

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, of schools accredited as members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, and those schools belonging to the Cognita Group which are not members of the Independent Schools Council and its constituent associations

PROGRESS MONITORING INSPECTION REPORT

Name of school:	Michael House Steiner School
DfE number:	830/6010
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mr Mike Thirkell Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Jane Cooper Mr Ted Cohn Mr Andrew Rickett
Dates of inspection:	27 to 29 January 2015

CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

Section A: Introduction and summary

Section B: Compliance with regulations for registration

Section C: The quality of organisation and management

Section D: Early Years Foundation Stage

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Michael House
Address of school:	The Field, Shipley, Derbyshire, DE75 7AT
Telephone number:	01773 718050
Fax number:	08723 529550
Email address:	admin@michaelhouseschool.com
Proprietor:	Michael House School Association Ltd
Name of the Chair of the College of Teachers:	Mr Ian Stephenson
Name of the Chair of the Trustees:	Mr Nigel Gamble
Name of Administrator:	Mrs Satu Sarkas-Bosman
DfE number:	830/6010
Type of school:	Independent school associated with the Steiner Fellowship
Age range of pupils and students:	3½ to 16
Gender of pupils:	Male and female
Total number on roll: (Full-time) (Part-time)	Boys: 55 Girls: 45 Boys: 28 Girls: 11
Number of children under 5:	Boys: 28 Girls: 11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:	Boys: 1 Girls: 1
Annual fees:	£3,382.50 to £5,073.75
Type of inspection:	Progress Monitoring Inspection
Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector:	Mr Mike Thirkell
Supporting Inspectors:	Mrs Jane Cooper Mr Ted Cohn Mr Andrew Rickett
Dates of inspection:	27 to 29 January 2015

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This Progress Monitoring Inspection (PMI) was conducted by the School Inspection Service (SIS) at the request of the Department for Education (DfE). It was carried out under Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework laid down by SIS and the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and agreed with the DfE. It was conducted by independent professional inspectors, who looked at those aspects of the school's provision as required by the DfE and highlighted as regulatory failings in the previous inspection report and a subsequent action plan provided by the school.

Context of the inspection

This inspection arose as a consequence of regulatory failings reported on in the Section 162(A) full inspection held between 13 and 15 May 2014. This was followed by the provision of an action plan which was reviewed by the School Inspection Service. The school had responded positively to the requests made of it, but it was agreed that a PMI was required to ascertain the extent of regulatory compliance.

At the request of the DfE, the inspection was conducted using the independent schools' regulations in place at the time of the inspection in 2014, but that judgements be made, including about the quality of leadership and management (as is usual SIS practice in published reports), based on the most recent regulations.

Inspectors held a number of meetings with staff, in particular senior staff with responsibility for dealing with matters raised by the Action Plan. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation relating to the matters in the Action Plan, including in relation to the issues highlighted in the action plan. A sample of lessons were visited, to support judgements about the use of assessment to support progress; samples of books were reviewed; and an interview was held with pupils.

Information about the school

Michael House, a Steiner Waldorf school, was founded in 1934. It moved to its present site in 1977. It is situated close to Heanor in its own woodland adjoining the Shipley Country Park in Derbyshire. It is a comprehensive, non-sectarian and non-denominational school for boys and girls aged from three-and-a-half to sixteen years. At the time of the inspection, there were 116 pupils on roll, twenty-one of whom attend the Kindergarten classes on a part-time basis. This is a slight decrease in numbers since the Section 162A inspection in 2014. Two pupils have a statement of special learning needs and twenty one pupils have been identified by the school as having additional learning needs and difficulties. Since the last inspection, the school has put in place some important changes supported by a new leadership and management structure.

