

Craig Ormerod Associates School Provision

Outwood Road, Radcliffe M26 1AG

Inspection dates

23 November 2023

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a)-7(b), 31(1), 31(1)(c)

- At the standard inspection in September 2023, the systems for safeguarding were not effective. Inspectors found significant weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements. The proprietor body had failed to ensure that safeguarding policies, staff training and day-to-day processes followed the government's statutory guidance. The school had failed to ensure that staff had the expertise to provide appropriate support for vulnerable pupils. Staff did not understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Pupils were not provided with important information about how to keep themselves safe.
- In its action plan, which was submitted to Ofsted in September 2023, the school proposed some actions to prioritise the safeguarding and welfare of pupils. For example, the school intended to update its safeguarding policy; to appoint a designated safeguarding leader (DSL); and to provide safeguarding training for all staff. However, the school action plan did not propose any actions about how pupils would be taught about risks, nor how they would learn how to keep themselves safe. In addition, some of the timescales for the proposed actions were vague. It was evaluated that this standard was unlikely to be met if the proposed actions were implemented.
- At this emergency inspection, inspectors reviewed the safeguarding policy. It now references government guidance. It is published on the school's website. However, the staff designated as leaders of safeguarding are not accurately identified in the policy. The school does not implement this policy effectively.
- Leaders of safeguarding have now received appropriate training. However, this has had little impact on their abilities to keep pupils safe. The proprietor body has not ensured that safeguarding leaders have the necessary expertise, experience or time to fulfil this role effectively. Leaders of safeguarding do not have a working knowledge of pupils' levels of need or of the external agencies that are working with the pupils to keep them safe.

- The school has introduced a new information management system for the recording of safeguarding concerns. However, at the time of the inspection, leaders did not maintain detailed records of safeguarding incidents and the actions taken. When inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records, they found concerns that had been identified, but that had not been appropriately reported or escalated.
- At the emergency inspection, inspectors found that the school had not taken steps to ensure that all pupils received important information about potential welfare and safety risks or how to keep themselves safe. Leaders had not ensured that all pupils were receiving relationships and sex education (RSE) or information about online safety.
- Safeguarding remains ineffective at the school.
- These independent school standards ('the standards') remain unmet.

Paragraph 12

- At the time of the standard inspection, the proprietor had not ensured that the school premises were compliant with the fire regulatory reform (Fire Safety) order 2005. A number of risks were identified relating to: fire evacuation procedures and fire exits; the storage of combustible materials; and a lack of smoke detectors.
- In its action plan, the school proposed that it would employ the services of a fire officer to complete a fire-risk assessment. Leaders also outlined their plans to communicate fire-evacuation procedures to staff and to pupils, and to practise these procedures. Leaders intended to take action to provide all staff with appropriate health and safety training. However, the timescales and success criteria for these actions were not made clear. It was evaluated that this standard was unlikely to be met if the proposed actions were implemented.
- During this emergency inspection, there was clear evidence that the school had collaborated with recognised external experts to address the failings previously identified. Fire exits were found to be accessible and fire-evacuation plans were in place throughout the building. Fire-evacuation drills had been conducted and staff had received fire-safety training. The boiler room was free of combustible materials. These materials were stored safely elsewhere. Fire directional signage was accurate. The school had fitted additional smoke alarms. All staff had received appropriate health and safety training.
- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 13

- When the standard inspection took place, the school's arrangements for first aid were not acceptable. Medication was not appropriately stored. The school could not confirm which staff had up to date first-aid training.
- In its action plan, the school did not propose any specific actions to resolve the concerns identified by inspectors at the standard inspection. It was evaluated that this standard was unlikely to be met if the proposed actions were implemented.
- At the emergency inspection, inspectors found that the school had introduced a more rigorous first-aid policy and approach to administering first aid. All staff had recently received recognised first-aid training. A locked cabinet stored any pupil medication. A

clear procedure was in place to log and record the administration of any medication. First-aid resources and supplies were available.

- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 15

- At the last standard inspection, leaders maintained the attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This is no longer the case.
- During this emergency inspection, inspectors found evidence that the school had recorded attendance inaccurately. The school did know when pupils had been on the school site and when they had been absent. However, the school did not record pupils' absences using the agreed attendance codes. This meant that attendance figures looked more favourable than they actually were.
- This standard is not met.

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

- At the last standard inspection, inspectors found that risk assessments were incomplete and inconsistently implemented.
- In its action plan, the school neglected to propose any specific actions to address the failings related to risk assessments. This standard was evaluated as unlikely to be met.
- During this emergency inspection, inspectors noted that the school had produced improved individual risk assessments for each pupil. However, the risk-assessment policy, and the risk assessments related to educational activities, were not fit for purpose.
- These standards remain unmet.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a)-18(2)(e), 18(3), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a)-21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(b)

- During the standard inspection, inspectors found significant weaknesses in the single central record. Checks were not made to ensure that staff were suitable to work with pupils. There was no policy for safer recruitment. The school did not understand or employ safer recruitment practices.
- In the school's action plan, it was proposed that the headteacher, who is also the chair of the proprietor body, would complete safer recruitment training. The school also proposed that all of the appropriate checks on the suitability of staff would be completed. The school outlined that it would secure an external review of the single central record to ensure that it remained compliant with the government's statutory guidance. However, the school's action plan referred to the completion of section 128 checks for all staff and governors. This suggested a lack of understanding about the necessity of certain checks for different staff members. The school also neglected to provide appropriate timescales or measurable success criteria for these actions.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has taken some actions to address these weaknesses. For example, the headteacher had undertaken safer recruitment training

and a policy for safer recruitment had been drafted. However, this had not been formally introduced. Inspectors gathered evidence from staff files and records that showed that the school had not implemented safer recruitment procedures for all staff. For example, the school had not gained appropriate references or information about gaps in the employment history of some staff.

