



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

Delta Independent School

March 2023

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School's Details

School	Delta Independent School
DfE number	840/6014
Registered charity number	1068064
Address	Delta Independent School Parliament Street Consett County Durham Postcode DH8 5DH
Telephone number	01207 502680
Email address	paul@deltaindependent.school
Principal	Mr Paul Hillary
Proprietor	Mr Neil Curran
Age range	13 to 16
Number of pupils on roll	58
Inspection dates	8 to 9 March 2023

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Opened in 2015, Delta Independent School is a day, co-educational school offering alternative provision to mainstream education. It offers part-time or full-time provision to local maintained schools, pupil referral units and the local authority for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Pupils are either dual registered with their mainstream school or registered solely with the alternative provision. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- 1.2 The school is part of Delta North Consett Ltd, which is a registered charity. Its leadership and management are overseen by a single proprietor, who has held this responsibility since September 2022. The current principal was appointed at the same time. The school was previously inspected by Ofsted.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to enable pupils to achieve and develop academically, socially and emotionally. It seeks to equip them with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to be the best version of themselves, mirroring the school's values of resilience, enthusiasm, self-awareness, positivism, empathy, effective communication and teamwork.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, living locally or in other locations across the county. An above average number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. Assessment data provided by the school indicate that pupils' abilities vary widely as a result of their previously disrupted educational experiences, extended periods of school non-attendance and individual learning difficulties. The school has identified 20 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including autistic spectrum condition, attention deficit disorder and social, emotional and mental health difficulties, all of whom receive additional support. Three pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school focuses on the individual needs of each pupil whatever their ability, and the curriculum is modified for them on a personalised basis. No pupil has English as an additional language (EAL).

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 Pupils take GCSE examinations in their final year at the school. The small numbers involved prevent reliable comparison with national averages, but inspection evidence confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships and sex education, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 Most of the arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance are in place, with the exception of those relating to some recruitment procedures and checks on staff. In a small number of cases, suitable references for staff were not obtained before they commenced employment. In a small number of cases, when an enhanced criminal record certificate had not been seen before staff commenced work, the school did not put in place adequate arrangements for their supervision.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9–16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but that in paragraph 7 [safeguarding] is not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure that suitable references are received for all staff before they begin work. [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

Action point 2

The school must ensure that, when an enhanced criminal record certificate has not been seen before staff commence working at the school, it puts in place adequate arrangements for their supervision [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

Action point 3

The proprietor must ensure suitable oversight of safeguarding procedures, particularly those relating to recruitment of staff [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 The school does not undertake suitable checks on the medical fitness of staff prior to their employment.
- 2.13 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 19, 20 and 21 are met but that in paragraph 18 [suitability of staff] is not met.**

Action point 4

The school must ensure that it undertakes suitable checks on the medical fitness of staff prior to their employment [paragraph 18(2)(c)(ii)].

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.15 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.
- 2.17 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.18 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear

time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.20 The school does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.

Action point 5

The proprietor must ensure that leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the standards are consistently met and pupils' well-being is actively promoted [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Andrew Farren

Reporting inspector

Mr Gary Woods

Compliance team inspector (Assistant head, HMC school)