The school follows the Steiner Waldorf system for naming classes. The corresponding National Curriculum names for the classes in the school at the time of the inspection are:

Steiner Class Name	National Curriculum
Kindergarten	Nursery, Reception, Year 1
Class 1 (lower school)	Year 2
Class 2 (lower school)	Year 3
Class 3 (lower school)	Year 4
Class 4 (lower school)	Year 5
Class 5/6 (lower school)	Years 6 and 7
Class 8 (upper school)	Year 9
Class 10 (upper school)	Year 11

Summary of main findings:

The school has made good progress since the last Section 162A inspection. Most of the regulatory standards highlighted by the subsequent report and indicated as being addressed in the school's Action Plan are now met. The quality of teaching sustains the good overall quality identified previously, the standard of education meets the needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs and a suitable framework to assess all pupils' work and progress is in place. Appropriate arrangements are now in place to support the welfare, health and safety of pupils in most respects. Standards relating to fire prevention, first aid and keeping records of sanctions imposed on pupils for serious misbehaviour meet regulatory standards, but aspects of the school's provision does not yet respond fully to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with respect to defining clearly the roles of staff. The school has made good progress with respect to safeguarding issues previously raised and can now demonstrate that most of the appropriate checks have been carried out on staff and that these are recorded as required on the Single Central Register(SCR). However, all overseas checks had not been suitably completed at the time of the inspection, and those that relate to the latest revisions to the independent school regulations had not been made and recorded on the SCR. Matters relating to premises and accommodation and the provision of changing rooms and showers are met through interim measures put in place by the school. Procedures for handling complaints are suitable, despite difficulties in providing an independent panel member in dealing with one complaint. The new structure for leadership and management has been successful in guiding the school in addressing those regulations outlined as failures in the last inspection report, but some matters relating to job descriptions had still to be clarified at the time of this inspection. Since the last inspection the EYFS team has made good progress in addressing the regulatory failings identified at that time, so that there are no longer any regulatory failings in the EYFS.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

In order to comply with the regulations, the school should:

- put in place appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and ensure that such arrangements have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The school must decide who the DSL is and provide sufficient time for that person to fulfil the role effectively, including monitoring effectively the active cases on the child protection file (Part 3 Paragraph 7b);
- ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out for each member of staff with regard to their medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, qualifications and professional references, and previous employment history and complete the appropriate checks before a person's appointment (Part 4 Paragraphs 19 (2) (b) and 19 (3)); and
- with regard to the Single Central Register, in relation to each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007, ensure that the identity of each, their right to work in the United Kingdom and additional checks on those who have lived outside the United Kingdom, and the date on which this check was made, is recorded in the register (Part 4 Paragraph 22 (1-3)); and
- with respect to the latest regulations (The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014) the school must ensure that it conducts the Prohibition from Teaching Order checks (Part 4 Paragraph 18(2)(e)).

Next Steps:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might consider the following points for development:

- ensure that there is a consistent understanding of the grade descriptors for effort and progress across all staff;
- ensure that the grade descriptors are shared with pupils and parents so they have a good understanding of them;
- further develop the use of assessment data to track pupil progress and analyse it to identify trends and future teaching and learning; and
- ensure consistency in the quality of comments made on the assessment recording from so that they identify future targets for pupil progress.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

The quality of education:

The quality of teaching meets the standard and sustains the overall good quality seen during the last s162A inspection.

The previous inspection stated that in order to comply with the required standards the school should:

- provide a standard of education sufficient to meet the needs of pupils with a statement of educational needs (SEN) (paragraph 2(2)(e)); and
- put in place a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 3(g)).

The school has made good progress and the standard relating to pupils with statements of special educational need is now met. Pupils with statements of special educational need are provided with a quality of education that enables them to access the curriculum and to make good progress in their learning. An Annual Review of the statements of special educational need have been completed with the involvement of the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), class teacher, parent, local authority and members of a range of outside agencies. Agreement was reached at the Annual Review regarding future provision and this is successfully supporting the learning needs of the pupils through a particular emphasis on English, maths and behaviour. The quality of the individual education plans (IEPs) has improved with the identification of clear short, medium and long term targets which provide a clearer focus for support. Procedures have been put in place to monitor progress in meeting these targets which are leading to increased effectiveness in their impact on pupils' progress. Provision through the IEPs is now sufficient to enable pupils to access the curriculum in the classroom. Pupils requiring support engage in lessons and respond well to teachers and other pupils. The quality of IEPs has improved further with greater clarity on ongoing evaluation of the impact of the IEP on learning being used to inform future provision. The multi-disciplinary annual review for July 2015 had still to take place at the time of the Progress Monitoring Inspection. The SEN policy has been updated and now includes a clear definition of SEN as well as further details about the support procedures, but is overdue for its annual review. The school has reviewed its admission procedures. Admission forms have been adapted so that they now include identification of children with special educational needs at the time they apply to enter the school.

