

Horatio House Independent School

Lound Campus, Church Lane, Lound, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 5LL

Inspection dates

13–15 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and proprietors are not ensuring that the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have started to put in place an appropriate development plan that focuses on the most important areas for improvement.
- Leaders do not have robust or rigorous systems in place to collect, track and analyse pupils' progress.
- Pupils do not learn new skills or extend their understanding of science sufficiently.
- Attendance is below the national average. Fixed-term exclusions remain too high.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching and staff performance is underdeveloped.
- Staff do not access enough training to develop their teaching skills.
- Too many pupils do the same work, which does not meet their needs.
- Some staff do not follow the school's strategies for dealing with behaviour well enough.
- Pupils do not learn enough about prejudice and the way it can lead to bullying.
- Pupils do not have sufficiently positive attitudes to learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have successfully established a new school in a short space of time. The school has an accurate picture of where it is and what it needs to do to improve.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong.
- Staff respond diligently and promptly to pupils' anxieties and concerns.
- Pupils' attendance rates increase once they settle at the school.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress, are supported well and acquire employability skills.
- Parents are very positive about the school, especially the support they have from staff.
- Leaders are highly committed to the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

- Improve leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - all of the independent school standards are met
 - a suitable strategic school improvement plan is established that sets clear goals, identifies responsibilities and details how success will be achieved
 - rigorous systems are established to monitor the school's effectiveness so that leaders know what difference they are making to raising standards in the school
 - leaders record, evaluate and review all aspects of the school's work systematically, particularly the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' social and academic progress from their starting points
 - leaders provide more training opportunities for staff to develop their teaching skills so that teaching is consistently effective.
- Improve pupils' learning and raise achievement, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers match the work in lessons to pupils' different abilities so pupils make good progress from their varying starting points
 - making sure that teachers provide good feedback and support to help pupils improve their work.
- Improve the breadth of the school's curriculum by:
 - giving pupils a broad awareness of different cultural traditions to acquire an appreciation of and respect for other cultures and the ways in which ideas about difference can lead to prejudice-based bullying
 - providing a wide range of opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and develop their skills in science.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and welfare by:
 - raising levels of attendance so that it is at least at the national average
 - ensuring that teachers apply behaviour management strategies consistently to eradicate the low-level disruption
 - reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietors must ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively, to provide:
 - 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 (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(a)).
- The proprietors must ensure that the teaching at the school:

- 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
- 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
- involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
- 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
- demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress

(paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)).

- The proprietors must ensure that a framework for pupils' 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 (paragraph 4).
- To meet the standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school, the proprietor must also ensure that principles are actively promoted which:
 - promote further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures (paragraph 5, 5(b), 5(b)(v)).
- Ensure that the proprietors and those persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently and actively promote the well-being of pupils

(paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have faced significant challenges since the school opened in November 2016. Previously a specialist centre in alternative educational provision, the school underwent a material change when it moved to new premises in April 2017. The school has taken an additional 24 pupils on roll since March 2017. Nevertheless, leaders have remained positive and ambitious in their vision, and have successfully established a new school in a relatively short space of time.
- Some aspects of the school's work are highly challenging, given the poor educational experiences and significant social and emotional challenges that many pupils have faced. Nonetheless, leaders know pupils exceptionally well and consistently make sure that pupils' educational, emotional and welfare needs come first.
- Even though some of the independent school standards are not met, leaders demonstrate they have the capacity to move the school forward. Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the school's strengths and do not seek to hide its weaknesses. They understand what areas of the school's work require improvement. A sense of urgency prevails in their work.
- Leaders are taking steps to write a clearly focused self-evaluation and action plan that recognises where the school needs to improve and how leaders will bring those improvements about.
- Leaders have not been thorough enough in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' work. The systems used to check on the quality of teaching are not yet well embedded. Leaders are not effective in identifying areas where teaching is not good enough. Little effective training and support for teaching is provided.
- Performance management plans for staff are beginning to have a sharper focus on improving teaching and the outcomes pupils achieve
- There is limited assessment information on pupils' achievement. Leaders do not yet have the tools that allow them to easily keep track of pupils' progress or assess the performance of different groups. There are plans to have a new system to enable leaders to store, analyse and retrieve information about the pupils. Too much time is wasted analysing data manually by leaders and teachers.
- The curriculum is appropriately designed to meet pupils' needs. However, it is limited in scope, particularly in science. The curriculum for pupils' academic learning has not had the same attention as the provision for pupils' personal development. Nevertheless, improvements are evident. For example, plans are in place to extend the teaching of science and the range of nationally recognised qualifications from September 2017.
- The curriculum enables pupils to become effective users of information and communication technology. It also provides opportunities for pupils to develop creative skills through drawing. Present-day issues such as debating the recent general election are explored. These experiences help pupils to develop active and creative minds.
- Extra-curricular activities such as revision lessons and sport help build pupils' self-esteem.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is being effectively developed in most respects. The school encourages tolerance and respect for others with different faiths and backgrounds. However, the range of discriminatory practice to which pupils are introduced and which they understand is not sufficiently extensive.
- The curriculum emphasises the British values of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty, which prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Staff have established strong relationships with community services. Pupils have good opportunities to learn right from wrong from visitors such as the emergency services.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful. However, pupils do not have sufficient self-respect or desire to accept the challenge of working hard in lessons to achieve success in their learning.
- The manager and the student support officer have established effective arrangements for the implementation and review of pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. Staff have a good understanding of the social and emotional needs of vulnerable pupils. They engage effectively with external agencies to ensure that the intentions of plans are fulfilled and as a result pupils' needs are well met.
- Parents have regular contact with staff to discuss any concerns. They receive termly reports on the progress of their children. The detailed reports give parents a clear picture of their child's progress. Parents are regularly contacted by telephone, predominantly to discuss behaviour, both positive and negative.
- Staff are positive about the school and appreciate the support they receive.
- The school has developed a good working relationship with an external adviser who gives impartial advice to support pupils. Pupils talk positively about their experiences and report receiving timely careers information. Consequently, pupils are being suitably prepared for the next stage in their lives.
- The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about the education that the school provides. They especially value the way the school responds to concerns or requests. Parents who spoke to the inspector were very complimentary about how happy and well looked after their children are. Typical examples of parents' views are: 'They are fantastic. They are amazing', 'My daughter absolutely loves it' and 'It is brilliant.'

Governance

- The proprietors share the ambition of the leadership team and care deeply about the school. They are committed to the school's success and improving outcomes for pupils.
- The chief executive officer has supported the school and ensures that it is better placed to improve further. He conveys his vision, ambition and sense of moral purpose with tireless passion and determination.
- The proprietors engage well in a variety of training opportunities, including safeguarding, but they have not secured a detailed enough understanding of the progress that pupils make from their different starting points. Consequently, they are not setting clear action points for leaders in order to secure further improvement.
- The proprietors are starting to ensure that the performance of staff is completed in a more thorough way by relating targets more concisely to the school development plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a suitable safeguarding policy on the school's website.
- All of the appropriate checks have been undertaken to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. The required information is held on the single central register of staff appointments.
- The proprietors have ensured that suitable measures are in place to escort or supervise visitors while they are on the school premises.
- Staff are familiar with 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016) and fully understand their roles and responsibilities in how to keep children safe.
- Policies to promote fire safety and the health and safety of pupils in school are fully carried out. A suitable number of staff are trained as first aiders.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and as one said, 'I know I can ask any member of staff to help me.' Pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They are aware of the potential risks they face and know whom to talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are variable across the school and for subjects, leading to uneven rates of progress.
- Teachers do not typically give pupils work that is sufficiently challenging and well suited to different levels of ability. The lack of challenge is preventing pupils from developing a deep understanding of what they are learning. As a result, pupils are not making the rapid progress they are capable of.
- The pace of learning in some lessons is too relaxed. Teachers do not make clear what they expect pupils to achieve and, as a result, the learning slows.
- Teachers' use of day-to-day assessment is not consistently effective in giving pupils good guidance on how to improve their work.
- Most teaching provides individual tuition or work in small groups. This supports pupils at each level of ability and whatever their attitude to learning. However, pupils told the inspector that some of the strategies used by their teachers were not engaging or challenging enough.
- Art is taught well, which is leading to good progress by the pupils. Expectations are made very clear and no learning time is lost as due importance is placed on learning. Pupils appreciate the time given to answer challenging questions about their art work.
- In mathematics, the planned activities tend to interest and motivate pupils enough for them to make good progress. Activities are set that challenge pupils to think more deeply. Teaching explains the relevance and importance of mathematics in the everyday world and engages the pupils fully in their learning.
- Teaching assistants usually enhance learning and provide helpful support and guidance for pupils.

- Admission procedures are good. Each pupil is reviewed carefully. Once an admission has been confirmed, the pupil spends a period of time in the assessment centre to ascertain prior knowledge and curriculum needs, which helps them to settle to learning.
- As pupils' self-esteem develops, they are encouraged to learn more, ask questions and engage in discussion, often for the first time in years.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- For many pupils, their experience of education has previously been one of isolation, disengagement and rejection. As a result, their self-esteem and self-confidence is very low. Staff are expert at making pupils feel part of Horatio House. Pupils told the inspector, 'The school have helped me so much. They listen to me 100%' and 'It's really effective if you are having a bad day because teachers listen and take note of everything.'
- Pupils are generally polite and courteous. Pupils were polite and well-mannered when talking to the inspector about their experiences in school. However, this conduct is not maintained when in lessons where pupils' interest is not held.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe. They are confident that they have someone to speak to if they have a problem. The school teaches pupils about safety. For example, there are discussions about alcohol, drug abuse, and using mobile phones and the internet.
- Although the school has only been on the current site for two months at the time of the inspection, staff have worked hard to take ownership of the space. The new signage gives the school a sense of identity. There is no litter or graffiti in the school. The classrooms and shared areas are well-cared for.
- Staff are suitably deployed to ensure the appropriate supervision of pupils throughout the school day.
- The school monitors the pupils attending alternative provision appropriately. The member of staff responsible visits pupils weekly to ensure that the provision is meeting the needs of the pupils and that they are fully engaging with the offer.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Despite the positive role models demonstrated by staff, and pupils' recognition of adults' care for them, classroom behaviour is not good enough to enable good progress. The majority of pupils do not sustain their concentration and effort for long enough to complete their work to a high standard.
- No serious concerns were raised by parents, pupils or staff about bullying. 'Restorative' meetings are held to help to resolve conflict when it arises.
- Overall, attendance is below the national average. However, pupils' rates of attendance are higher while in the school than in their previous settings. Senior staff are diligent in

following up any unexplained absences. They work effectively with parents and external agencies to ensure that no pupil is at risk because of non-attendance.

- Staff are working closely with individual pupils in order to fully engage them in their learning. This approach works well for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The number of fixed-term exclusions remains too high. This has come about as a result of new pupils starting the school finding it hard to settle and leaders' heightened expectations through the use of an increasingly effective behaviour policy.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils are not making consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Books show that the most able pupils, as well as the lower- and middle-ability, are not making enough progress. Too few make good progress because teaching is not challenging enough for them.
- Pupils have had very limited time to study science in order to deepen their knowledge and learn new skills.
- Pupils achieve well in art and mathematics. Clear next steps in learning are provided, ensuring that pupils move on rapidly and make good progress.
- Most pupils read fluently and use their skills well across the curriculum.
- External accreditations are being taken by the Year 11 pupils, who have only been at the school for a short period of time. These include GCSE English and mathematics, functional skills in English and mathematics, a level 1 award in mechanics, and information and communication technology.
- A range of awards are completed by all pupils, appropriate to their ability. From September 2017, qualifications will be available for science, history, English literature, art and construction.
- The alternative provider delivers a range of accredited vocational courses pupils can achieve qualifications in. These include courses in hair and beauty, construction skills, catering and hospitality, motorcycle maintenance and therapeutic art. Attendance is monitored carefully and pupils make good progress on the courses they study.
- The effective careers advice, guidance and support enable pupils to make well-informed decisions about their future. This prepares them well for life after the school. Typical examples of their views are: 'I can now aim for something in life' and 'I think I can do something now instead of nothing.'
- Pupils often join the school with levels of attainment well below those typical for pupils of a similar age. Frequently, when pupils start at the school, they are disillusioned with learning and are negative about their futures. Nevertheless, improvements are evident. Pupils told the inspector that they now enjoy attending school and feel cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	143081
DfE registration number	935/6009
Inspection number	10033611

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Number of part-time pupils	5
Proprietor	Great Yarmouth Community Trust
Chair	John Holmes
Manager	Trevor Cockburn
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,000
Telephone number	01493 602108
Website	www.horatiohouse.co.uk
Email address	horatio-house@gyctrust.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Horatio House is an independent school situated on the outskirts of a rural village.
- The school is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to admit 64 boys and girls, aged between 11 and 16 years. There are 42 pupils on roll.
- Horatio House became an independent school in August 2016, having been a specialist centre in alternative educational provision since 2009.
- In September 2015, Horatio House joined the family of services provided by the Great Yarmouth Community Trust. The trust is now the proprietor of the school.

- Horatio House was primarily set up to provide solutions for pupils whose needs are difficult to accommodate, or which could not be met in mainstream education.
- Pupils have histories of severely disrupted schooling. Pupils have been permanently excluded or at high risk of permanent exclusion from their previous schools. Many have not attended school regularly prior to starting at Horatio House. The vast majority of pupils have a history of challenging behaviour.
- In April 2017, the DfE commissioned Ofsted to conduct a material change inspection following the school moving premises to a larger site. All of the independent school standards that were checked at that time were likely to be met.
- The school aims to provide a dynamic and comprehensive curriculum, supporting young people to believe in themselves, enabling them to reach their full potential. Pupils leave with a range of qualifications and go on to college, a job or an apprenticeship.
- The school provides outreach services to schools and academies, supporting vulnerable pupils in their mainstream school setting.
- The school offers an assessment centre service to Children's Services Admissions and Great Yarmouth schools.
- A high proportion of pupils need support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities and about one quarter have an EHC plan.
- Two of the pupils are looked after by their respective local authorities.
- The school uses St Edmunds Society, Norwich and Appleseed Farm for alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector toured the school site accompanied by the manager and the chief executive officer.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager, senior leadership staff, the chief executive officer, the trustees and a contractor carrying out the fire risk assessment.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school, including those available on its website.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning, and pupils' conduct in lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector met with pupils both formally and informally. She looked at their work and at the records of their progress.
- The inspector received six free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- A telephone call was made to three parents.
- The inspector spoke to teachers and learning support assistants wherever this did not interrupt pupils' learning.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for pupils or staff.
- The inspector spoke to local authority representatives from Norfolk and Suffolk by telephone.
- The inspector spoke to a representative from The St Edmunds Society, the alternative provider, by telephone.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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