

Lancaster Steiner School

Lune Road, Lancaster LA1 5QU

Inspection dates

3 July 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

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

- This standard was identified as unmet at the school's inspection in November 2018. It was identified as unmet because curriculum plans and schemes of work in the lower school had not been adapted effectively, to take account of specific pupils' needs. There was not sufficient account taken of the full range of pupils' prior attainment and capabilities. Although not exclusively, the curriculums for reading, writing and mathematics were identified as not being planned effectively enough to ensure that pupils are working at a level appropriate to their abilities and needs. The most able pupils were identified as a group who were not being challenged enough by the curriculum. The November 2018 report stated that, in some classes, the curriculum timetable on particular days was limited, with pupils experiencing similar lessons consecutively. The inspector concluded that the weaknesses in curriculum organisation were having a negative impact on pupils' progress and achievement.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in April 2019, it was considered that actions to meet this standard were vague and ambiguous.
- At the time of this inspection, it was apparent that senior staff had worked with genuine endeavour to develop schemes of work. To this end, new schemes of work, based on an Australian Steiner curriculum, have been developed to cover the school's main lesson of the day. Schemes of work now outline the content of the curriculum more precisely and they break the curriculum down into Steiner aspects of learning, such as learning experiences, practical elaboration and expressing understanding through skills.
- Nevertheless, schemes of work still contain no reference to the aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Closer scrutiny also reveals that learning expectations within the schemes for each age group are well below what would be typically expected. Schemes make no reference to how the curriculum will be adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils, either those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those pupils who are the most able.
- A new curriculum policy has not been written to reflect the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Leaders have decided to wait until the schemes of work have been further

improved before they do this.

Paragraph 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(g)

- This standard was identified as unmet at the inspection in November 2018. This was because pupils were not making good enough progress, particularly, but not exclusively, in reading, writing and mathematics. This included the most able pupils and those with SEND. Although the quality of the teaching and learning in music and French was found to be good, elsewhere, and particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, it was considered to be inconsistent and inadequate. The inspection report states that this was because teachers' teaching methods and their subject knowledge and understanding were weak and insecure. Mathematics was given as an example where the teaching was confusing and inaccurate because explanations were inappropriate and not at the right level for pupils to understand. As a result, learning was inconsistent, both within subjects and across classes. Progress and achievement were variable. Teachers did not plan effectively to ensure that they were meeting pupils' academic needs or to ensure that pupils were working at the appropriate level. Teaching was not challenging the most able sufficiently. The 2018 report acknowledged that senior staff recognised that procedures for assessment, tracking and recording pupils' progress were inadequate. The lesson planning format, which was updated just prior to the 2018 inspection, included features to identify a range of pupils' needs more accurately. However, staff were not using this information effectively, to adapt their activities or learning objectives to meet pupils' needs. As tasks were not thought through carefully enough, pupils' learning was limited.
- The inspector evaluating the school's action plan in April 2019 found the actions to be confusing and disjointed.
- At the time of this inspection, it is evident that there have been improvements made to teaching and learning. There is a greater consistency of practice across the school. The newly appointed education coordinator is beginning to have a positive impact on developing teaching methods and improving teachers' subject knowledge, while keeping true to the Steiner philosophy. Some appropriate work has been done to develop pupils' extended writing across the school. Pupils' workbooks confirm that they are being encouraged to write independently much earlier in their education than previously. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the progress pupils are making in this area. The teacher coordinator, who is also the Class 5 teacher, is very aware of the age-appropriate learning expectations for her Year 6 pupils. She is offering them a mathematics and English curriculum which will go towards helping them prepare appropriately for the next stage in their education. They will all be attending a mainstream secondary school.
- Overall, teachers' subject knowledge remains weak, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The teaching of phonics is poor. For example, pupils in Year 2 and 3 (Class 1 and 2) were observed going over silent letter sounds, despite the majority of the class already being able to read. Teachers' subject knowledge of what should be typically expected of pupils of different ages in mathematics, grammar and punctuation is also limited. For example, Year 6 pupils are set basic grammar targets that reflect teachers' low expectations. For example, pupils are asked to focus on using commas correctly and ensure that sentences start with capital letters.
- There are improvements in the way that teachers plan pupils' learning. They are more

consistently catering for the needs of pupils with SEND. This is because the education coordinator is also a trained coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND are now having their needs identified effectively and offered appropriate support. This is reflected in teachers' daily planning, which is having a more positive impact on the progress of these pupils. However, the most able pupils are not having their needs met. Teachers do not focus on meeting the needs of these pupils and, as a result, they do not make progress that is in line with their ability. The most able pupils and those of middle ability are insufficiently challenged to learn at greater depth. This is because the curriculum they are offered is pitched too low for their capabilities.

