



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Progress monitoring report

School name	Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School
DfE registration number	332/6000
Inspection dates	25 February 2016
Reporting inspector	Ted Cohn
Supporting inspector	Margaret Buckingham

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was conducted by the School Inspection Service (SIS) at the request of the Department for Education (DfE). It was carried out by SIS in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and it follows the inspection framework agreed with the DfE.

The inspection was conducted by two independent professional inspectors, who looked at aspects of the school's provision as requested by the DfE and covered by the school's action plan.

Context of the inspection

This inspection took place without prior notice at the request of the DfE in order to check the school's progress in implementing its agreed action plan following a Notice served on the school. The previous inspection, which took place between 30th September and 2nd October 2015, reported that paragraphs 16 (a) and (b) and 34 (1b) of the Independent School Standards were not met. As a result, the school produced an action plan which was evaluated and accepted in December 2015.

The inspectors focused their attention on ensuring that the welfare of pupils in the school is safeguarded and promoted through the effective implementation of risk assessments and appropriate action is taken in order to reduce identified risks; and the capacity of school managers and the council of trustees to ensure that the Independent School Standards are met consistently in this regard.

In order to assess the progress the school has made in addressing the shortcomings identified at the time of the last inspection, the inspectors reviewed areas of the school about which specific issues were raised in detail and visited the rest of the school, scrutinised documentation related to the actions the school has taken and is proposing, and interviewed various staff with management responsibilities, as well as the chair of the council of trustees, which has delegated responsibility for running the school.

Evidence of progress in relation to the action plan

The school has made a number of helpful improvements in line with its action plan, particularly to improve its policies and procedure for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. Nevertheless, weaknesses remain in the implementation of these policies and procedures. This is because management systems are not robust enough to check that the policies are consistently put into practice.

Part 3, paragraph 16 (a): to ensure 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.

This standard is not met. The school has taken appropriate and urgent action to develop procedures that would ensure the welfare of pupils was promoted and

safeguarded if implemented effectively, but implementation is inadequate. These actions include a revised and more rigorous health and safety policy; appropriate risk assessments for all activities; regular spot checks of the craft workshop and science preparatory (prep) room, which were safety hazards at the time of the last inspection; a commissioned health and safety report by a well qualified and experienced health and safety consultant, leading to a considerable number of recommendations on which the school is working; a recent welfare, health and safety training workshop based around real-life case studies; and the recent recruitment to the council of trustees of a trustee with professional expertise of health and safety, who is now working closely with the business manager. The school has also ensured that the hazardous material in the craft workshop at the time of the last inspection has been removed and that the science prep room has been upgraded, with an outside lock, with a limited number of key holders and clear instructions that the room is to be kept locked at all times when not in use. The materials in the prep room have been organised more effectively and labelled properly, with potentially hazardous materials kept in separate locked cabinets. Nevertheless, spot checks carried out by the business manager revealed that on several occasions the room was left open. Further reminders have been given to the relevant staff and the room was securely locked at the time of the inspection.

Paragraph 16 (b): appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

This standard is not met. The situation with regard to health and safety in the craft workshop is unsatisfactory. The specific issue related to the insecure storage of hazardous material in the craft workshop identified at the time of the last inspection has been dealt with satisfactorily. The monitoring inspection revealed that, although a lockable cupboard had been provided for potentially hazardous materials, such as varnish, and the cupboard was locked, the key was placed on top of the cupboard and so accessible to pupils. Trailing flexes for electrical equipment on the floor presented a potential hazard and the room was poorly maintained, with considerable amounts of dust on floors and other surfaces, together with an overflowing waste bin and other clutter on benches and the floor. The room also had no working dust extractor to remove dust from the atmosphere. After the last inspection the room was cleaned and all the unnecessary waste and other materials removed, and a trustee helped in monitoring and supporting this process. The spot checks carried out by the business manager since then indicate that the room was being kept tidy, working areas were safer and trip hazards were not evident, as stated in his last check made on 26th January 2016. This was not the case at the time of this monitoring inspection, when the workshop environment represented a health and safety hazard to pupils.

Part 8, paragraph 34 1 (b): the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

The standard is not met. The business manager, who has overall responsibility for safeguarding, health and safety, and reports to the council of trustees on these matters, has been very diligent and rigorous in pursuit of ways of ensuring that the school meets all its responsibilities, but the council of trustees has not provided sufficient support to ensure that the independent school standards related to these

aspects are met fully at all times. The council of trustees has been insufficiently rigorous and persistent in supporting managers in ensuring that regulations related to the safeguarding, health and safety of pupils are enforced and in dealing with staff who, for whatever reason, have failed to ensure that the clear and appropriate procedures are implemented consistently and fully.

The recent recruitment of a trustee with professional expertise in health and safety to work closely with the business manager strengthens the expertise of the council in this vital area of school provision. Similarly, the proposed restructuring of management responsibilities, including specific identified responsibilities for the chair of college and chairs of various sections of the school, are likely to help to establish a more effective collaborative management structure. In addition, recent changes amongst trustees and the establishment of specific responsibilities for individual trustees also have the potential to make the council more effective in the governance of the school. However, all these initiatives are at a very early stage of development and, at the time of the inspection, the new management structure had not been finalised.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements as follows:

- Ensure that the science prep room is always locked when unattended (paragraph 16 (a));
- take the necessary action in order to ensure that the craft workshop is kept clean, tidy and in good order, with an operational dust extractor, any potentially hazardous materials in the craft workshop are kept securely, including more health and safety training for staff using the workshop (paragraph 16 (b)); and
- ensure that the council of trustees is more effective in supporting managers to assure that all the independent school standards related to safeguarding, welfare and safety are consistently and fully met, whilst establishing a more effective management structure to ensure that all staff and trustees at school make a consistently effective contribution to the safeguarding, welfare and safety of pupils in the school (paragraph 34 (1)).

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School			
Address of school:	14 Love Lane Stourbridge DY8 2EA			
Telephone number:	01384 394633			
Email address:	info@elmfield.com			
Web address	www.http://elmfield.com/			
Proprietor:	Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School Ltd			
Education Manager:	Diana Ball			
Chair of Early Years Department	Jackie Irving			
DfE Number	332/6000			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	£4500 - £7500			
Age range of pupils	3 - 17			
Gender of pupils	Mixed			
Total number on roll	full-time	214	part-time	38
Number of children under 5	Boys:	21	Girls:	17
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	113	Girls:	86
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	9	Girls:	6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	2	Girls:	2
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	8	Girls:	7
Type of inspection	Emergency unannounced inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act			
Date of inspection	25 February 2016			
Inspectors	Ted Cohn Margaret Buckingham			

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk