



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Red Balloon, Norwich

December 2019



School's details

School	Red Balloon, Norwich			
DfE number	926/6158			
Registered charity number	1117092			
Address	Red Balloon, Norwich 76 Earlham Road Norwich Norfolk NR2 3DF			
Telephone number	01603 622288			
Email address	angela.hewett@rbnorwich.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Hewett			
Proprietor	Dr Carrie Herbert			
Age range	11 to 17			
Number of pupils on roll	32			
	Seniors	23	Sixth Form	9
Date of visit	11 December 2019			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Red Balloon Learner Centre Norwich is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 11 and 17 years and is one of four centres in the Red Balloon group. The school was established in 2006 and moved to its current premises in a residential suburb near Norwich city centre in 2009. The proprietor and founder of the school delegates the educational, welfare and financial oversight to a group of local trustees. The school has 32 pupils, all of whom require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. Thirty-one pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in June 2018.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) following a local authority audit of safeguarding; in particular, safeguarding; staff recruitment checks; provision of information to parents including provision of reports to parents and publication of the school's safeguarding policy; and leadership and management.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Not met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32 (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Not met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.4 All members of staff, including those with designated responsibility for safeguarding, have suitable levels of training. All staff complete an online child protection course as part of their induction. Recent training has focused on the most recent update of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2019* including risks such as female genital mutilation, up-skirting and 'county lines'. There are suitable recruitment procedures in place.
- 2.5 Listening to pupils is central to the school's ethos and staff mentor pupils individually through weekly meetings. All pupils interviewed confirmed that staff listen to their concerns and take prompt action in response. Those with designated roles for safeguarding understand the importance of e-safety and suitable systems are in place to monitor pupils' use of the school internet. Pupils are not allowed to use their mobile devices while at school. The school responds promptly and appropriately when any misuse of technology is identified.
- 2.6 The identity of visitors is checked on arrival, and the school provides all visitors with safeguarding information.
- 2.7 A suitable code of conduct is provided and understood by all staff, and this gives clear guidance on relationships with pupils and appropriate use of social media. All staff interviewed reported confidence in the school's whistleblowing procedures.
- 2.8 The school has not always followed its own policy and procedures when seeking guidance, making referrals to external agencies or maintaining records of safeguarding concerns. Referrals and/or discussions are not always carried out sufficiently promptly. Not all staff are fully conversant with reporting lines. School records are not maintained effectively because they do not always provide a clear and comprehensive account of actions taken or include sufficient detail on discussions with external agencies. As a result, the thresholds for making referrals are not always clear. This prevents effective analysis of data from safeguarding records by those with safeguarding responsibilities. The proprietor and trustees, all of whom have completed online safeguarding training, conduct an annual review of safeguarding but checks of safeguarding records have not been sufficiently robust to identify shortcomings.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, proprietors, contractors and volunteers. The school does not employ supply staff. Since the previous inspection, all checks, including qualifications, prohibition from teaching and the receipt of at least two references, have been completed prior to appointment and entered on the single central record of appointments.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32]

- 2.11 The school meets the requirement for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.
- 2.12 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include a report to parents at least annually of their own child's progress, except in circumstances where this is prohibited by a court order or for safeguarding reasons.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.13 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.14 Leaders and managers do not always demonstrate good skills in meeting their responsibilities effectively to ensure the independent school standards are met consistently. Safeguarding procedures relating to liaison with external agencies and the maintaining of accurate, detailed records, lack sufficient rigour. Leaders and managers, including the proprietor and trustees, do not fulfil their responsibilities in overseeing all areas of safeguarding and consequently do not actively promote the well-being of pupils.

3. Regulatory action points

3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, safeguarding [paragraph 7]

- Ensure the school responds promptly and appropriately when any safeguarding concerns are raised in accordance with the school policy and locally agreed procedures and keeps comprehensive and accurate records of safeguarding concerns [paragraph 7(a) and (b)]

ISSR Part 8, Quality of leadership in and management of schools [paragraph 34]

- Ensure leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles and fulfil their responsibilities effectively to actively promote the well-being of pupils, in particular in maintaining effective oversight of all areas of safeguarding [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)]

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff, met with the chair of the trustees and had a telephone conversation with the proprietor. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.