- Baseline assessments have been implemented across the school, but it is too early to see whether the information gleaned from these is having an impact on how teachers plan learning to meet all pupils' needs. Senior staff have been proactive in organising moderation activities to look at pupils' progress across year groups within school and across other Steiner schools.

Paragraph 4

- At the time of the November 2018 inspection, it was identified that the school was not evaluating pupils' performance well. Further to this, there was no system in place for tracking the progress or achievement of an individual or group of pupils over time.
- The school's action plan was not sufficiently precise or clear about the actions to be taken to address this unmet standard.
- This inspection revealed that senior staff are working hard to develop a 'Steiner sympathetic' system in relation to assessment so that staff are able to establish pupils' prior learning and track their progress over time in a way that aligns with Steiner philosophy. Senior staff have also begun to explore ways to track the number of pupils developing, meeting or exceeding the expectations that would be considered typical for their age in mathematics. Information is gathered in spelling, reading and mathematics but, as yet, only a baseline assessment has been collected. Consequently, staff are currently unable to evaluate how well pupils are learning and the progress they are making.
- Teachers meet with parents and carers to discuss their child's progress twice a year. At the end of the academic year, a report is sent to parents. This is a lengthy document. The content outlines in detail the areas of the curriculum which have been covered during the year. There is very little written about a pupil's achievements or progress in any subject. What is written is general and vague. It is not sufficiently precise to give parents and carers an accurate picture of their children's progress.
- Despite improvements, standards in this part remain unmet.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7(a), 7(b)

- The standard was identified as unmet at the time of the November 2018 inspection because the provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety were judged as inadequate. The school's safeguarding policy was not compliant and did not meet the current government requirements. Other safeguarding-related school policies were not reviewed in line with the latest statutory guidance. The arrangements for keeping pupils

safe online were underdeveloped. The school had not ensured that safeguarding policies provided effective and accurate guidance for staff and parents. Although trained, staff did not have a good enough understanding of safeguarding to ensure that there was an effective safeguarding culture in school. Finally, the inspection found that the oversight of governors and trustees, with regard to safeguarding, welfare and health and safety, was ineffective.

- There were a wide range of appropriate actions identified by senior staff in the school's action plan to ensure that this unmet standard was addressed. There was an appropriate sense of urgency, with the vast majority of actions scheduled to be completed within a few weeks of the November 2018 inspection.
- The safeguarding policy is now fully compliant. The school has used a local authority template to ensure that all of the required areas are covered, and that the policy meets current government requirements. This policy is on the school's website.
- Staff are provided with accurate guidance and are fully aware of safeguarding procedures and protocols. They know that they make an important contribution to the culture of safeguarding in the school. Senior staff ensure that all staff, volunteers and trustees are trained to an appropriate level with regards to safeguarding. There is a rolling programme of updates for staff on relevant topics, such as peer-on-peer abuse and the 'Prevent' duty.
- Leaders have developed an appropriate online safety policy. Senior staff have been proactive and forward-thinking in implementing a comprehensive online safety curriculum for all pupils, including those children who attend kindergarten. Parents were recently invited to an information meeting as part of a safer internet day, where they found out about online safety in the home.

Paragraph 9(c), 15, 16(b)

- These standards were identified as unmet at the time of the November 2018 inspection. They were unmet because there was no central record kept of sanctions imposed on pupils for serious misdemeanours. Senior staff were unclear how to register those pupils who are educated at home for part of the week. Senior staff did not routinely monitor attendance for patterns of absence. The admissions register did not systematically record the destinations of leavers, principally those pupils who are flexi-schooled or move abroad. Finally, although risk assessments were well devised and appropriate, they were not routinely checked by senior staff or evaluated after trips out of school.
- This inspection confirms that the actions identified in the school's action plan have been completed. Senior staff have created a separate confidential file to record behaviour incidents that the school considers to be unacceptable. This file is stored centrally in a locked cabinet. Additionally, senior staff now monitor behaviour through the trustees' monthly reports.
- Following the November 2018 inspection, and as described in the school's subsequent action plan, there has been a full review of attendance and admissions records. The attendance registers correctly record pupils who are home-schooled for part of the week. The admissions register is compliant with regulations and includes records of the destinations of leavers who have been home-schooled, flexi-schooled or who have moved abroad. Any pupil leaving the school is routinely reported to the local authority. Senior staff have devised a system to monitor pupils' attendance through the trustees'

reports.

