

# South Devon Steiner School

Hood Manor, Dartington, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6AB

**Inspection date**

14 November 2019

**Overall outcome**

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

Residential provision outcome

**The school does not meet all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

#### *Paragraph 3, 3(a)–(d)*

- When the school was inspected in April 2019, staff were not planning lessons that took what pupils already knew and understood into account. The work teachers set was not closely matched to pupils' learning needs and teachers did not use their assessments to adapt their teaching. Consequently, pupils were not making good progress.
- Weaknesses in teachers' planning in the lower school remain. Therefore, pupils are not acquiring the knowledge they need. Leaders have not ensured that teachers have sufficient guidance and support in order to improve. Consequently, teachers' expectations in the lower school continue to be too low and the curriculum is not sufficiently challenging. Teachers do not use assessment to help them adapt learning to meet pupils' needs, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The quality of pupils' work is generally poor.
- However, the quality of education in the upper school is much stronger. Teachers have carefully considered what pupils need to know and plan lessons that build up pupils' knowledge over time.
- Recent changes, such as new leadership structures and the creation of professional development clusters, are beginning to bring about improvements in teaching. However, it is early days.
- The standard remains unmet.

## Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

### *Paragraph 7*

- This standard was not met at the previous inspection as the proprietor had not ensured that safeguarding and child protection policies were being adhered to. Inspectors raised concerns about the effectiveness of systems, the timeliness of the school's actions to involve other agencies, and the procedures that were followed when new members of staff were appointed.
- Although there have been significant improvements in the arrangements for the recruitment of staff, in a few areas these still do not meet the requirements set out in the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State and in the independent school standards (ISS).
- As at the previous inspection, the policy meets requirements, but it is not followed consistently. Consequently, gaps in applicants' employment history are not fully accounted for, references from current or former employers are not completed satisfactorily, and insufficient attention is paid to establishing applicants' understanding of safeguarding at interview.
- The standard remains unmet.

### *Paragraph 8*

- At the April 2019 inspection, leaders and managers could not confirm that all of the required checks had been completed for host families and there were no systems in place to prevent this practice from continuing. Furthermore, leaders and managers had not ensured that all adult members of host families receive good-quality safeguarding training that is refreshed regularly.
- Inspectors found there to be significant improvements in the boarding arrangements and many of the national minimum standards (NMS) that were previously not met have now been met. For example, the standards that refer to the work of leaders and the proprietor to ensure that host families receive the training they need are now in place. Leaders' monitoring of the boarding provision is much improved.
- Some failings remain. Although much improved, leaders have yet to ensure that staff recruitment procedures, the management of allegations and health and safety arrangements are suitably robust. There are two cases of missing Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for adults living with host families.
- The standard remains unmet.

### *Paragraph 11, 12, 16, 16(a)–(b)*

- Since the previous inspection, the Department for Education (DfE) has raised queries about the safety of the school site, particularly with regard to fire safety, site maintenance and the management of risks.
- The proprietor has put a health and safety policy in place; however, it is not implemented sufficiently well. As a result, minor hazards are not attended to. For example, the flooring in some classrooms is damaged and, in one case, this presents a trip hazard on a fire escape route. Window restrictors are missing from upper floor windows. Gutters and downpipes are often incomplete or blocked and so areas of the

grounds are waterlogged. Leaders have not ensured that there is a systematic approach in place to ensure that the premises are kept in good order.

- The emergency lighting system has been compromised in one building. So far, this academic year, there has not been a fire evacuation drill. Although staff and pupils are clear about what to do in the event of a fire, this should be tested regularly.
- The risk assessment policy meets requirements, but it is not being implemented consistently. Risk assessments are in place. Those reviewed identify particular hazards but not the controls that are in place to minimise the likelihood of harm. Classroom health and safety checklists have been completed in recent months, but the hazards identified have not been attended to or control measures put in place.
- The standards are now not met.

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

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(iii), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(6)*

- When inspectors checked the school's recruitment procedures in April, many of the required checks were missing.
- Leaders and managers have acted to ensure that all the required checks are in place. These are now complete for almost all members of staff. All members of school staff now have DBS checks and all bar two adults, who are involved in the boarding provision, have had the necessary checks. Leaders and managers have confirmed the identity of each member of staff and assured themselves that they have the right to work in the United Kingdom.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that there is a full suite of checks for members of staff and trustees who have lived outside the United Kingdom. For several, checks have been made for one country they have lived in but not the others.
- The school continues not to make use of agency staff.
- The standards in this part are not met.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraph 25*

- Following the queries raised by the DfE about the safety of the school site, a review of the premises was undertaken.
- In some buildings, the premises have not been maintained to a good standard. The flooring in several classrooms is damaged. This, along with steep drops from fire escapes, missing window restrictors, uneven steps and blocked or missing guttering mean that pupils' health, safety and welfare cannot be assured.
- This standard is now not met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)–(c)*

