

Smallbrook School

Units 1 - 4, Sleep Industrial Estate, Sleep, Nr. Wem, Shropshire SY4 3HE

Inspection date

11 May 2023

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 32(1)(c)

- There is an appropriate safeguarding policy in place. It pays due regard to the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. It is published on the school's website.
- The designated safeguarding lead and three deputy designated safeguarding leads have all completed a wide range of safeguarding training. They meet regularly to discuss relevant safeguarding issues.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the contextual safeguarding risks. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep pupils and students safe. There are appropriate systems for reporting and recording any concerns. Leaders respond swiftly when issues are raised. They liaise with the relevant external agencies when required and follow up on concerns to ensure that pupils and students are safe.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 16(a) and 16(b)

- There is an appropriate health and safety policy in place. There is a facilities manager who works on site full time to ensure that all the relevant checks are made so that the premises are maintained to a high standard.
- There is an appropriate fire risk assessment for the current buildings in place. Fire evacuation drills and fire safety equipment checks take place regularly. Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that the additional premises are likely to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- An appropriate risk assessment policy is in place. Leaders have carried out a range of risk assessments. These demonstrate that both staff and leaders understand the potential hazards and the appropriate control measures required.

Paragraph 14

- There is an established staffing structure that ensures a high ratio of staff to pupils and students. Leaders have recruited several additional staff to ensure that this ratio is maintained when the number of pupils and students increases.

- Leaders have ensured that these independent school standards (the standards) are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to approve the material change.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b) and 21(6)

- Leaders have a rigorous approach to the recruitment of staff and ensure that all of the appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken. This includes relevant checks on staff who have worked in other countries and those who are in management positions.
- Leaders do not use supply staff but are aware of the appropriate checks that should be made if they did.
- The single central record details all of the required information for staff and regular visitors and is stored securely.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 24(2), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b)

- The current school buildings are extensive and provide suitable accommodation for the proposed number of pupils and students. There are 20 classrooms designed to have no more than four pupils or students per room. In addition to this, there is a woodwork workshop, a car maintenance workshop and a room designed for pupils and students to cook in. There is also a newly refurbished computer suite, a music room and an animal care room.
- There are several separate toilet facilities for boys and girls. There are also separate toilet facilities for staff and visitors. All toilets have suitable washing facilities, and the temperature of the water does not pose a risk of scalding.
- There is a suitable medical room located in one of the buildings. It has a bed and washing facilities within the room. It is located close to toilet facilities.
- In all classrooms, there is suitable natural daylight as well as adequate artificial lighting. In the specialist workshops, there is appropriate artificial lighting. The acoustics in all rooms are suitable.
- Cold drinking-water is clearly labelled which is available throughout the day. The cold water supplies are in separate areas from the toilet facilities.
- There are suitable spaces outside comprising of a hard-surfaced space and large grassed areas. These spaces are suitable for the purpose of playing outside. Currently,

all physical education takes place off site. Pupils are transported to suitable venues and use the changing and shower facilities at the venues.

- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor body has a clear rationale for why it wants to expand the numbers at the school. It has invested significant resources in preparing for an increase in numbers and ensuring that the standards are met.
- The proprietor body has a range of systems in place to quality assure the work of leaders at the school. This includes the use of external quality assurance.
- The proprietor body has a secure understanding of the standards. It has extensive experience of running independent special schools.
- Leaders have the relevant experience to ensure that the needs of an increased number of pupils and students would continue to be met.
- The proprietor body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor body has ensured that it has a suitable accessibility plan in place that meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	134000
DfE registration number	893/6026
Inspection number	10287162

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Andrew Huxley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£73736 to £86909
Telephone number	01939233042
Website	www.smallbrookschoo.org.uk/
Email address	deborah.dalton@smallbrookschoo.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	21 to 23 September 2021

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 19	7 to 19	7 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	49	65	80

Reason for inspector's recommendations

The original request for an increase in numbers was for an extra 15 pupils making the total 65. The proprietor has submitted a further request to increase numbers to 95. There are additional buildings being constructed, but they were not on site at the time of the inspection. The DFE requested that the inspector assess how many pupils the current buildings could accommodate.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	49	65
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	49	65
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	49	65
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	49	65

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	27	To meet pupils' needs
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	To meet pupils' needs
Number of staff in the welfare provision	17	To meet pupils' needs

Information about this school

- Smallbrook School is an independent day special school for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE to establish if the school would be likely to meet all of the relevant standards if the proposed material change, to increase the number of pupils in the school to 65, is implemented. This is the school's second material change inspection.
- The inspection focused on some of the welfare, health and safety standards in part 3, including the supervision of pupils and appropriate deployment of staff; all of the standards in part 4 about the suitability of staff; all of the standards in part 5, premises and accommodation and the standards in part 8, quality of leadership and management of schools.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the Midlands regional director who is also the chair of the governing body, the school business manager who is also the designated safeguarding lead, and the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector toured the accommodation with the facilities manager and the headteacher.
- The inspector scrutinised documents relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding documents and the single central record.

Inspection team

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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