

The Treehouse School

37 Wallingford Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire OX10 9LG

Inspection date

30 March 2021

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b)

- This aspect of the standards was identified as unmet at the progress monitoring inspection of January 2019. Although there had been some improvements in safeguarding arrangements, the curriculum did not support pupils well enough to know how to keep themselves safe.
- Since the previous monitoring visit, a member of staff has been trained to be the lead designated safeguarding lead (DSL). She has been supported well in developing her safeguarding understanding by both the local authority and the school's safeguarding adviser. As a result, she is knowledgeable about the proper processes and practice of keeping children safe.
- Trustees have increased their understanding of safeguarding. The chair of trustees has undertaken DSL-level training so that he is now more knowledgeable about the requirements of the role. The safeguarding adviser has taken on an interim post as trustee. She models for trustees how to check safeguarding in the school. In addition, trustees commissioned the local authority to check and monitor the school's safeguarding arrangements. Consequently, trustees are now well informed about safeguarding in the school and are better able to hold leaders to account for the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Leaders have made sure that safeguarding procedures are followed closely. All staff and volunteers receive regular training in safeguarding. As a result, they know what to look out for and what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Safeguarding records are kept securely and in detail. Leaders ensure that they consider pupils' behaviour and wider needs when considering whether a pupil needs extra help. During the inspection, the DSL reflected that a 'top sheet chronology' of safeguarding records would support her even more in being able to build up a complete picture of a pupils' welfare needs.
- Since the previous monitoring inspection, the director of learning and teaching has broadened the range of safeguarding information and education that pupils are taught in

the curriculum. During the pandemic, pupils used computers as part of their learning much more than they would have normally. Because of this, leaders prioritised making sure that pupils understood the protocols for keeping safe online. In addition, all pupils are taught to tell a trusted adult if something makes them feel uncomfortable, and they learn about the difference between 'good' and 'bad' secrets. Older pupils are helped to understand how to stay safe when using social media. As part of their preparation for the new government requirements to teach about relationships, leaders are considering how best to teach the 'being safe' section of this statutory guidance.

Paragraphs 16–16(b)

- This aspect of the standards was not met at the last progress monitoring inspection because leaders did not fully consider the potential risks associated with pupils' medical or behavioural needs when planning for trips and visits.
- After the last inspection, leaders altered their risk assessment policy and proformas. Prompts now ensure that leaders consider pupils' wider needs in their planning. In doing so, they make sure that provision is made to reduce potential risks.
- Pupils are also educated in the risks associated with the local area. For example, they know about how to check that driveways are safe to cross and how to cross the road safely when learning in the community.
- All of the standards in this part are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- This part was not met at the last progress monitoring inspection because, despite improvements, leaders had not ensured that all of the independent school standards were met. There was not enough evidence at the time that improvements would be sustained.
- At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher had responsibility for running all aspects of the school. Since then other staff have taken on leadership roles, so that there are now more people with leadership responsibilities. In particular, the previous headteacher now focuses purely on learning and teaching, there is a new lead DSL with overall responsibility for safeguarding, and a 'director' now oversees the rest of the school's work. This has increased the school's capacity to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met consistently well.
- At the time of the last inspection, the chair of trustees was relatively new. Since then, he has made sure that he increases his understanding of safeguarding and other aspects of the school's work. This means that he and other trustees are able to hold school leaders to account for their work more strategically. Trustees have received extra training in safeguarding. They draw on expert support and advice from the local authority and a safeguarding adviser. Through visits and discussions, they check regularly that the school is fulfilling its duty to safeguard pupils and to prioritise their well-being. Trustee meetings also focus on the strategic direction of the school, as well as what leaders are doing to provide pupils with an education.
- All of the standards in this part are now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	138873
DfE registration number	931/6011
Inspection number	10173689

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 school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Proprietor	The Treehouse Trust
Chair	Time Hirst
Headteacher	Andrea Turner
Telephone number	01491 652 000
Website	www.thetreehouseschool.org.uk
Email address	office@thetreehouseschool.org.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	14–16 May 2019

Information about this school

- The Treehouse School is a non-fee-paying primary school catering for up to 15 pupils aged 5 to 11.
- The school opened in 2012. This is the second progress monitoring inspection since the school was judged to be inadequate in May 2019. The first took place in January 2020, when it was judged that some of the independent school standards that were checked, remained unmet.
- Since the previous progress monitoring inspection, leadership roles have been reorganised among existing staff. There is no longer a formal 'headteacher' position. The previous headteacher is now the director of learning and teaching. She is supported by a deputy director of learning and teaching. These two adults provide the main teaching for the school. The overall school 'director' is in charge of all other aspects of the day-to-day running of the school. She is supported by a deputy director, who is also the new DSL.

- The trustees have engaged the services of a consultant safeguarding adviser to support the school's safeguarding work. This person has recently been acting as 'interim trustee' for safeguarding while the trustees recruit a trustee to be responsible for safeguarding.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the second progress monitoring inspection since the previous standard inspection in May 2019. It was carried out with one hour's notice. The preceding monitoring inspection took place in January 2020, when the school was judged to not comply with all the independent school standards.
- The Department for Education (DfE) required the school to prepare an action plan. This was evaluated by Ofsted in August 2019. Taking account of that assessment, the DfE took the decision on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education to reject the action plan.
- The inspector held discussions with the main school director, the director of learning and teaching, the DSL, the chair of trustees, and a volunteer. She spoke with the safeguarding adviser on the telephone. She spoke with some pupils outside during lunchtime. The inspector scrutinised a range of documents and records, examined the arrangements for safeguarding pupils in the school and sampled some risk assessments. Throughout the inspection, the inspector followed government and school guidance on COVID-19 (coronavirus) precaution measures.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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