

Horatio House Independent School

Lound Campus, Church Lane, Lound, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 5LL

Inspection date

2 October 2018

Overall outcome

The school does not meet 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(2), 2(2)(a)

- The previous inspection found the scope of the school's curriculum to be limited, particularly in science. Inspectors found that the curriculum for pupils' academic learning had not had the same attention as the provision for pupils' personal development.
- The school's action plan stated that a number of actions would be taken to meet these unmet standards. The headteacher and proprietors undertook to introduce science to the curriculum and to create a dedicated science teaching room. They also undertook to ensure that appropriate written schemes of work were put in place for all subjects.
- Science has been introduced to the curriculum and some pupils are now studying for GCSE core science. However, progress in this area is limited. The classroom noted in the action plan has not been established and remains at the planning stage. This means that pupils do not have access to the practical experiments necessary to be successful in the subject and to develop their knowledge and understanding of scientific principles.
- Schemes of work are now in place for most subjects. However, these are at varying stages of development and there is no consistency of approach throughout the school. In some subjects, such as science, schemes of work are generic plans, produced by a commercial publisher. These plans have not been adapted to meet the needs of the school and its pupils.
- Until very recently, the school did not provide full-time education for all its pupils. This has now been rectified and all pupils have a full-time timetable available to them. However, very few pupils are taking up this full-time provision, and poor rates of attendance are a very serious concern.
- In 2017/18, almost half of the school's pupils were absent from school, or alternative provision, for more than half of the academic year. One in five pupils attended less than 20% of the school year or, on average, less than one day per week for the entire year. This is unacceptably low and gives serious cause for concern.
- These standards remain unmet.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g), 4

- The previous inspection found that teaching, learning and assessment were variable across the school and in different subjects. Inspectors found that pupils were not given work that was sufficiently challenging or suited to their different levels of ability. They also found that the pace of learning was sometimes too relaxed and that teachers did not make clear to pupils what they wanted them to achieve. Inspectors also found that assessment was not used well enough. As a result of these issues, pupils were making less progress than they should have done.
- The action plan stated that actions would be taken to meet these standards. The headteacher and the proprietors undertook to arrange for observations of teaching to take place and for targets to be put in place for individual members of staff. The action plan also stated that strengths and weaknesses of teaching would be identified, targets set and professional development opportunities provided, as appropriate.
- The actions plan's aims have not been achieved. There is evidence that observations of teaching have taken place. However, these observations did not identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practice seen. There is no evidence that the observations that have taken place have had any impact on improving the quality of teaching and, thus, improving outcomes for pupils.
- There is no evidence that performance management processes have been developed, as described in the action plan. Until very recently, staff have not been held to account effectively. Staff have not been provided with the opportunities to continue their professional development, as noted in the action plan.
- These standards remain unmet.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5, 5(b), 5(b)(v)

- The previous inspection found that the range of discriminatory practice that pupils were introduced to and which they understood was not sufficiently extensive. Pupils did not learn enough about prejudice and the way it can lead to bullying.
- The school's action plan provided little detail about how leaders and the proprietors intended to meet this standard.
- The school was unable to provide the inspector with any evidence that action has been taken to broaden the range of discriminatory practice that pupils are taught about and understand, to support their improved awareness of prejudice-based bullying.
- This standard remains unmet.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The previous inspection found that leaders and the proprietor had not ensured that all the independent school standards were met. Inspectors found that leaders had not been thorough enough in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' work. They also found that leaders did not have the necessary tools to allow them to keep track of pupils'

progress easily or to assess the performance of different groups. The proprietors did not have a detailed enough understanding of the progress pupils made and they did not set clear action points for leaders in order to secure further improvement.

- The first two versions of the school's action plan were judged not to be fit for purpose. The third iteration of the plan was accepted, subject to modifications. These modifications have not been made.
- The school's action plan stated that an information management system would be introduced to track pupils' progress and to use assessment information to inform planning. The plan also stated that actions would be taken to improve the proprietors' knowledge and understanding of the school.
- An information management system has been purchased and is now being used to record and track pupils' attendance. It is not yet being used as a tool for tracking pupils' progress. The system has not been populated with all the necessary information to make this possible. That is, the school has not ensured that the appropriate digital files have been obtained from pupils' previous schools in order for all their assessment information to be imported into the school's own system.
- The proprietors now have a clearer understanding of the school's current position. They recognise that the school's overall effectiveness deteriorated after the previous inspection and that it has yet to recover. The proprietors are ambitious for the school but are also realistic. They know that it is vital that prompt and effective action is taken now so that the school starts to improve rapidly.
- The proprietors have employed an experienced and knowledgeable headteacher to lead the school. In the short time that he has been in post, he has evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses thoroughly and accurately. The resulting self-evaluation summary paints a clear and compelling picture of the school's current position.
- The headteacher is in the process of writing an action plan based on his recent self-evaluation, as well as the issues highlighted by the previous inspection. Although the plan is not yet complete, there are early signs that this will provide the school with the clear direction it needs in order to improve quickly but sustainably.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on its website. The policy is up to date and meets current requirements.
- These standards remain unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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 does not meet the following independent school standards:

- The proprietors must ensure 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, to provide:
 - full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(a)).
- The proprietors must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - 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
 - fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - 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
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)).
- The proprietors must ensure that a framework for pupils' 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 (paragraph 4).
- The proprietors must ensure that principles are actively promoted which:
 - further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures (paragraph 5, 5(b), 5(b)(v)).
- The proprietors must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).

School details

Unique reference number	143081
DfE registration number	935/6009
Inspection number	10077728

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	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Proprietor	Great Yarmouth Community Trust
Chair	John Holmes
Headteacher	Andrew Livingstone
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,000
Telephone number	01493 602108
Website	www.priorycentre.co.uk/education/horatio-house
Email address	horatio-house@gyctrust.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	13–15 June 2017

Information about this school

- The school opened in August 2016 and moved to its current site in April 2017. The school is situated on the outskirts of Lound, a village near Lowestoft in Suffolk.
- Horatio House was a provider of alternative educational provision prior to its registration as a school.
- The school's proprietor is a not-for-profit, charitable organisation. The proprietor runs ten nurseries across Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth and Norwich. It also runs Nexus Engineering, a provider of engineering training in the local area.
- The school takes pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or who are at serious risk of permanent exclusion. In many cases, pupils have had very disrupted

schooling prior to joining the school. Frequently, pupils have not attended school regularly before starting at Horatio House.

- Most pupils have a history of challenging behaviour. Almost half of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses the alternative provision provided by the St Edmunds Society in Norwich and Appleseed Farm in Wymondham.

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.
- A full standard inspection was carried out in June 2017. The inspection found that the school's overall effectiveness required improvement. This was the first monitoring inspection and was carried out without notice.
- Evaluations of the school's proposed action plan were carried out in October 2017 and February 2018. The action plans submitted by the school were judged not to be fit for purpose on both occasions. A third evaluation was conducted in July 2018. The final iteration of the plan was accepted, subject to modifications.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other members of staff, two directors of the proprietor body and a group of pupils. The inspector visited all classes and observed the quality of teaching and learning more closely in two classes. The inspector scrutinised a wide range of school documents, including the school's single central record.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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