

The Rowan School

Henne Drive, Bilston WV14 9JW

Inspection dates

12 March 2019

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

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(f), 3(g)

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

- The curriculum policy has now been effectively implemented. Leaders make sure that there is a broad and balanced curriculum and pupils enjoy subjects such as art, food technology, music and PE. The curriculum also includes valuable elements of social, emotional and mental health development called 'Emotional Regulation'. A clear link now exists between pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans, the curriculum, individual support plans and individual risk assessments. As a result of this, work now meets pupils' needs effectively.

- The standards in these paragraphs are now met.

Paragraphs 2(2), 2(1)(a), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii)

- The curriculum clearly includes personal, social, health and economic education, alongside the opportunity to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures, traditions and protected characteristics. Schemes of work on these topics are relatively new, but already pupils' work shows that they are effectively developing their knowledge and understanding in these areas.

- The standards in these paragraphs are now met.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(f), 3(g)

- Leaders now use assessment competently to evaluate pupils' progress and identify their next steps. This is evidenced in pupils' work since the appointment of the new headteacher. As a result of improvements in this area, pupils' progress has improved markedly; however, some pupils remain behind in their work as a legacy of weaker teaching.
- Pupils are increasingly ready to learn as a result of the way in which leaders have structured the school day. The meditation sessions at the start of the day, alongside pupils' ability to choose tasks during 'target time', lead to pupils being better motivated and ready to learn.

- Inspectors observed pupils working independently with enthusiasm and keen interest. Parental surveys undertaken by the school support the assertion that teaching, learning and assessment have improved.
- Teachers use resources that are well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils have individualised resources to meet their needs and this is having a positive impact on their progress.
- The standards in these paragraphs are now met.

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

Paragraphs 5, 5(b), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v)

- The school has developed an interesting curriculum to enhance pupils' knowledge and respect for public institutions. For example, pupils have enjoyed a range of visits to the ambulance service, talks from the police and have further visits and activities planned. Work to improve pupils' knowledge of local culture and other cultures is also well under way. For example, pupils enjoyed learning about engineering at a local museum and visited places of worship.
- The standards in these paragraphs are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- Leaders have not established a culture of safeguarding. This was raised at the previous inspection. While arrangements for child protection have been strengthened and are now effective, pupils' safety is undermined because leaders have not maintained a safe physical environment for pupils.
- Leaders have redrafted the school's child protection policy to bring it in line with government guidelines. This policy is fit for purpose and is available to parents. Leaders make sure that this is given to parents when their child enters the school. There is no school website.
- Staff now have a clear understanding of how to log a concern with the designated leaders for safeguarding. They understand the child protection processes, know how to speak with pupils about any concerns and gave inspectors examples of when the child protection policy had been enacted effectively. Staff are trained appropriately and vigilant to child protection concerns.
- Leaders have introduced an effective internet filtering process.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not met.

Paragraph 12

- An external company has completed fire risk assessments and provided a structure to leaders' work in this area. However, pupils and staff have access to areas not covered by this risk assessment. Therefore the risk assessment does not effectively help mitigate all of the fire risks evident in the premises.
- There is a lack of clarity as to the means of escape in the event of a fire. This has arisen because the school uses one part of a larger building and there are a number of

signposted fire exits which cannot be used. Some fire exits are locked and inaccessible because they are behind other sets of locked doors.

- A full, five-litre container of a chemical labelled 'highly flammable' was being stored on the floor in the kitchen at the time of inspection.
- The standard in this paragraph is not met.

Paragraphs 11, 16(a), 16(b)

- Although the proprietor has ensured that there are written health and safety and risk assessment policies, these are not effective because they do not outline many of the risks to pupils and staff inspectors found during this inspection. Elements of the health and safety policy are not being followed.
- There are high, narrow cupboards in some classrooms that are not attached to the wall and unstable and so pose a serious crush risk to pupils. A number of filing cabinets are in classrooms and places to which pupils have access. They are unlocked, so if drawers are opened they become unstable and could fall and crush a child.
- A power distribution cupboard is in a corridor. At the time of inspection, this was unlocked, accessible as it was above a bench, and contained loose, large metal components that pose an injury risk to pupils.
- Inspectors found a number of industrial chemicals being stored in the staff kitchen, which had a door open to the school building. These chemicals included five-litre containers of bleach and anti-freeze, urinal disinfectant blocks and graffiti remover. Additionally, one five-litre container had been emptied into an open washing-up bowl on the floor and so posed a more serious risk. Some of these chemicals were labelled as highly flammable, irritant or as posing a serious risk of damage to eyes. They were being stored on the floor, which would give pupils easy access. They were present in the area where pupils' food is brought in from the external supplier and put onto plates for pupils to eat. The lack of proper procedures around the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) was identified at the previous inspection.
- In a variety of rooms in the building, inspectors found evidence of pest infestation that had not been adequately managed. This was in areas adjoining the place where staff plate up pupils' food. Although these rooms are not a part of the school's leased premises, they were accessible as they were unlocked. There was evidence that staff use these rooms and the proprietor acknowledged that it was likely that these rooms were in use.
- The health and safety policy states that 'good housekeeping' will include maintaining a safe and healthy working environment. This is not being undertaken properly. The staff toilets and kitchen area are dirty, unhygienic and unsafe.
- The hall, which is used for physical activity, is adjacent to a community theatre with no barrier between these two spaces. A number of significant hazards to pupils' health are in the theatre space. For example, stacked tiered seating that nearly reaches the ceiling, which pupils could easily climb, and stacked metal staging that poses a crush hazard. The two doors at the back of this space were open. Behind the hall were unsecured cupboards which pose a crush risk and locked fire doors. Additionally, at the time of the inspection, leaders could not find a light switch, suggesting that if a pupil were to enter this space it would be difficult to locate them.

