

Steiner Academy Frome

Park Road, Frome, Somerset BA11 1EU

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have failed to provide pupils with a safe and effective education. They do not understand current statutory requirements.
- Governors and leaders have not followed the school's complaints policy. They have not addressed serious issues that put pupils at risk of harm.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make insufficient progress. Over time, there has been little effective support for these vulnerable pupils.
- There is no evidence that the guidance and training leaders provide to teachers has had a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. Pupils of all abilities make insufficient progress across the curriculum.
- Teaching does not build on what pupils know and can do or address their misconceptions.
- The provision for children in the early years (kindergarten) is inadequate. Behaviour management is unsafe. Teaching does not develop children's speaking well enough.
- Secondary-age pupils do not receive effective careers information and guidance.
- Some staff and parents do not feel able to raise concerns. Leaders and governors have not created an open culture that puts pupils' safety and welfare first.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Essential systems to oversee this work are not in place. Pupils are not supervised well enough.
- Leaders cannot explain how they have spent any additional earmarked funding in the last two years.
- There is no shared approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Some responses have been disproportionate and unsafe.
- There has been a high number of exclusions. Most of these are for pupils with SEND.
- Low-level disruption in lessons is common. Pupils can easily opt out of learning.
- Governors do not hold senior leaders to account. They have not identified or tackled serious weaknesses at the school.
- Governors have not ensured that their statutory responsibilities are met. For example, equalities are not promoted effectively.
- The curriculum does not enable pupils to acquire skills and knowledge at a suitable rate. It does not prepare pupils for their future lives.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take immediate action to safeguard pupils by ensuring that:
 - keeping pupils safe takes priority in all aspects of the school's work so that staff and parents feel able to raise concerns at any time
 - records of child protection and the management of allegations are fit for purpose and enable effective oversight of this work
 - systems and approaches to recruiting staff include all necessary suitability checks
 - there is a clear code of conduct for staff behaviour
 - staff receive and follow clear guidance about using physical restraint with pupils
 - pupils are adequately supervised at all times.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders, middle leaders and governors understand their roles and responsibilities and fulfil them effectively
 - governors hold senior leaders to account rigorously
 - complaints are investigated thoroughly and fairly, and outcomes are communicated clearly to complainants and used to make improvements to the school
 - leaders check the impact of their work on pupils' safety, welfare and achievement
 - all pupils who have SEND receive effective support that enables them to make good progress
 - additional funding is spent appropriately and improves pupils' outcomes
 - the curriculum meets pupils' needs, enables them to achieve well and prepares them effectively for the future.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare so that it is good, by ensuring that:
 - the behaviour policy is fit for purpose, sets out high expectations and clear, safe and proportionate sanctions, and is applied consistently across the school
 - low-level disruption in lessons is minimised
 - pupils of all ages learn how to keep themselves safe
 - secondary pupils receive effective careers information and guidance.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' outcomes are good, by

ensuring that:

- staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' achievement and attitudes to learning
- learning is suitably demanding for pupils of all abilities and builds on what they know and can do
- teachers make use of effective questions and checks on pupils' learning during lessons to adjust and increase the impact of their teaching
- teachers in the kindergarten enable children to develop their speaking and listening skills effectively.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how the use of this funding may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have failed to provide pupils with a safe and effective education. Together, they have not ensured that essential systems are in place and that staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to fulfil their duties successfully. This is because their own knowledge of current statutory requirements is limited.
- Leaders have not established a culture that puts pupils' welfare and safety first. Some staff and parents feel unable to raise concerns as they feel threatened by leaders and governors. This places pupils at risk.
- Governors and leaders have not adhered to the school's complaints policy. Records of complaints show that responses do not address concerns directly and investigations lack rigour. Some parents feel that the process is unfair. This is not unfounded. Leaders cannot explain how they have learned or made changes as a result of upheld complaints.
- Equalities are not promoted effectively. Some parents expressed concerns that staff and governors have discriminatory attitudes towards pupils with SEND and some parents.
- Senior leaders and the new middle leaders have provided some guidance and training for teachers. There is no evidence that this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Leaders cannot demonstrate that they have checked that teachers have implemented these changes and cannot explain how they have improved pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders cannot and have not explained how they spent the pupil premium last year or the difference that it has made to disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well because they do not receive any discernible extra support.
- The Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium has not been spent effectively. It is not clear how this money has been used. Pupils make inadequate progress in key stage 3 (class 6 to class 8).
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium cannot be accounted for. Leaders are not able to explain how this funding was used last year or how it will enhance younger pupils' physical education this year.
- The curriculum does not enable pupils to make good progress across a range of subjects. Pupils do not have the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge at a suitable rate. Work in pupils' books shows that some subjects are taught more frequently than others. This varies across the different classes as each teacher interprets and implements the curriculum differently. Leaders do not check how the curriculum is taught.
- Pupils do not learn about British values and cannot discuss these. They are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- There is some provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. However, leaders acknowledge that the quality and extent of this varies widely across

