

Three Bridges

Kea Downs Road, Blackwater, Truro, Cornwall TR4 8EG

Inspection date

20 September 2023

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- At the standard inspection in November 2022, inspectors found that school leaders had not ensured effective safeguarding arrangements, including the management of risk, were in place. Record-keeping was not robust. Leaders had not identified and assessed the potential risks to pupils' safety well enough.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They have implemented new staffing structures and comprehensive systems for recording and reporting safeguarding to ensure the welfare and well-being of pupils are secure. Leaders have undertaken policy reviews to check that arrangements to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare are in line with the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Paragraphs 9, 10, 14

- Leaders have written a behaviour policy that all members of the school community understand. The policy outlines relevant procedures when dealing with and reporting on aspects of behaviour. Staff follow these procedures. Leaders keep thorough records of behaviour incidents.
- Leaders have implemented an effective anti-bullying strategy that is closely monitored to ensure it is effective. The curriculum teaches pupils about respect and difference.
- Leaders have appropriate levels of supervision in place to keep pupils safe. Relevant training and support for staff means that supervision is managed well in on-site and off-site activities.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Leaders have been proactive in reviewing the full risk assessment process, including the implementation of a new policy and procedures. The risk assessment policy is fit for purpose. Relevant training has been provided to ensure leaders can identify and assess personalised risks to pupils, including for on-site, off-site and remote activity.
- Leaders now keep detailed risk assessments that consider relevant dangers, including for pupils with medical needs. Governance leads provide support and challenge through the

monitoring of these procedures so that appropriate action is taken to reduce risk.

- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders and the proprietor did not have the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. They did not ensure that all the standards were met. There was an overreliance on external monitoring in relation to safeguarding. However, leaders have implemented effective safeguarding systems to ensure that the standards are met. They now have a thorough understanding of these standards and ensure they are reviewed frequently.
- Leaders had not ensured that an effective risk assessment policy was in place to identify risks to pupils' safety. They had not taken into account the individual personalised needs of pupils which could pose a risk. Leaders have now established effective risk assessment systems and processes. Local authority and governance leads carry out regular quality assurance of safeguarding arrangements.
- There is now a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Pupils are happy and feel safe. They have good relationships with adults. Leaders have continued to strengthen safer recruitment processes.
- The standards in this part are now met.

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 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.

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that –
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

- 10 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective bullying strategy.

- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

- 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 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.

School details

Unique reference number	129252
DfE registration number	908/6095
Inspection number	10297684

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	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Proprietor	Three Bridges Education Limited
Chair	Tracey Storey
Headteacher	Lisa Smith
Annual fees (day pupils)	£89,445
Telephone number	01872561010
Website	www.3bridges.co.uk
Email address	lisa.smith@threebridgeseducation.com
Date of previous standard inspection	29 November to 1 December 2022

Information about this school

- The proprietor of the school is Three Bridges Education Ltd. In June 2023, Melrose Education Ltd acquired the school. Melrose Education Ltd owns seven other special needs independent school settings.
- The previous standard inspection took place in November 2022 where the school was judged to be inadequate.
- The school is a specialist provision for pupils with autism. All pupils on roll have education, health and care plans. The majority of placements are funded by Cornwall local authority.

- The school uses no alternative provision.

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 standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the school was judged to be inadequate in November 2022. The inspection was carried out with no notice.
- The Department for Education (DfE) required the school to draw up an action plan. This was evaluated in April 2023 and rejected as not being fit for purpose.
- The DfE requested that the inspector also look at standards in relation to behaviour management, bullying and supervision as part of the monitoring visit.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior staff, the designated safeguarding leads, the finance and business administrator, the chair of the proprietor body and a group of staff and pupils. The inspector held a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of policies, plans and documentation relating to the standards, improvement planning and safeguarding information, including the school's single central record.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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