- Some of the required checks had been made to ensure that staff were suitable to work with pupils. For example, enhanced disclosure and barring service checks, and prohibition from teaching checks were recorded on the single central record. However, some important checks, such as section 128 checks, were not recorded on the single central record. The school was unclear about why this check should be made and for whom it should be made.
- The school had ensured that external checks were being made on the single central record. However, at the time of this inspection, the single central record remained non-compliant. The proprietor body, and the school, had not acted swiftly enough on recommendations to ensure that the single central record was compliant. Inspectors found that it was not well managed or well maintained.
- The actions that the school has taken lack the urgency and thoroughness required to ensure that it can meet all of these standards.
- Some of these standards remain unmet.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- When the school was previously inspected in September 2023, inspectors found that the school premises and accommodation were not maintained to a suitable standard to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils. For example, the electricity supply to some classrooms was provided through low-hanging cables that could be reached by pupils. Appropriate health and safety checks had not been carried out for all of the buildings on the premises, some of which had been added to the site after the original registration agreement. The proprietor body had failed to address several high-priority recommendations from an external fire-risk assessment.
- In its action plan, the school had proposed suitable actions to address the weaknesses identified at the standard inspection. These included the employment of external experts to check and to address the health and safety standards of the premises and accommodation. This included electrical and fire safety requirements. However, the school had neglected to identify clear timescales or success criteria for these proposed actions.
- At the time of this emergency inspection, it was evident that the school had taken swift actions to address these failings. The school had completed further electrical works. Leaders had employed an external health and safety company to complete a site check. This provided assurance of compliance with health and safety requirements. Moreover, the school had employed the services of a fire officer to complete a fire-risk assessment. It had acted upon these recommendations. Staff had received appropriate health and safety training.
- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- At the time of the standard inspection, inspectors identified that there was insufficient external lighting around the premises for staff, pupils and visitors to enter and leave safely in the hours of darkness.
- The school did not propose any actions to resolve this failing as part of its action plan.
- During the emergency inspection, it was evident that some additional external lighting had been installed around the school premises. However, one particular area, which had now become a fire-escape route as part of newly implemented fire arrangements, lacked sufficient lighting for staff, pupils and visitors to evacuate the premises during the hours of darkness. The school was aware of this and had ordered additional lighting for this purpose. However, this lighting had not yet arrived.
- This standard remains unmet.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(d)

- Although the Department for Education (DfE) did not request a check on this standard as part of the inspection commissioning form, inspectors noted during this inspection that the school had failed to maintain, on the school's website, a copy of the previous inspection report.
- This standard is not met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the time of the standard inspection, this standard was unmet. The proprietor did not have the knowledge or understanding to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, including in relation to keeping pupils safe. Inspectors found that the proprietor had not ensured that the leadership and management of the school had the capacity to meet the independent school standards consistently and securely.
- In its action plan, the school neglected to propose sufficiently robust and timely actions to address the significant issues that had led to the failings identified at the standard inspection.
- The action plan submitted by the school was deemed to be unacceptable. Ofsted evaluated that the standards were unlikely to be met as a result of the proposed actions.
- During this emergency inspection, it was evident that leaders had taken some actions to meet some of the standards. However, in the main, any improvements made have been due to the influence and support of external advice and guidance.
- The proprietor body lacks the knowledge and understanding to ensure that there is sufficient leadership and management capacity to meet the standards consistently.
- The school does not ensure that the well-being of pupils is actively promoted.
- Safeguarding remains ineffective.
- This standard is not met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Although the school has an accessibility plan in place, this plan is not specific to the school. It does not contain realistic actions.
- This statutory requirement is 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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	149094
DfE registration number	351/6020
Inspection number	10319827

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 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Craig Ormerod Associates Ltd
Chair	Craig Ormerod
Headteacher	Craig Ormerod
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000
Telephone number	07815601583
Website	www.craigormerodassociates-schoolprovision.com
Email address	craigormerod@craigormerodassociates.com
Date of previous standard inspection	12 to 14 September 2023

Information about this school

- The school's first standard inspection was 12 to 14 September 2023.
- The school's registered premises are at Outwood Road, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 1AG.
- The school uses one unregistered provider, which is located at the same site as the school and it is also owned by the proprietor body.
- All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan. The majority of pupils have social, emotional or mental health needs.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE, the registration authority for independent schools. This was because the DfE had been made aware that the school had re-opened, despite the Secretary of State requesting voluntary closure on 18 September 2023. The DfE had also received complaints about the school. The purpose of the inspection was to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.
- The previous standard inspection was 12 to 14 September 2023. At this inspection, the school was judged not to comply with the standards.
- The DfE required the school to prepare an action plan. This plan was statutory. Ofsted evaluated the plan on 29 September 2023. The DfE rejected this action plan.
- The focus of the inspection was to check leaders' compliance with the standards relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils; the checks made to ensure the suitability of staff; the suitability of the school premises; and the quality of leadership and management.
- This inspection was carried out without notice.
- To check compliance with the standards, inspectors met with the chair of the proprietor body, who is also the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- An inspector spoke with the chair of the proprietor body and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors conducted a tour of the school premises and scrutinised a range of documentation.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Philippa Darley	His 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 un-met 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.
- 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 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether-
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
 - 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d).

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 27(b) external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.

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.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Arrangements are made to fulfil duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 32(1)(d) following an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, a copy of the report of the inspection (if it has been sent to the proprietor) is published and maintained on the school's internet website, and provided to the parents of each registered pupil, by any date specified by the body who conducted the inspection.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.

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 such a standard that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 27(a) the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein.

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