the school.

- Over time, pupils with SEND have not received effective support and have not achieved well. It is hard to identify what provision some pupils have received. The new special educational needs co-ordinator has rightly started to implement some necessary improvements. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these.
- The GCSE curriculum for pupils in class 9 (Year 10) is relatively narrow. Leaders hope to provide a wider range of options for pupils in the future.
- Most parents are very supportive of the school. However, a significant minority of parents shared serious concerns with inspectors before and during the inspection. These related to pupils' safety and well-being, bullying, the quality of leadership and management and how well the needs of pupils with SEND are met.
- It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governance is weak. Governors do not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the statutory requirements of governing bodies and have not ensured that they are met. For example, they have not ensured that safeguarding is effective.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account. Minutes of governors' meetings do not demonstrate that governors ask leaders any challenging questions. As a result, the school is not providing pupils with a suitable education.
- Leaders' reports to governors are short, vague and unhelpful. There is no evidence that governors have asked for, or received, all of the information that they need to undertake their duties effectively.
- Governors do not oversee the strategic direction of the school effectively. The school development plan, agreed by governors, is too broad and does not identify or tackle the school's many and significant weaknesses.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Records of child protection and the management of allegations do not enable leaders to keep pupils safe. They lack rigour and do not bring together important information. This means that leaders cannot maintain effective oversight of these serious concerns. This places pupils at risk of harm.
- Recruitment processes do not ensure that staff are suitable and safe to work with children. Records are not thorough. Checks and references are not complete for all staff.
- Leaders have not set out clearly how they expect staff to behave to keep pupils safe. Leaders' guidance on staff behaviour is confusing. This makes it hard for staff to understand what is expected of them.
- Leaders say that they provide clear expectations to staff about the use of physical restraint on pupils. However, the school's own records show that staff are not following these guidelines and use inappropriate methods. These are often not recorded,

overseen or dealt with appropriately.

- At various points, and in different places, throughout the school day, inspectors observed that pupils were not supervised well enough. Pupils said that staff are not always available to help them when they need it.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils' exercise books show that they undertake work that is well below the standards expected for their age. Consequently, pupils are underachieving across the curriculum.
- Lessons do not build on what pupils already know or provide pupils with the right opportunities to practise what they have learned. This means pupils do not develop their learning appropriately.
- Pupils' books show that work can often be too easy for some and too hard for others. Pupils, including those with SEND, usually complete the same tasks. Teachers do not match tasks to pupils' different needs.
- Teachers do not notice or tackle low-level disruption. Often, pupils talk over the teacher or walk around the classroom freely during teaching. As a result, pupils are able to opt out of lessons if they choose. This further inhibits their learning.
- Teachers do not monitor pupils' learning routinely during lessons. This means that, when pupils find work too hard or too easy, teachers do not realise soon enough, and do not, therefore, adjust their teaching accordingly. As a result, pupils' progress is limited.
- In class 9 (Year 10), where learning is effective, teachers provide pupils with challenging tasks. These pupils say that they are enjoying the rigours of the subjects that they are studying at GCSE.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders have not prioritised pupils' welfare. Their responses to serious complaints relating to pupils' well-being have not addressed issues that place pupils at risk of potential physical and emotional harm.
- A minority of parents have raised concerns about bullying. Pupils who spoke to inspectors did not express any concerns about bullying. However, there is no evidence that senior leaders have effective oversight of allegations or incidents of bullying. Records of incidents are not clear.
- There is little provision in the curriculum for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils recognise that using social media and playing games online can place them at risk. They told inspectors that they would like to learn how to stay safe online.
- Older pupils are articulate and thoughtful. They are pleased to have had a chance