The school has put in place a suitable framework to assess all pupils' work and progress. Since the last inspection, the staff and trustees have agreed the introduction of a common assessment framework across Classes 1 to 8. The school has implemented an effective system which preserves Steiner educational principles. A standardised system of recording pupils' effort and progress towards achieving measurable outcomes is now used in all subjects across Classes 1 to 8, although the process of embedding the new assessment procedures across the school is still ongoing. Assessment records often include teachers' comments relating to pupils' progress. These comments vary in quality. At their best, these comments identify

clear learning targets that enable pupils to make further progress. Assessment is a regular item in staff meetings and teacher mentoring group meetings. This ensures that through ongoing discussion, teachers are continuously evaluating the impact of assessment on pupils' progress, and are developing their understanding of how assessment links with planning. Schemes of work have been revised and a standard format is being used across the school. The identification of explicit aims and measurable objectives in schemes of work and their regular assessment against grades for effort and progress makes a direct link between planning and assessment. Opportunities for assessment for learning within lessons is an area of ongoing development. The school's internal quality assurance has evaluated effectively the impact of the new assessment system on learning and progress, and has identified areas for further improvement. Assessment information is beginning to be entered onto an electronic database with the intention of it being used to track individual pupils' progress and to inform the progress of different groups of pupils over time.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The previous inspection stated that in order to comply with the required standards the school should ensure that:

- appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7 (a) and 7 (b));
- arrangements for fire safety are established which comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (paragraph 13);
- the school's written policy on first aid is implemented effectively (paragraph 14); and
- written records are kept of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour (paragraph 16).

Since the last inspection the school has reviewed and updated the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, although one aspect is still not fully met. The revised policy is a clear and comprehensive document which provides detailed and informative guidance to staff about all aspects of safeguarding, and reflects the latest government guidance '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*'. The school has been robust in ensuring that the staff have all received basic safeguarding training, understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe, and are familiar with the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. Four members of staff have received recent inter-agency safeguarding training at an appropriate level for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). There is very good awareness of the importance of safeguarding in the school. However, while the policy specifies a named DSL and deputy, there is a lack of clarity in practice about who the school's DSL is. None of the members of staff with the appropriate training has a job description for the role of DSL, nor have time and resources been allocated to the work as specified by the latest guidance. The impact is to diffuse accountability for safeguarding across the whole school, so that, for example, although the Child Protection files are clear and well-organised, the on-going cases require more timely and active management.

As proposed in the agreed Action Plan, the school has recently revised its health and safety policy, so that this is now a useful document which covers all areas of activity both on and off-site and guides staff to consider and minimise potential risks to pupils. The pupils are supervised appropriately and report that they feel safe. Any incidents concerning their welfare are recorded effectively and shared with parents appropriately.

The arrangements for fire safety have been revised and are now good, fully meeting the requirements of the regulation. The school has appointed and secured appropriate training for fire officers in both the main school and Kindergarten. All members of staff have now been trained on fire safety and this has contributed to their good level of awareness. Regular fire drills are held for all areas of the school, including the Kindergarten, as required, and these are recorded appropriately. Equipment is tested regularly and properly maintained.

At the time of the last inspection the school had a suitable written policy for first aid but this was not implemented effectively. The school has rectified this by ensuring that training in paediatric first aid for the Kindergarten staff is up to date and that all members of the main school staff received basic training in first aid at the start of the autumn term 2014. An accident book has been introduced for the Kindergarten so that all accidents and injuries are now recorded appropriately and parents are made aware of these when they collect their children.

