



## **SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE**

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# Progress monitoring report

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School name	Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School
DfE registration number	332/6000
Inspection dates	21 June 2016
Reporting inspector	Jane Cooper
Supporting inspector	Peter Jones

## **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 the aspects of provision covered by the school's action plan, as requested by the DfE.

## **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 original 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.

An inspection took place on 25 February 2016 to monitor the progress that the school had made against this action plan. At that stage inspectors judged that the school had made insufficient progress in implementing the action plan. The DfE therefore commissioned this inspection to discover whether the required action had now been taken.

## **Evidence of progress in relation to the action plan**

The school has taken effective steps in line with its action plan to improve and implement its policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. It has managed these improvements well and ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

**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 met.** At the last inspection the school had already taken appropriate and urgent action to develop its policies and procedures for promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils but it was not implementing these effectively. This is now much improved. Teachers are trained to assess the risk of the various activities they undertake with children and to adapt these in the light of experience. Appropriate risk assessments are in place for the school buildings and grounds.

The school has pursued a vigorous approach to ensuring the implementation of the health and safety policy. A regular check is made of the playground equipment by the caretaker. The business manager has implemented conscientiously a system of spot checks on areas of the school which were identified previously as particular

areas of hazard for pupils. The teachers responsible for these areas have been held to account effectively for the condition and maintenance of these areas through rigorous performance management. Regular health and safety reports have been made to the trustees on the progress towards improvement. School managers, through pursuing a relentless approach to checking and performance management, have secured improvement to the point where hazards identified by the last inspection now have been rectified.

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

**This standard is met.** The science prep room was identified by the last inspection as an area where the health and safety policy was not being implemented effectively. It is now kept locked when pupils are using the laboratory and at all other times of the day except when a teacher is using it. The key to the room is not accessible to pupils. The prep room is suitably organised with improved storage systems for equipment and materials. Hazardous chemicals are kept in separate locked cabinets. Expert advice from the SIS science inspector was given to the school on enhancing the policy regarding safe labelling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials.

The craft workshop has been tidied and reorganised. Although still a busy working environment, it is maintained appropriately and there are now no trailing flexes on the floor. The dust extraction units have been refurbished and air filtration units have been installed over the work benches so that the air is clean and the floor and surfaces are generally free from dust. Storage of wood and other materials has been relocated to an area outside the workshop to give more space for pupils to work. Varnish and other hazardous materials are kept in a locked cupboard for which the key is held securely by the teacher and out of reach of pupils. The acid discovered at a previous inspection has been removed and waste materials have been cleared. The school carries out spot checks on the cleanliness and tidiness of this room to ensure that its condition is being maintained appropriately. These recorded checks, together with photographic evidence, show that the room is being maintained in good order and that the school is rigorous in holding the teacher in charge to account for its condition. Further training on health and safety has also been provided. The craft room has a good range of equipment including a brazing hearth. Although this area is zoned off in part, inspectors advised that the signage be improved to remind pupils of the high temperature of this equipment when in use.

A tour of the school site revealed that it is a generally safe and well-maintained environment and that the outdoor areas presented an exciting and stimulating place for children to play. Two health and safety matters were identified by inspectors: a broken waterproof cover on an electrical socket; and some large logs which were too heavy for younger children to use for building dens. These matters were rectified immediately. The school has given considerable attention to improving the health and safety of pupils, including the commissioning of a very thorough audit of fire safety, the recommendations of which are currently being implemented conscientiously.

**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 met.** Since the last inspection the management structure of the school has been further developed to strengthen both the leadership and management of the school and its relationship with the council of management (the trustees). The impact of this development is an improved process for decision-making and accountability, so that the trustees are now better informed about the work of the school and provide more effective support to the business and education managers who are implementing development. There is a clear and transparent process for recruiting new trustees. As vacancies become available, the council has sought to recruit trustees with the necessary skills and expertise in particular areas of the school's work and has linked each trustee effectively to the relevant manager, providing training where necessary. The result is that the school is able to benefit from the trustees' knowledge, and the senior managers are held to account effectively for the implementation of key decisions. The partnership between the business manager and a trustee with professional expertise in health and safety, who had been only recently recruited at the time of the last inspection, has now had time to demonstrate a strong impact on the successful implementation of the action plan to improve the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Training for trustees, for example in safeguarding, and regular reporting to the council by the education and business managers have strengthened further the capacity of the leadership and management to make and sustain school improvement and to hold to account those responsible for key areas of the school's work. The business manager has brought a strong and rigorous focus to school management by checking vigorously on the implementation of the action plan, providing fortnightly health and safety updates to trustees and relentlessly holding to account those responsible for improvement. In this way he has ensured that the independent school standards are met consistently.

Key appointments have now been made to middle management positions for the new academic year. Lead roles in the Early Years, Upper and Lower Schools, and Learning Support are likely to provide much needed support for the Education Manager and strengthen the impact of the appraisal and performance management systems. A bespoke training package has already been commissioned to support the appointees in their new roles. Elsewhere in the school, systems for safeguarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils through the safe recruitment and vetting of staff and the management of child protection, health and safety, fire precautions and first aid are secure and well-managed, and the staff has received appropriate training.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school now meets The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## 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			
Business Manager:	Ben Arnold			
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	211	part-time	58
Number of children under 5	Boys:	15	Girls:	24
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	118	Girls:	92
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	9	Girls:	11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	2	Girls:	2
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	6	Girls:	6
Type of inspection	Progress monitoring inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act			
Date of inspection	21 June 2016			
Inspectors	Jane Cooper Peter Jones			

**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.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk](http://www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk)**