

Music Stuff

Unit 2, The Cuthbert Centre, 877 Ashton Old Road, Manchester M11 2NA

Inspection dates

8 and 9 October 2024

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(a) to 7(b)

- At the time of the previous monitoring inspection, this independent school standard (the standard) was met. Leaders had put into place all of the necessary arrangements to safeguard pupils.
- At this inspection, the designated safeguarding lead and all staff were up to date with their training and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities well.
- The school has a safeguarding policy that meets the latest statutory requirements. It shares this with parents and carers on the school's website.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a) to 9(c)

- At the time of the previous monitoring inspection, this standard was met. At the request of the Department for Education (DfE), this standard was considered as part of this progress monitoring inspection. The proprietor has a suitable behaviour policy in place that is followed by staff. Any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with appropriately. Leaders cross-reference these incidents with other concerns so that they can gain a detailed picture of an individual pupil and respond promptly to any needs or issues that arise. The school's behaviour policy sets out proportionate sanctions. These are logged appropriately.

Paragraph 11

- At the previous progress monitoring inspection in January 2024, the school had not ensured that all of the premises were clean, tidy and well maintained. This compromised the otherwise effective health and safety policy.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in May 2024, it was judged that this standard was unlikely to be met if the proposed actions were implemented. Since then, leaders have revised the action plan. They have added detail and specificity and revised the dates for completing the required actions.
- At the time of this progress monitoring inspection, leaders have addressed weaknesses in this aspect of the school's work urgently and effectively. They have implemented systems for daily cleaning to be carried out on all sites. In addition to this, all sites are checked daily by the centre managers. Any maintenance issues are reported to site staff.

Records show that where maintenance is required, this is responded to and actioned swiftly. This work is overseen by a dedicated health and safety leader. The sites are now clean, tidy and well maintained.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- At the time of the previous monitoring inspection, this standard was met. At the request of the DfE, this standard was considered as part of this progress monitoring inspection. The proprietor has a suitable risk assessment policy in place that is followed by staff. Appropriate action is taken by the proprietor and staff to reduce the risks that are identified.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23(1)(a), 25, 27(b)

- At the previous progress monitoring inspection in January 2024, some toilet facilities were not suitable. On one site, the designated toilet for girls was located at the front of a classroom and therefore lacked privacy. Girls could choose to go and use the staff toilet instead, but this had not been redesignated for the sole use of pupils. Some toilet facilities were missing soap and others did not have a means of hand drying. In addition to this, in the toilet facilities, some sinks were dirty and soap dispensers were damaged. There was graffiti in some toilets and elsewhere in the school building. In the outside spaces, there was debris that had not been removed, some of which was potentially unsafe such as glass. Leaders had not addressed the issue of a suitable and effective cleaning regime across the school sites. There was no appropriate and functional external lighting.
- At the time of this progress monitoring inspection, leaders have addressed weaknesses in this aspect of the school's work efficiently and without delay. They have implemented systems for daily cleaning to be carried out on all sites. In addition to this, the toilets have been renovated and redesignated so that pupils have sole access to appropriate facilities. All toilets have soap and a means of hand drying. The toilets and sinks are clean and well maintained. All outside spaces are checked daily by centre managers. The outside spaces are now clean and tidy. The external lights on all sites are all fully operational.

Paragraphs 29(1) and 29(1)(b)

- At the previous progress monitoring inspection in January 2024, there was no suitable outdoor area for pupils to use at the Fog Lane site.
- At the time of this progress monitoring inspection, leaders have leased additional land at the back of the Fog Lane site. This provides pupils with an appropriate space in which they can play when not in lessons.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i)

- At the time of the previous monitoring inspection, this standard was met. At the request of the DfE, this standard was considered as part of this progress monitoring inspection.
- In this progress monitoring inspection, leaders could provide information for both the annual review of the education, health and care plan (EHC plan) and for where a pupil is wholly or partly funded by a local authority. There are annual accounts of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of each pupil. Leaders have clearly understood how the specific elements of provision are identified and the availability of these provisions to pupils. This includes staffing costs and access to specific resources, interventions and opportunities linked to the pupil's individual assessed and agreed provision. The school can provide individual reports for pupils on how their provision is linked to this provision framework. These are provided to the responsible local authority.
- The standards checked in this part continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a) to 34(1)(b)

- At the previous progress monitoring inspection, leaders had not taken sufficient action to ensure that the school met all of the standards that were found to be unmet at the standard inspection in February 2023.
- At this inspection, leaders have implemented the improvements set out in the school's revised action plan. Leaders have significantly developed their understanding of the requirements for independent schools and are now actively and thoroughly checking the school's compliance with all the standards.
- The proprietor is now fulfilling its responsibilities so that the standards are likely to be met consistently.
- The school meets the previously unmet requirements of the standard in this part.

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

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and are now met at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 6. The standards about the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school are those contained in this Part.
- 11. The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 22. The standards about the premises of and accommodation at the school are those contained in this Part.
- 23. Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils.
- 25. The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 27. The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 27(b) external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.
- 29. The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable—
 - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137887
DfE registration number	352/6006
Inspection number	10353388

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 day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Proprietor	Andrew Portersmith
Headteacher	Lyndsey Murray
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15 000 to £41 500
Telephone number	07947 754132
Website	www.musicstuffeducation.org
Email address	musicstuff@musicstuffeducation.org
Date of previous standard inspection	7 to 9 February 2023

Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection was on 7 to 9 February 2023. Subsequently, the DfE commissioned a progress monitoring inspection. This took place on 23 and 24 January 2024.
- The address registered for this school is Unit 2, The Cuthbert Centre, 877 Ashton Old Road, Manchester, M11 2NA. The school also operates from four other sites: Unit 1, The Cuthbert Centre, 877 Ashton Old Road, Manchester, M11 2NA and Units 3 and 4, The Cuthbert Centre, 877 Ashton Old Road, Manchester, M11 2NA, which are both situated at the same location as the main site. The two other premises are at other locations in Manchester: Fog Lane, Burnage, Manchester, M20 6FJ and Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6JU.
- The school's current number of pupils on roll exceeds the capacity of 70 agreed by the DfE.

- All pupils at this school have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils have an EHC plan.
- Leaders do not currently make use of 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 standard inspection in February 2023. It was conducted without notice.
- The DfE required the school to prepare an action plan. This plan was statutory. Ofsted evaluated this plan on 3 May 2024. The DfE accepted the action plan with some modifications.
- The inspector also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers. These requirements of the standards are met.
- The inspector met with the headteacher. She also met with other senior leaders, as well as staff, including those responsible for safeguarding and health and safety.
- The inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body and members of the governing body. She spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector made a tour of the school premises and looked at a wide variety of documentation in relation to the standards checked.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and staff.
- The inspector examined policy documents, including the safeguarding policy, the single central record and the accessibility plan.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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