The school now keeps a written record of all sanctions imposed on pupils for serious misbehaviour. There are clear procedures for ensuring that incidents of poor behaviour and sanctions are recorded systematically and filed appropriately. This system allows information to be collated and used to track individual children who need support to improve their behaviour. The school should monitor this information carefully to ensure that best use is made of it.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The previous inspection stated that in order to comply with the required standards the school should ensure that:

- appropriate checks have been carried out in respect to each member of staff with regard to their medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, qualifications and professional references, and previous employment history and that the appropriate checks are completed before a person's appointment (paragraphs 19 (2) (b) and 19 (3)).
- with regard to the Single Central Register, in relation to each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007, the identity of each, their right to work in the United Kingdom and additional checks on those who have lived outside the United Kingdom, and the date on which this check was made, is recorded in the register (paragraph 22 (1-3)).

The school has made good progress and can now demonstrate that the appropriate checks have been carried out for almost all current members of staff and that these are recorded as required on the Single Central Register. However, 19 2(b) and 22 (1-3) remain unmet. Overseas checks and Prohibition from Teaching Order checks are still awaited and therefore not recorded. During the inspection the school was

still awaiting information from an overseas check on one member of staff. However, supervision has been thorough. Confidential staff files contain evidence to support the information on the register. The school has also improved its recruitment procedure to ensure that relevant information is sought from applicants in good time to enable checks to be made before the successful candidate is appointed.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The previous inspection stated that in order to comply with the required standards the school should ensure that:

- suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged eleven years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23A).

The regulation is judged to have been met, but the school has not yet been able to make changes to its accommodation. The agreed Action Plan accepted that as an interim measure lessons in PE for secondary aged pupils would be timetabled at the end of the afternoon sessions, and this has been done. In the longer term there are firm plans under discussion for showers and changing facilities to be installed in one of the buildings.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The previous inspection stated that in order to comply with the required standards the school should ensure that:

- the school's complaints procedure, stipulates that a copy of any findings and recommendations of the panel are provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, and made available for inspection on the school premises.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and the complaints policy and procedures now meet the regulations. They include appropriate arrangements for the appointment of a panel and that the recommendations made by the panel are provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. The procedures and detailed files and other documents relating to complaints, including current complaints were made available and scrutinised closely by inspectors during the inspection.

In light of the school's recent experience in handling complaints, they have begun to review their current complaints' policy, in particular with respect to changing the length of time between each stage of the procedure. Inspectors agree that current time periods place too much pressure on the responsible persons in terms of organisation and the investigation of complex issues. This review is timely and does not detract from the suitability of the procedures overall. With respect to a recent complaint when the school was unable to provide an independent panel member to comply with the timetable for handling complaints provided in the policy, this resulted from unforeseen circumstances, and in the inspectors' judgement was neither the fault of the school nor as a consequence of any negligence on its part.

SECTION C: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Structures and roles relating to the leadership and management of the school have been reviewed and revised since the last inspection as outlined in the Action Plan.

Leadership and management have successfully guided the school in addressing regulations outlined as failures in the last inspection report. Whilst a structure to support the school's further development has been established, leadership acknowledges that the process is still ongoing and that a number of the new procedures are still in the process of being embedded. Since the last inspection a new elected senior management team have been put in place which has a clear understanding of their responsibilities and which have the appropriate skills and knowledge for the roles, demonstrated for example through the systems of quality assurance that have been established. The Collegiate has been reduced to form successfully, in the words of the school, 'a smaller and more agile team'. Trustees, including the chair of the trustees, provide a strong and informed presence to guide developments. Leaders and senior managers fulfil their responsibilities and have the ability to improve the school further. The school demonstrates a collaborative working environment, supported by good communication structures which reflect and build on the Steiner ethos. The well-being of pupils is actively supported through the welfare and safeguarding procedures in place. Pupils confirm that they appreciate the support they receive.

Leadership and management have done well in addressing the regulations identified as failures in the last inspection report and the Action Plan. They will, however, need to be alert to all new regulations as they are introduced. The delegation of responsibility should be supported by clear lines of communication to support this process, including the provision of detailed written job descriptions for the senior management team.

PART D: EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Since the last inspection the EYFS team has made good progress in addressing the regulatory failings identified at that time, so that there are no longer any regulatory failings in the EYFS.

Learning and Development

The previous inspection stated that in order to comply with the required standards the school should ensure that:

- guidance for the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that they complete the EYFS ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them;
- the planning and implementation of each area of learning and development through planned purposeful play; and
- in mathematics, that greater consideration is given to shape, space and measurement.

