

Clarity Independent School

Bridge Farm Barn, Woodhill Road, Sandon, Essex CM2 7SG

Inspection date

4 May 2022

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)

- Leaders were not fulfilling the requirements of this independent school standard in the school's standard inspection in February 2020 and in the subsequent progress monitoring inspection in September 2021.
- On both occasions, inspectors found weaknesses in the implementation of the planned curriculum. Staff had not had the training they needed to help them plan for pupils' academic learning effectively.
- Leaders have developed and are implementing a well-structured curriculum. The curriculum is being delivered for a wide range of subjects. Plans are appropriate for pupils from key stage 1 to the end of key stage 4.
- Leaders have delivered precise training. Staff use a range of strategies to gauge what pupils can and can't do well. Staff are well placed to deliver the curriculum and adapt learning to meet the needs of the individual pupils. Staff know and understand the specific needs of individual pupils in their care, including those with complex social and emotional needs. Pupils value the fact that staff provide them with the individualised support when they need it.
- The requirements of this independent school standard are now met.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(g)

- In the previous standard and progress monitoring inspections, the requirements of this standard were unmet. Some staff who were new to the school had insufficient training to use assessment properly. They were not checking what pupils knew and understood in their learning.
- Leaders have introduced a monitoring and evaluation schedule to check what staff are doing well and where further development is needed. This is helping leaders to precisely focus staff training and know what they need to prioritise in developing the quality of education.

- The school has recruited more staff. Less experienced staff are receiving appropriate training and support to teach some aspects of the curriculum. They are given time to work along with experienced teachers to help develop their skills. Leaders have introduced weekly curriculum meetings. This is helping staff to adapt pupils' learning to suit different needs and abilities.
- Work is suitably matched to pupils' abilities. In lessons, staff build on pupils' prior learning and provide appropriate support and sufficient challenge to help pupils achieve as well as they can.
- The requirements of this independent school standard are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The requirements of this independent school standard were not met at the progress monitoring inspection in September 2021. The inspectors found that staff had not had the relevant training or sufficient knowledge of safeguarding concerns.
- The weaknesses in safeguarding practices have been rectified. Staff have had extensive training on the most recent changes to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2021). Leaders have put in place secure systems to ensure staff know their duties in terms of safeguarding from when they join the school.
- Staff confidently talk about local contextual issues and the potential risks that pupils could face. All staff recognise and are vigilant to any particular risks for pupils with special educational needs. Staff share information about pupils' well-being at the end of each day and leaders routinely share relevant information with staff on all aspects of safeguarding.
- Leaders and staff ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and guidance from external agencies, in school one-to-one support, and through the school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum. In addition, pupils have an appropriate awareness of safeguarding issues, such as county lines, peer-on-peer abuse and child exploitation.
- Designated leaders record and cross reference all concerns about pupils thoroughly. Staff have received training on the new electronic system that is currently in place. Leaders are meticulous at ensuring all concerns are recorded and responded to immediately. This includes all concerns from parents. Leaders have recently undergone a safeguarding audit from the local authority safeguarding team to quality assure the systems in place.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents on the school website.
- The requirements of this independent school standard are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- This standard was not met in the standard inspection of the school in February 2020 or in the progress monitoring inspection in September 2021, because the proprietor had not ensured that all the independent school standards were met. Inspectors found that systems for monitoring and reviewing the school's effectiveness were underdeveloped.

They also found that leaders did not have an accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. Improvement planning was at an early stage of development.

- The proprietor now has an approved action plan in place to help ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met.
- Leaders monitoring systems are now robust and provide leaders with secure information about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders are working with the local authority and other providers to share and develop best practice in all areas of their work.
- The requirements of this independent school standard are now met.
- This inspection also considered the proprietor's request for a material change, to extend the age range of the school from 14 to 16. It is judged that the proprietor would be likely to meet the standards if this material change was agreed.

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 subparagraph (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.

■ 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(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught; and
- 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.

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; and
- 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

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; and
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	146804
DfE registration number	881/6073
Inspection number	10232687

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 special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 15
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Proprietor	Clarity SEN Consultancy Ltd
Headteacher	Mrs Debbie Hanson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,000 to £65,000
Telephone number	01245 408 606
Website	www.clarity.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@clarity.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	11 to 13 February 2020

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	NA	6 to 16	6 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	NA	9	NA

Reason for inspector's recommendations:

- The previously unmet independent school standards are now met. It is likely that the proprietor would meet the independent school standards if this material change was agreed.

Information about this school

- The school's registration with the Department for Education (DfE) was approved in June 2019. It opened as an independent special school, catering for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, in September 2019.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils' needs include autism spectrum disorder; cognitive and learning needs; specific learning difficulties; moderate learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social development needs; communication and interaction needs; and physical disability.
- The registration with the DfE is for a maximum of 12 pupils between the ages of six and 14 years. During the academic year 2019/20, the DfE granted the proprietor temporary approval to admit pupils up to the age of 16 years. This temporary approval has expired. The DfE has granted a further temporary approval to admit pupils up to the age of 15 years, to cover pupils already on the school's roll.
- Most pupils have experienced significant periods of disruption to their full-time education in previous schools.
- The headteacher is the sole proprietor and director of the limited company.
- The school does not have a governing body.
- The school does not use alternative education provision.
- The school's inspection history:
 - In February 2020, Ofsted conducted the school's first standard inspection. The school was judged to require improvement. Three of the independent school standards were not met.
 - On 24 September 2020, the DfE issued the proprietor with a notice, requiring the proprietor to prepare an action plan to show how the un-met independent school standards would be addressed.
 - The school submitted an action plan within the required timeframe. The plan was evaluated in November 2020 and was found to be not acceptable.
 - In September 2021, Ofsted carried out a progress monitoring visit. Three of the independent school standards were not met.
 - The school submitted an action plan within the required timeframe. The plan was evaluated in January 2022 and was found to be acceptable.
 - This was the second progress monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement in February 2020. The inspection was conducted with no notice.

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 inspections.
- This inspection also considered the proprietor's request for a material change to the school's registration. The proprietor seeks to extend the upper age range from 14 years to 16 years.
- To check compliance with the independent school standards, the inspector met with the proprietor (who is also the headteacher) and the deputy head; spoke with staff and pupils; visited lessons and looked at pupils' work; looked at a range of documents; scrutinised the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks; and checked records of child protection concerns.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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