

# Inspection of Argyll House

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Inspection dates: 10–12 March 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Argyll House School have had poor prior experiences of education and continue to do so. They demonstrate challenging behaviour which staff struggle to manage. Pupils have little confidence in the adults to keep them safe.

Learning is regularly disrupted by poor behaviour. Some pupils do not feel safe in school because of other pupils' behaviour. They feel at risk of being bullied by others. They do not feel that staff deal with this well.

Adults have low expectations of pupils. Pupils have only completed a small amount of work since being at the school. The work produced reflects the low expectations held by staff. Some pupils hardly ever attend the school so receive little education.

Pupils enjoy some activities in school, such as cooking and going to the beach. When engaged, pupils follow instructions, remember what they have learned and show pride in what they achieve. This is not the case for most learning activities. The curriculum does not meet pupils' individual needs so pupils do not want to participate.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The curriculum for each pupil is unplanned and ad hoc. Pupils experience a disjointed set of activities which do not promote learning. Learning activities do not meet pupils' needs and aptitudes. Staff do not take account of what pupils already know or what they need to know next. Even where pupils write well and use varied vocabulary, they are not provided with opportunities to make better progress. The poorly designed curriculum does not meet the independent school standards.

Pupils who need support to develop basic knowledge and skills do not receive the help they need, such as in mathematics. The content of other subjects is weak. Pupils are taught random information, such as 10 facts about France. Pupils are not given opportunities to connect learning together so they can build knowledge and understanding over time. Teachers make some effort to take account of pupils' interests. This is not done often or well enough to help pupils make progress in learning the curriculum.

The premises are unsuitable for pupils. They are unclean, unkempt and disorganised. The 'safe space' provided for pupils smells badly and is unsuitable for pupils to use. Resources provided for pupils are of poor quality. There are very few books for pupils to read. The organisation of teaching spaces does not match the premises plan provided at the pre-registration check. There is insufficient teaching space for the eight pupils that the school is registered to accept.

Pupils demonstrate poor behaviour and attitudes to learning. Some pupils hardly ever attend school. There is no evidence that pupils' attitudes or behaviour are

improving over time. In some instances, pupils' work shows that they are less interested in learning now than when they started at the school.

Police are being called routinely to the premises relating to pupils' behaviour outside of school hours. Staff do not have strategies to support pupils' behavioural needs. Pupils are not being helped to self-regulate or manage their feelings and behaviours.

Staff do not think enough about how they can widen pupils' experiences or promote pupils' emotional and social well-being. Staff take pupils out to the leisure centre and to the beach. They talk to pupils about how to behave in public. On the occasions when pupils are given tasks which they enjoy, and which meet their needs, then pupils are well behaved and cooperative. However, there is no evidence of a planned approach to this.

Staff are not ambitious enough for pupils. They do not encourage pupils to have high aspirations. They do not talk to pupils enough about future careers and what qualifications they will need for this. Recently, staff have arranged opportunities for some pupils, such as a college taster day and a work experience day.

Leaders have not met a large number of the independent school standards, especially those relating to the quality of the curriculum provided to pupils. Leaders have not ensured that the attendance and admissions registers are accurate to reflect the pupils registered to attend the school.

Governors, who are all members of the proprietorial body, have not checked that information they receive is accurate. They have been unaware of the school's weaknesses so have not held leaders to account. After the previous headteacher left, governors did not ensure that effective leadership was provided while recruiting a new headteacher.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders provide suitable training for permanent staff. However, they have not ensured that supply staff have the training they need for this particular setting. Risk assessments for individual pupils are completed, but too little account is taken of these when planning activities and staffing. This puts pupils and adults at risk.

Although undertaken appropriately, physical restraint is used frequently, because staff cannot manage pupils' behaviour by any other means. There are frequent assaults on staff. There is no evidence that the need for physical restraint is reducing over time. Some pupils do not feel safe in school because of the behaviour of others and lack of confidence in adults to help.

Fire evacuation procedures are inadequate, which places pupils at risk. A practice evacuation was only carried out for the first time following the announcement of the

inspection. Pupils do not understand the importance of evacuation and so refuse to leave the building.