The school has adopted the latest version of the Steiner kindergarten profile produced by the Steiner Waldorf School Fellowship (SWSF), which covers all the areas of the EYFS learning goals from which Steiner schools have not received exemption, and records various levels of achievement in relation to these areas. Staff are using the profile effectively to gather good quality evidence of children's progress across the areas of the EYFS learning goals, which will provide good evidence of achievement for the EYFS profile. This evidence will also demonstrate when children are ready to progress beyond the EYFS stage of learning.

The planning for the implementation of the EYFS areas of learning are now more effective. Learning opportunities in various areas of the learning goals are identified in planning documentation, although on occasions these need more detail. A good feature of the planning is the way in which staff are identifying the need for more learning opportunities in relation to particular aspects of areas of learning goals, such as further development of expressive language, with subtle unobtrusive guidance involving the child in more role-play activities, such as puppet shows.

A stronger emphasis has been given to work on shape and management of space in the curriculum. Evidence is gathered about the achievement of children in this area more effectively through the use of photographic evidence.

Welfare and Safeguarding

The previous inspection stated that in order to comply with the required standards the school should ensure that:

- all the necessary steps are being taken to keep children safe and well;
- The school ensures that all staff follow policies and procedures and implement these to safeguard children;

- all the relevant personnel attend a child protection training course, enabling them to understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect;
- people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles.

The school now takes all the necessary steps to keep children safe and well. Fire drills are carried out each term, with appropriate records kept of evacuation times and any issues to be addressed. Staff have received training in fire safety and a fire marshal has been appointed for the kindergarten. The health and welfare of children are closely monitored and staff work closely with parents in doing this. A health and safety audit of the outside play area has been conducted by a health and safety specialist, identifying various issues for attention in the outside area, which have all been attended to, making this area safe for children. Staff know the relevant policies and procedures and implement them effectively to safeguard children. All staff have attended appropriate child protection training and understand what to do if they observe any indications of possible abuse or neglect. One member of staff has done higher-level training suitable for a designated safeguarding lead and takes this role in the kindergarten. The school has now recorded all the necessary checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children, as they have done with the part-time volunteer who works in classrooms.

Health and Safety

The previous inspection stated that in order to comply with the required standards the school should ensure that:

- records are kept of accidents, injuries and first aid treatment and the provider complies with the requirements of the health and safety legislation.

Since the last inspection the school has used an incident book to record all the necessary information about accidents, injuries and first aid treatment, which is signed by the relevant member of staff and counter-signed by parents, providing a satisfactory record of the accident, injury and treatment. The two teachers have undergone paediatric first aid training and other staff have done first aid training.

Complaints

Staff are aware of how to deal with complaints, including keeping appropriate records and liaising closely with the complaints coordinator, but none referring to incidents since the last inspection has been received.

Recommendations to the Department for Education

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan	Good progress
Compliance with regulatory requirements	
The school requires improvement and must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), and associated requirements	
Put in place appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and ensure that such arrangements have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The school must decide who the DSL is and provide sufficient time for that person to fulfil the role effectively, including monitoring effectively the active cases on the CP file.	Part 3, 7(a) and 7 (b) – now Part 3, 7(a) and (b) of 2014 regs
With regard to the Single Central Register, in relation to each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007, to ensure that the identity of each, their right to work in the United Kingdom and additional checks on those who have lived outside the United Kingdom, and the date on which this check was made, is recorded in the register	Part 4, 22 (1-3) – now Part 4, 21(1) to (3) of 2014 regs
To ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out in respect to each member of staff with regard to their medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, qualifications and professional references, and previous employment history and complete the appropriate checks before a person's appointment.	Part 4, 19 (2) (b) and 19 (3) – now Part 4, 18(2)(c) and 18(3) of 2014 regs
In relation the latest Independent School Standards and the DfE's requirements- The school had not conducted the Prohibition from Teaching Order checks. It started these during the inspection. One overseas check is also still awaited.	Not fully met – Part 4, 18(2)(b) of 2014 regs.