- At the previous inspection, leaders and trustees had failed in their duty to ensure that the ISS and NMS were met in full. Leaders and teachers were not being held to account for their work and the arrangements to monitor and evaluate the quality of education pupils receive were weak. There were significant regulatory failings in the boarding provision.
- Trustees and leaders have taken on board the findings of the previous inspection wholeheartedly. They have recruited additional trustees who bring particular skills and expertise that are strengthening the proprietorial board. In many areas of the school's work, improvements can be seen. Strategic staffing appointments have been made and a reorganisation of roles and responsibilities is bringing about improvements.
- Although trustees and leaders show a much better appreciation of the ISS and NMS, they have not yet ensured that the standards that were not met at the previous inspection have been achieved. Additional standards have not been met due to a lack of attention to health and safety risks, many of which had not been identified by leaders.
- The standard remains unmet.

### Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- At the inspection in April 2019, the proprietor had not ensured that staff in the kindergarten were suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. The systems in place to check this were not suitable (EYFS standard 3.9).
- Leaders and managers have done much to improve the systems in place. However, the implementation of these systems lacks rigour. Managers do not show a strong understanding of the procedures and some of the required checks are missing.
- This requirement remains unmet.

### Residential provision

#### The overall experience and progress of children

#### *Taking into account how well children are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers*

- Steady and effective steps have been taken to improve the boarding provision. A number of the weaknesses seen at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. As a result, six of the 11 previously unmet NMS are now met.
- Boarding has a greater prominence in the school. Trustees now actively monitor the boarding provision and stronger systems are in place to understand the boarders' experiences and the performance of the boarding provision.
- However, it remains early days in the school's improvement journey and further work is required to ensure that all safeguarding policies are securely implemented in order to keep boarders safe.

The national minimum standards that were assessed during this inspection

*Standards 6.1, 6.2, 6.3*

- Following queries raised by the DfE about the safety of the school site, a review of the premises was undertaken.
- Health and safety and risk assessment policies are in place, but they are not implemented consistently. Some aspects of the school's premises require attention to ensure that they are always maintained to a standard that ensures the health, safety and welfare of boarding pupils.
- National minimum standards 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 are not met.

*Standard 11.1*

- Overall, the management of child protection concerns has improved notably. However, further work is required to ensure that all concerns are dealt with in accordance with safeguarding processes. The school now uses a centralised electronic recording system to document and monitor safeguarding matters. Child protection records show the concerns identified, the actions taken in response and the outcomes comprehensively. Allegations or concerns about families, staff and host families are dealt with swiftly and effectively, including referring to the local authority as required. In contrast, safeguarding processes were not followed effectively in respect of one case of peer-on-peer abuse.
- This standard remains unmet.

*Standard 13.1*

- Trustees now take responsibility for monitoring the boarding and welfare provision regularly. Boarding matters are reported to the trustees and discussed at their monthly meetings. More rigour is now applied to challenging boarding practices, understanding boarders' experiences and ensuring the necessary improvements are completed.
- This standard is met.

*Standard 13.2*

- The visiting student coordinator is now given increased time to complete the role thoroughly. As a result, she has worked hard to implement several previously unmet national minimum standards. A properly planned system for providing out-of-hours, on-call support is now in place and working effectively.
- This standard is met.

*Standard 13.4*

- Leaders' and trustees' understanding of the boarding provision's performance has improved. Trustees work in partnership with managers to review the national minimum standards and practices in the school. While this has notably improved, further work is required as weaknesses are still evident in safer recruitment practices and safeguarding.
- This standard is not met.

*Standard 13.5*

- Leaders, managers and trustees have a better understanding of boarders' safety because they monitor the provision more regularly now and hold each other to account. However,

more work is required due to ongoing weakness in implementing the safer recruitment and child protection policies effectively in all cases.

- This standard remains unmet.

#### *Standard 14.1*

- The safer recruitment policy has been updated and now follows the latest statutory guidance. However, safer recruitment processes have still not been applied rigorously for new staff and host families. Staff and host families have continued to start work with boarders without all of the required checks being in place. Weaknesses remain in relation to obtaining overseas checks, rigorously exploring gaps in employment and ensuring the quality and validity of references.

- This standard is not met.

#### *Standard 15.1*

- Leaders have put systems in place to provide purposeful opportunities for the visiting student coordinator to talk about her work with boarders and to reflect on her role. One of the trustees and the school education manager now meet regularly with the visiting student coordinator to strengthen the leadership of the boarding provision. In addition, consultation has taken place with other similar settings to share learning and to develop practice.

- This standard is met.

#### *Standard 17.1*

- Leaders and managers have ensured that there are opportunities in place for boarders and host families to provide feedback on their boarding and hosting experiences. Such feedback is actively sought and acted on. This provides leaders and managers with a more informed view of the quality of boarding provision.

- This standard is now met.