- Despite the school's action plan giving the impression of tardiness and a lack of clarity about the actions to meet risk assessment requirements, the inspector found that senior staff had been immediate and diligent in their response. There is now a prompt review of risk assessments following trips or other learning experiences. There is a section on each risk assessment to identify any additional risks and ways to reduce danger. Scrutiny of risk assessments have been built into a regular monitoring cycle by senior staff and the trustees.
- Leaders have been quick to respond to the unmet standards identified at the previous inspection and, as a result, the standards in this part are now met.

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

Paragraph 18(2)(b), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b)

- These standards were identified as unmet at the time of the November 2018 inspection because the school was found to not have appropriate procedures for recruiting and vetting staff and trustees. Specifically, it failed to make the checks to ensure that teaching staff were not prohibited from teaching in schools or, where appropriate, from holding a leadership and management position. Inspectors also found that the appropriate checks were not completed before a person's appointment to the school. For example, leaders had not ensured that appropriate checks had been undertaken on prospective staff who have lived or worked abroad before their appointment. They had also not ensured that they had appropriate references for all newly appointed staff. As a result, the single central record (SCR) for all staff at the school lacked the key safeguarding checks required.
- Most of the planned actions to meet these standards were forecast to be completed by the time of the action plan evaluation in April 2018. However, the review of leaders' action plan indicated that there remained a lack of clarity around how checks on staff who have lived and worked abroad were to be completed and recorded on the SCR. Additionally, it was unclear if the full range of required checks are required before a new member of staff is appointed.
- The SCR was scrutinised during this inspection. The revised SCR includes columns for all the safeguarding requirements. All entries are date-verified and initialled to identify who has monitored the entry. There are also columns completed for identity, qualification and medical checks of new staff. Checks, such as those required for staff who have lived and/or worked outside the United Kingdom, are also routinely made and recorded.
- Scrutiny of a random set of personnel files confirms that the school has been diligent in their checks on staff. Records are well maintained.
- All aspects of the SCR are complete, dated and compliant. Leaders have been thorough and conscientious in their response. The school now meets the standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 24(1)(b)

- The standard was identified as unmet during the school's inspection in November 2018.

The inspector considered that the provision for pupils who might be ill or injured was not appropriate. Additionally, this room was soon to be made into a classroom. The school's planned move of the medical facility to the disabled toilet was considered inappropriate.

- When evaluating the action plan in April 2019, there was a lack of clarity about the actions which had been taken to identify an appropriate designated medical room or what now made the community room suitable when, at the time of the inspection, it was not.
- Following the inspection in 2018, the school's designated medical room was not turned into a classroom. It remains a community room for the foreseeable future. The issue at the 2018 inspection was the shared use of the sink between the community and medical room.
- The school continues to use the community room as their medical facility. It is a light, airy and pleasant space. A laminated sign has been placed above the sink to indicate sole use for medical purposes. The community room users must use the sink in the kitchen area. This practice was observed by the inspector on the day of the inspection and appears usual custom. There is a pop-up bed available in the room for pupils who are unwell as well as a blanket and a cushion to use as a pillow. Toilets are situated nearby.
- The standards in this part are met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- At the time of the last inspection in November 2018, this standard was not met. The safeguarding policy did not take full account of the current government requirements. Although there was a safeguarding policy published on the website, it was not compliant with requirements.
- The actions identified by the school to rewrite the safeguarding policy, so that it was fully compliant, were appropriate. Additionally, leaders intended to update the website with a dedicated safeguarding page. At the time of the action plan evaluation in April 2019, scrutiny of the school's website confirmed that there was a compliant safeguarding policy in place, and that a dedicated safeguarding page had been established.
- The standard in this part is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- This standard was identified as unmet during the November 2018 inspection because senior staff, governors and trustees had not ensured that all the independent school standards were consistently met. There was either no, or ineffective, oversight of the school's processes and procedures, including those related to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The monitoring of the school's effectiveness was inadequate. Roles and responsibilities among leaders, governors and trustees were unclear.
- There were a range of appropriate actions identified within the school's action plan to

establish appropriate oversight from leaders, governors and trustees. For example, the action plan indicated that the independent school standards would become a standing item on the agenda of senior governance team meetings. The inspection confirms that this has been actioned. There is a suitable monitoring cycle in place, which incorporates all levels of leadership and management.

