

Rugeley School

Blithbury Road, Blithbury, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 3JQ

Inspection date

7 March 2024

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

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

- The school's safeguarding policy takes account of the most recent government guidance and is available on the school's website.
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the three deputy DSLs have completed suitable training in relation to their role. There will always be at least one member of the safeguarding team in school.
- Safeguarding training for all staff focuses on government guidance updates, including dealing with pupil disclosures and recording concerns. This academic year, the school organised specific training linked to monitoring and filtering of online activity. New members of staff complete a two-week induction programme that includes safeguarding elements.
- Leaders are knowledgeable about the increased vulnerability of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know what to do if a pupil makes a safeguarding disclosure. Pupils name a trusted adult who they would go to if they are worried or concerned about something.
- The proprietor body has ensured that these independent school standards (the standards) are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 14, 16(a) and 16(b)

- A detailed health and safety policy and risk assessment policy are in place. There is clear evidence that these policies reflect robust practice within the school to promote the safety of pupils, staff and visitors.
- Fire safety checks, such as emergency lighting checks, are carried out on a regular basis. All checks are recorded to support the monitoring of fire safety. There are an extensive number of staff trained as fire marshals to further promote fire safety across the school.

- The high staff-to-pupil ratio means that pupils are closely supervised throughout the school day. Staff know the pupils well, which helps pupils to build trusting relationships with them.
- The proprietor body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

Paragraphs 18(1), 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(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 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), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)

- The school has appropriate recruitment procedures in place. All the necessary pre-employment checks are made before an offer of employment is given.
- The headteacher and nine other members of staff are safer recruitment trained. At least one of them sits on every recruitment panel.
- The format of the single central record contains the full range of pre-employment checks. It is stored centrally in an electronic format. The human resources administrator maintains the single central record and updates it when a new member of staff is recruited. It is checked every term by the quality improvement leader.
- The school has robust systems in place when they need to use supply staff. However, due to the needs of the pupils, the school does not use supply staff to cover unplanned staff absences.
- The proprietor body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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(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 new school building was originally a residential care home owned by the proprietor body. It is situated on the same site as the existing school. The building has been renovated, decorated and furnished to an exceptionally high standard. The school is surrounded by picturesque countryside and rural views.
- In the new building, there are three large classrooms that can be used for general teaching purposes. There is a sensory room and a specialist room to support the teaching of food technology. In addition, there is a staff room, office, medical room and dining room. There is plenty of space for the proposed number of pupils to learn.

- There are a sufficient number of individual toilets available to pupils, including accessible toilets. These contain hot and cold running water and handwashing facilities. There are separate toilets for staff and visitors. Changing facilities and poolside showers are also available for pupils to use if they wish to do so.
- The two medical rooms are spacious and contain a washing facility. There are locked cabinets to store medication. The medical rooms are adjacent to a toilet.
- The outdoor area consists of an all-weather field, courtyard area, two trim trails and spacious walkways around the main school building. There is plenty of space for pupils to play and socialise. The space is also suitable for outdoor physical education (PE) lessons. To supplement the PE curriculum, the school has a large sports hall and a swimming pool on site.
- Pupils can obtain drinking-water from a water fountain. In addition, all drinking-water taps are labelled as such.
- The proprietor body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor body has a clear rationale for why they want to increase the number of pupils on roll. This is linked to the increased demand for school places for pupils with autism. In addition, the school wants to extend its post-16 provision and promote preparation for adulthood further. The proprietor body's vision is to support pupils' development and provide them with a range of experiences so they can move on to destinations linked to their potential and personal aspirations. There is strong evidence that this vision is shared by school leaders who have put provision in place to prepare pupils for their next steps in education and training.
- The proprietor body has established a multi-layered leadership structure, which they use to support and hold school leaders to account. This ensures that school leaders and staff fulfil their responsibilities effectively. A range of monitoring and reporting systems are in place, many of which report to the governing body. The governing body has been strengthened through the appointment of specialist governors who are independent of the proprietor body. This supports the proprietor body to ensure that the standards are met consistently well over time.
- Supported by the proprietor body, leaders have implemented changes to reduce workload and avoid the duplication of tasks. For example, they have adapted planning documents to make them more manageable. The behaviour team plays a key role in supporting teaching staff to manage pupils' behaviour. This enables them to focus on teaching and learning. There is a well-being team that provides staff with support when required. The team passes on the views of staff to leaders so that they can act upon any requests or concerns. For example, staff requested attachment and trauma training which was subsequently organised. In addition, leaders have organised a range of activities and special events, such as a scavenger hunt, to support staff well-being and promote teamwork.

- The proprietor body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has ensured that a suitable accessibility plan is in place. It focuses on the physical environment, the curriculum and the sharing of information. The plan meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school considers and plans for the needs of pupils with SEND.

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	132735
DfE registration number	860/6024
Inspection number	10309083

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 school
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services Ltd
Chair	John Anderson
Headteacher	Lisa Price
Annual fees (day pupils)	£91,223 to £143,293
Telephone number	01889 504400
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk
Email address	rugeleyschool@aspriscs.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	7 to 9 March 2023

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 19	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	58	73	73

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	58	73
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	58	73
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	58	73
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	58	73

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	65	78
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2	4

Information about this school

- Rugeley School is an independent residential special school. It is situated in Blithbury in Staffordshire.
- The school caters for pupils who have autism. Pupils have complex needs and some display challenging behaviours. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- A range of local authorities place pupils in the school. Most pupils arrive and leave the school by local authority-funded transport.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's last full inspection was in March 2023. The school was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- The material change inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether the school is likely to meet the relevant standards if the proposed material change is implemented. The proposed material change is to increase the number of pupils on roll from 58 to 73. This was the school's first material change inspection.
- Many documents were reviewed by the inspector prior to the inspection. Additional documents were scrutinised on site.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the safeguarding team, three middle leaders, the site manager and the member of staff responsible for overseeing the administration of medicines. The inspector also met with a representative of the proprietor body and the chair of governors.
- As the inspection included a full-day on-site visit, a tour of the premises was completed.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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