- Inspectors found obvious mistakes in the medication administration records. These included paperwork that had not been properly filled in and records that suggested that some medications had gone missing. This indicates that staff are not properly following the medication administration policy.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- The proprietor has not ensured that the premises are kept to a standard that maintains the health, safety and welfare of pupils. The requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 are not met. There are risks to pupils' health, safety and welfare as a result of various hazards in the building. Toilets are not maintained to an appropriate standard and are unhygienic. Some parts of the building have evidence of uncontrolled rodent infestation. One classroom was found to have a heavy door that had hinges that were coming away from the frame and a cracked frame.
- Some parts of the school are not appropriate for pupils' education. At the time of the inspection pupils were present in unlit corridors. These corridors, being a part of a disused and empty secondary school with historic displays and corridors divided by unstable temporary room dividers, are not appropriate for young pupils' education.
- The standard in this paragraph is not met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33(c), 33(k)

- Leaders have established a new policy. All parents have been sent the new policy. This policy has clear timeframes for dealing with complaints at each stage. The school keeps a record of all complaints. It keeps this securely and confidentially, and provided this to the inspector on request during the inspection.
- The standards in these paragraphs are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- As was the case at the previous inspection, leaders have not demonstrated the knowledge they need to safeguard pupils effectively and promote pupils' safety and well-being. They have not demonstrated the knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently. Some of the issues identified at the previous inspection are still evident at this inspection; for example, the safe storage of potentially hazardous chemicals. The move to a new part of the building has introduced new hazards that pose a high risk to pupils. Leaders do not have the knowledge to recognise and address these hazards.
- A new headteacher and deputy are now in post and are adding capacity to the leadership team. They have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and pupils' progress. They have begun to review and improve all of the school's policies and there is evidence that leaders' knowledge and ability to meet some of the independent school standards are improving.

- Leaders have clarity over what constitutes good-quality teaching and have robust systems for monitoring its quality. They know where staff practice needs to improve and use external moderation to validate their observations. Leaders demonstrated examples of how teaching has tangibly improved across the school.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not met.

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, as set out in the annex of this report. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	144374
DfE registration number	332/6008
Inspection number	10094742

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 special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Michael Searle and Ben Whittall
Headteacher	Mrs Snita Verma
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,000
Telephone number	07456 736542
Email address	sverma@therowanschool.org
Date of previous standard inspection	19–21 June 2018

Information about this school

- The Rowan School occupies a part of a former high school in Cosley, West Midlands. Local authorities place pupils in this school. All pupils who attend have special educational needs and/or disabilities and have an education, health and care plan in place.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2018. The school is currently fully staffed.
- Two proprietors have joint ownership of the school and play an active role in developing the school's provision.
- Since the previous inspection the school has moved premises. Although the school remains at the same address, it now operates from a different part of the building. This part of the building was not a part of the pre-registration checks undertaken when the school moved to the site in May 2018.

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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with both proprietors, the new headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and pupils. They looked at information about parents' views that the school had collected and checked the school's procedures for handling complaints.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning, looked at their learning over time, scrutinised EHC plans and the curriculum. They evaluated systems to monitor the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders joined inspectors on a check of the premises. Each part of the building that the school uses was checked. In addition, inspectors checked other parts of the building that are not formally part of the school, but to which pupils and staff had access.
- Inspectors checked a range of health and safety and risk assessment policies and looked at how these policies are implemented.

Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Yates

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

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.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

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; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection

The school now meets the following independent school standards

■ Part 1

- *2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(f), 3(g).*

■ Part 2

- *5, 5(b), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v).*

■ Part 7

- *33(c), 33(k).*

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