recently to share their views on religious education and suggest some improvements. Pupils have also rightly identified that they need to improve their behaviour.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Low-level disruption in classes is common. Pupils report that this often inhibits their learning. Leaders and staff have not tackled this behaviour. Consequently, pupils' education has suffered.
- There is no consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour and this places pupils at risk. In some instances, staff do not address misbehaviour at all. At other times, responses to challenging behaviour have been disproportionate. There has been a recent and significant increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND.
- Pupils attend school regularly. The rate of attendance has been similar to the national average for the last three years.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Current pupils in class 1 (Year 2) to class 8 (Year 9) make insufficient progress across a range of subjects. This is because the curriculum does not build on or develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils with SEND do not achieve well enough. Leaders have not ensured that they have received effective support over time.
- There is no evidence to suggest that disadvantaged pupils achieve any better than their classmates. Additional funding has not been used to raise the achievement of these pupils.
- At the end of class 5 (Year 6) pupils do not reach the standards expected for their age. Over the past three years, very few pupils have reached the expected standard or higher in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Pupils' attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling and science is similarly low.
- The school does not prepare pupils well enough for the next stage in their education. Work in pupils' exercise books shows that pupils in key stage 3 are not meeting the expectations for their age. The oldest pupils reported that the curriculum leading up to their GCSE courses has left them feeling ill-prepared.
- Work in exercise books shows that pupils in class 9 (Year 10) are making accelerated progress. This is because teaching is based on the detailed syllabuses provided for the GCSE qualifications.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Senior leaders have not ensured that children in the kindergarten are safe. This is because children in the early years are subject to the same safeguarding arrangements as other pupils.
- Staff in the kindergarten are not equipped to support children with challenging behaviour. Records show that staff in the early years have used inappropriate physical restraint in these classes.
- The new early years leader, appointed in September 2018, has not yet been able to have an impact on children's learning. She has rightly identified that assessments of children's development are inaccurate. However, she has not had enough time to address these shortcomings. This means that there is no reliable information to show whether children make progress in this provision.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that teaching in the kindergarten is meeting children's needs. There are limited opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- There is evidence that teachers work closely with parents. Teachers visit children at home before they join the kindergarten and find out about their interests and development. They make regular contact with parents and take time to get to know them. Many parents told inspectors that they valued the relationships that they have built with their child's kindergarten teacher.

School details

Unique reference number	138383
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10082661

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Guy Marson
Principal	Trevor Mepham
Telephone number	01373 832804
Website	www.steineracademyfrome.co.uk
Email address	admin@steineracademyfrome.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school first opened in September 2012 in the village of Corsley. It moved to the site in Frome in September 2014. Since then, pupil numbers have increased steadily. The school currently has pupils aged between three and 15 years old.
- The school is exempt from delivering the literacy, number, technology, arts and design, understanding and moving and handling requirements of the early years foundation stage. It is also exempt from carrying out assessments at the end of the early years foundation stage and key stage 1. The school is also exempt from administering the Year 1 phonics screening check. The school's funding agreement requires it to admit pupils to the national tests at the end of key stage 2 (class 5) and key stage 4 (class 10).
- Children continue in the early years foundation stage for one extra year. They join class 1 when they are in national curriculum Year 2.
- The governing body are also the trustees of the school.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is similar to the national average.
- The school has few disadvantaged pupils.
- One secondary pupil attends alternative provision at Critchill School on a part-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted without notice to the school.
- The inspection was carried out following a number of complaints made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection should take place to follow up on the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether leadership and management are effective, whether pupils are safe at the school, whether the needs of pupils with SEND are being met, whether pupils' behaviour is managed appropriately and whether pupils' well-being is promoted well.
- Inspectors visited classes to speak to pupils and observe their learning. They also looked at work in pupils' exercise books.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, two group of pupils and six members of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to two representatives of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke to three parents on the telephone. Inspectors met with 20 parents at the school. There were 332 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also considered over 100 letters and emails.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's information about pupils' achievement, records of complaints, minutes of governors' meetings and records concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Nathan Kemp	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Carrington	Her Majesty's Inspector

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