able pupils do not make sufficient progress because work set does not meet their needs sufficiently accurately.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to develop problem-solving skills in science.
- Pupils' academic progress is poor in some subject areas. As a result, they are not effectively prepared to make the transition to key stage 4.
- Pupils' progress in modern foreign languages is stronger than in other subject areas.
- Pupils make good progress in handwork and craft work, developing many skills.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The provision for older early years children is not as strong as the provision for the younger children. Staff do give them greater responsibility for leading play and take some

opportunities to develop their early numeracy and literacy skills. For example, they may count the number of steps to the office when taking the registers or help pupils to spell their names, if asked to by a child. However, this incidental learning does not give pupils the opportunity to learn and make progress in a planned and purposeful way. As a result, they do not develop skills in line with peers of similar age.

- Children quickly settle into the well-established routines of the kindergarten and learn to play and learn together both inside and outside the classroom.
- The outside provision gives children opportunities to develop their physical skills through, for example, climbing up to the top of the slide and digging in the mud kitchen.
- Indoors, children learn early skills in handcraft, such as making knot dolls and sewing simple clothes. Creative play is well supported through opportunities to retell stories through puppet shows.
- The early years leaders ensure that all aspects of the welfare standards are met. Parents spoken to feel that staff ensure that children are well cared for.
- Leaders track children's progress through the year using the Steiner system, which links to the early years foundation stage. Observations to support this assessment are effectively written by staff and show that children make progress over time.

School details

Unique reference number	121759
DfE registration number	816/6008
Inspection number	10094071

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Number of part-time pupils	37
Proprietor	Robert Butler
Chair	Robert Butler
Headteacher	Annabel Gibb
Annual fees (day pupils)	Contributions of up to £6,850 dependent on parental means
Telephone number	01904 654983
Website	www.yorksteinerschool.co.uk
Email address	info@yorksteinerschool.org
Date of previous inspection	22–24 November 2016

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection the school has undergone a significant change to the leadership team. The school has very recently appointed a new proprietor and chair of trustees, a new board of trustees and a new education manager.
- The school was previously inspected in November 2016 by the school inspection services (SIS). The school was graded as good in all areas including overall effectiveness.
- The school does not use any alternative providers for secondary-age pupils.
- The school follows the Waldorf Steiner curriculum.

- The school's kindergarten is exempt from some of the learning and development elements of the early years foundation stage.
- Children who access the kindergarten are in the early years, both Nursery and Reception, and key stage 1. Children attending the kindergarten do so on a part-time basis. Those children of statutory school age are also registered as being home-educated.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in classrooms across the school. Some observations were carried out jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors met with the chair of trustees, four other trustees, school staff, the leadership team, the manager of education, a national leader of governance who is currently supporting the school and more than 50 pupils.
- The inspection team studied a wide variety of documents including the curriculum policy and schemes of work, the school's safeguarding policy and health and safety documents. Inspectors also spoke to members of staff from the secondary school which many pupils attend for key stage 4 and made checks on identified asbestos in the school's boiler room.
- The inspection team also took into account the responses made by 175 parents on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 25 responses from parents given on Ofsted's free-text service.
- A material change inspection was carried out at the same time as the standard inspection as requested by the Department for Education. Currently the school has 18 more pupils on roll than it is registered for.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Debbie Redshaw

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet 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)(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)(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.

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