Checks on staff are carried out and recorded in accordance with requirements. A small number of administrative errors were addressed on the first day of the inspection.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Pupils are not safe in school. This is because of weaknesses in the use of risk assessments, in safeguarding training, in fire evacuation procedures and in the management of pupils' behaviour. Leaders need to urgently address all the weaknesses in the training of staff and management of this wide range of areas. Leaders must ensure that pupils are safe and feel safe in school.
- The curriculum is not planned or implemented effectively. The school's 'therapeutic approach' to the curriculum is not evident in practice. Staff have low expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils' learning is poor. Leaders should ensure that each pupil's curriculum meets their individual needs and engages pupils in learning so that pupils attend school regularly. Leaders should provide training for staff so that they know what pupils need to learn and in what order. Leaders need to raise adults' expectations of what pupils should and can achieve.
- The approach to pupils' personal development is sporadic. Pupils are not being well prepared to be adults in society or for their next steps in education, training or employment. Leaders need to ensure that there is a well thought through personalised approach to pupils' personal development which widens pupils' experiences, raises their aspirations and helps their emotional and social development.
- The proprietorial body has not ensured that there is adequate governance of the school. Many of the independent school standards are unmet. Pupils do not receive an appropriate education at the school and are not kept safe. Governors have accepted leaders' assertions about the school without seeking evidence. Governors need to urgently implement a rapid plan for improvement, with clear accountabilities and timeframes, and introduce systems to hold leaders to account for the quality of education provided. They need to ensure that the school consistently meets all the independent school standards.
- The premises on which pupils are taught and the resources that they are provided with are of a woeful quality. The proprietorial body needs to ensure that the premises are suitable and reflect a high level of care for pupils. Governors need to ensure that high-quality resources are provided to enable staff to deliver a suitable curriculum for each pupil.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146626
<b>DfE registration number</b>	926/6021
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10100308
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	5
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Ryes College Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Kate Yarbo
<b>Headteacher</b>	None at the time of the inspection
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£37,500.50
<b>Telephone number</b>	01263 514944
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theryescollege.org.uk">www.theryescollege.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Office@theryescollege.org.uk">Office@theryescollege.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school caters for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including autism spectrum disorder, cognitive and learning needs and behavioural, emotional and social development needs.
- At the time of the inspection, there was no substantive headteacher in post.
- The head of education assisted us with our inspection and was the point of contact for any inspection-related queries. The proprietorial body confirmed at the time of the inspection that the head of education was responsible for overseeing education and taking de-facto headteacher responsibilities since the headteacher had left. On the second day of the inspection, the head of education indicated that he would no longer continue in his role with immediate effect. The head of education was not in the school on the third day of the inspection.
- The proprietor, The Ryes College, runs two schools. Governors are also members of the proprietorial body.
- Argyll House opened in September 2019 following its pre-registration inspection in January 2019.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first standard inspection since the school opened.
- No lessons were taking place during the inspection as pupils were either off-site or refused to attend school. We looked at all pupils' written work for each pupil and had some conversations with pupils when possible. We talked with staff about the curriculum provided. We looked at planning provided. We looked at published schemes of work.
- We looked at school documentation relating to the curriculum and assessment, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- We spoke with the head of education for The Ryes College. We met with two members of the proprietorial body who are also governors at the school. We spoke with representatives from two placing local authorities.
- We toured the school to check the independent school standards relating to premises.

- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We took account of one staff response to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Maria Curry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mary Rayner

Ofsted Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
  - 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 sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
  - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
  - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
  - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which–
    - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school’s aim and ethos; and
    - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act[9];
  - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
    - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
    - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
    - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
  - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
  - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 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;
- 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
- 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;
- 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly.

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

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
  - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which–
    - 5(b)(i) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
    - 5(b)(ii) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
    - 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;
    - 5(b)(iv) enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
    - 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
    - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act; and
    - 5(b)(vii) encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

### **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(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 anti-bullying strategy.
- 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[12].
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 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].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

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

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

### **Part 6. Provision of information**

- 32(3)(c) particulars of the policy referred to in paragraph 2.

## **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.

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