- School leaders were distraught at the outcome of the inspection in November 2018, particularly the unmet standards regarding safeguarding and welfare. School staff, governors and trustees have responded to the unmet standards with genuine urgency and diligence. The school rightly prides itself on its nurturing practices and the good-quality care that it provides for pupils. This is reflected in leaders' swift and effective response to the unmet standards relating to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of pupils.
- School staff and trustees have also set about improving the quality of education in earnest, but many of their improvements are at an early stage of implementation or are yet to come to fruition. Leaders are committed to meeting the standards that relate to the quality of education. However, they are open about the fact that they still need to think through how they can marry the Steiner philosophy with some of the remaining unmet independent school standard requirements.
- Not all standards in this part are met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- At the November 2018 standard inspection, the school did not meet the requirements of the Equality Act (2010). The school was also required to update and implement a disability access plan.
- The action plan submitted for evaluation in April 2019 makes no reference to meeting this standard. Neither an equality policy nor a disability access plan was evident on the school's website.
- There is now an equality policy, which makes specific reference to paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. There is also a disability access policy, which identifies areas for improvement. This includes the adaptation of teaching for pupils with SEND, increased disabled access around the school and the provision of assistive technologies to support pupils where needed. The majority of these improvements have been actioned, including offering a wide range of personalised support to pupils with SEND and disabled ramps being installed so there is easy access to the school building.
- Inspection evidence confirms that leaders have ensured that all the standards in this part are now met.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- The statutory requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage were unmet at the time of the November 2018 inspection because the school's safeguarding policy was not fully compliant. It did not reflect current government requirements. Additionally, not all staff had current paediatric first-aid training. The certificates for those who had training were not displayed or readily available to parents.
- Evaluation of the school action plan in April 2019 identified the intention to arrange first-

aid training rather than its completion. Scrutiny of the school's website at the time of the action plan evaluation confirms there was a compliant safeguarding policy in place.

- The safeguarding policy continues to be compliant and is on the school's website. It contains within it a specific section on early years safeguarding.
- There are four members of staff who work in the early years, which is known by the school as Kindergarten. All four have current paediatric first-aid certification. Certificates are displayed at the entrance to the classroom in full view of parents.
- This school meets the requirements of this standard.

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 with which the school was judged to not comply at the previous inspection. Not all the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	132095
DfE registration number	888/6040
Inspection number	10108327

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	Independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Number of part-time pupils	13
Proprietor	Lancaster Steiner School
Chair	Gisela Renolds
Headteacher	Louise Duirwyn
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,575 to £5,850
Telephone number	01524 381 876
Website	www.lancastersteinerschool.org
Email address	enquiries@lancastersteinerschool.org
Date of previous standard inspection	13 November 2018

Information about this school

- Lancaster Steiner School is an independent school for boys and girls aged three to 11 years. It was established in 2003. It has 20 children attending full-time and 13 attending part-time. Of those who attend part-time, nine children are flexi-schooled, attending school part-time and being home schooled for the rest of the week. This arrangement is covered by home-school agreements.
- A number of pupils are identified as having SEND but none have an education, health and care plan.
- A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.

- The school follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. Steiner's philosophy and his views on child development and psychology underpin the school's educational approach. The school 'aims to develop free, morally responsible and integrated individuals, equipped with a high degree of social competence, enabling them to embrace their community, sustain their livelihoods and positively shape the world'.
- The Kindergarten has received exemptions from aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Besides the morning Kindergarten sessions, afternoon Kindergarten care sessions are provided.
- As part of its wrap-around provision, the school provides extended care for all children until 4.30pm.
- In common with other Steiner Waldorf schools, there is no headteacher. Management rests with the trustees, the education coordinator, the teacher coordinator and the office manager.

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.
- The previous inspection was carried out in November 2018 by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with section 109(3) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. At that time the school was judged to not comply with the independent school standards.
- The school was asked to prepare an action plan. The plan was evaluated by Ofsted in April 2019. This plan was not approved by the DfE.
- The inspector met with the education coordinator, who is also the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND. She also met with the teacher coordinator and staff responsible for maintaining safeguarding records and attendance. She spoke informally with school staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with a group of four trustees, also known as the school governance team.
- The inspector was shown round the school premises, both inside and outside. She observed lessons and observed lunchtime.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents regarding safety and safeguarding, including risk assessments, school policies and the single central record. She also examined a range of other documents, including schemes of work, behaviour and attendance records and examples of pupils' work.
- The inspector examined the school's safeguarding policy.
- The inspection was conducted without notice to the school and was the first progress monitoring inspection.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

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 un-met at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
- 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 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(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;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

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.

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

Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 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(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
- 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(5).
- 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 4 Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 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)(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(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)(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)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e), including the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained; and
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

Part 5 Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility;

Part 6 Provision of information

- 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request;

Part 8 Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

Are arrangements made to meet the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Safeguarding and welfare requirements.

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