#### *Standard 20.5*

- Generic safeguarding checks on host family members have improved. For example, references to consider host families' skills and abilities are obtained and spot checks are undertaken to assess safeguarding matters. However, on one occasion, leaders placed a child to board with a family before the DBS check was returned. They risk assessed this process and acted to mitigate the risks, but this action was insufficient to reduce the risks.

- This standard remains unmet.

#### *Standard 20.6*

- Leaders and managers now ensure that all adult members of host families regularly receive relevant safeguarding training and that their knowledge in this area is tested. This prepares host families for their role. Consequently, they are better equipped to safeguard boarders.

- This standard is met.

*Standard 20.9*

- The visiting student coordinator and safeguarding trustee now speak with each boarding pupil at least once each term about their boarding experiences. Detailed records are kept. These show the actions taken in response to boarders' feedback comprehensively.
- This standard is met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools 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.

### **The school now meets the following independent school standards**

- 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(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person–
    - 18(2)(c)(i) the person's identity;
    - 18(2)(c)(iii) the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.
- 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made.

### **The school now meets the following national minimum standards for boarding schools**

- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary. (NMS 13.1)
- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. (NMS 13.2)
- Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding. (NMS 15.1)
- Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. (NMS 17.1)
- The school ensures that all adults providing lodgings for pupils on its behalf have undergone safeguarding training that is updated regularly as advised by the Local

Safeguarding Children Board, and that they understand the school's policy in relation to pupils going missing and their role in implementing that policy. (NMS 20.6)

- At least once per school term a member of staff discusses their lodgings separately with each pupil accommodated by or on behalf of the school in lodgings, recording the pupil's assessment in writing and taking action on any concerns or complaints. (NMS 20.9)

## School details

Unique reference number	113603
Social care unique reference number	2531482
DfE registration number	878/6029
Inspection number	10120991

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.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Steiner Waldorf
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	16
Number of part-time pupils	39
Number of boarders on roll	16
Proprietor	Rudolph Steiner School (South Devon) Limited
Chair	Juliet Crittenden
Headteacher	Jeff van Zyl
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,160 to £8,400
Annual fees (boarders)	£7,153 to £9,562
Telephone number	01803 897377
Website	<a href="http://www.southdevonsteinerschool.org">www.southdevonsteinerschool.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@steiner-south-devon.org">enquiries@steiner-south-devon.org</a>

Date of previous standard inspection

2–4 April 2019

## Information about this school

- South Devon Steiner School was founded by a group of parents in 1980.
- The school aims to provide a Steiner Waldorf education, promoting the fundamental principle of protecting the right to childhood and creative abilities for life.
- The upper school, classes 9 to 11, offers the New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (NZCSE).
- The school is based in a former manor house and other buildings on the same site approximately three miles north west of Totnes, Devon.
- The DfE has agreed several modifications to the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school is exempt from completing the EYFS profile at the end of the academic year in which the child reaches the age of five.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school was last inspected by Ofsted in April 2019 and was judged inadequate.
- The proprietor had indicated to the registration authority that they intended to cease to offer boarding provision from 31 December 2019. However, this decision is being reviewed.

## 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.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in April 2019.
- At the registration authority's request, the proprietor produced an action plan. This was evaluated by Ofsted in July 2019. The registration authority rejected the school's action plan.
- This inspection was carried out without notice.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the school education manager, school business manager, designated safeguarding lead and the designated teacher for children looked after. Inspectors visited lessons and spoke with coordinators, teachers and pupils. Inspectors met with three trustees, including the chair. Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including policies, safety checks, schemes of learning, and other records maintained by school staff. Inspectors toured the site to evaluate how well leaders and managers are ensuring that the health and safety standards are maintained.

## Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Carol Hannaford

Ofsted Inspector

Paula Lahey

Social Care Regulatory 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 1. Quality of education provided**

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
  - 3(a) 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;
  - 3(b) 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;
  - 3(c) involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
  - 3(d) 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.

#### **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.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
  - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if–

- 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
- 18(2)(f) in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of boarders, in addition to the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (e), the proprietor checks that Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, is complied with.
- 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)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e).

## **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.

### **The school does not meet the following requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage**

Safeguarding and welfare requirements: paragraphs 3.9

*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**

- 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 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual (“MB”), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if–
  - 20(6)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the Chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB–
    - 20(6)(b)(iii) where, by reason of MB’s living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish MB’s suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Chair of the school considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation each member (“MB”) of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

### **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.

## **The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools**

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

- The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the secretary of staff. (NMS 11.1)
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. (NMS 13.4)
- The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the well-being of pupils. (NMS 13.5)
- Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to the relevant guidance issued by the secretary of state. (NMS 14.1)
- The school can demonstrate that members of the host family aged over 16 are subject to a DBS check, with a satisfactory outcome known before any pupil is placed. (NMS 20.6)

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

- The school ensures compliance with relevant health and safety laws by drawing up and implementing effectively a written health and safety policy. (NMS 6.1)
- The school premises, 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. (NMS 6.2)
- The school ensures that 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 appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (NMS 6.3)

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