

Sedgemoor Manor School

Blackford Road, Mark, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 4NP

Inspection date

8 July 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 to 7 (b)

- The proprietor ensures that safeguarding is made a priority. There is an up-to-date safeguarding policy on the school's website, which covers all aspects of the latest statutory guidance. The policy is accompanied by documentation which makes it clear how safeguarding concerns about pupils or staff should be reported. The school ensures that this policy and associated procedures are implemented effectively.
- The school provides staff with regular, appropriate training. As a result, staff are confident in identifying and sharing concerns about pupils with leaders. Leaders, in turn, take appropriate action when they consider a pupil to be at risk. They work closely with external partners as required. This helps to protect pupils.
- The school keeps pupils' attendance, behaviour and pastoral needs under close review. It has a strong understanding of potential risks to pupils and is alert to any indicators of concern. The school encourages pupils to share any worries they have with a trusted adult. This helps the school provide the support that pupils need.

Paragraph 11

- The school has a written health and safety policy. It ensures that this is implemented effectively. Staff understand their responsibilities, such as reporting any issues that require remedial work. Leaders ensure that timely action is taken to resolve these issues. This helps to ensure that pupils and staff are kept safe.

Paragraph 12

- The current school buildings comply fully with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Fire signs, exits and extinguishers are clearly indicated and suitably located throughout the school's existing buildings. The proprietor ensures that the school's fire safety arrangements are checked regularly by appropriately qualified staff or professionals. The school ensures that recommended actions are addressed swiftly and that regular checks are maintained. For example, fire doors are tested and adjustments are made as required. The effective systems utilised by leaders mean that policy and procedure are well placed to be adapted should the material change

be granted.

- The proposed new building is a former boarding house. It is currently in the final stages of being refitted. Smoke alarms have been installed and fire doors are in place. Emergency gas cut-off systems in the science classrooms have been added. However, door closers for fire doors have not been fitted, fire extinguishers have not been installed and further action is required to complete the fire alarm system. Consequently, the building is not currently ready to admit pupils. Building work is proceeding in line with the school's plan to ensure the refitted building meets the requirements of the independent school standards. Once the remaining work has been completed, the independent school standards in this part are therefore likely to be met.

Paragraph 14

- The school ensures that there are appropriate levels of supervision of pupils. Pupils learn in small groups, and sometimes one to one, according to the requirements of their education, health and care plans (EHC plan). During breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils continue to be supervised according to their needs. For example, some pupils have their lunch with staff, while others make use of the school's grounds. Leaders have considered carefully the required staffing ratios should the number of pupils on roll increase.

Paragraphs 16 to 16(b)

- There are appropriate and detailed risk assessments in place to safeguard pupils' welfare. These are reviewed in line with the proprietor's policies. The school considers carefully risks to pupils such as when they arrive on site in vehicles, when on a school trip or visit or when they use equipment during cooking activities. It puts in place suitable mitigations for these risks, including for individual pupils where required. The proprietor has ensured that the school is likely to continue meeting the independent school standards relating to part 3 checked on this inspection should the material change be granted.

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

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3) to 21(2)

- The proprietor ensures that suitable checks are made on staff. These checks are recorded diligently on the single central record. Safer recruitment processes are robust and followed assiduously by the school. This ensures that staff are safe to work with pupils. Plans to expand the size of the school team have been considered in a systematic way. As a result, the proprietor has ensured that all elements of part 4 are likely to remain met if the material change is granted.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23(1)(a) to 23(2), 24(1) to 24(3), 25, 26, 27(a) to 27(b), 28(1) to 28(2)(b), 29(1) to 29(2), 31(a) to 31(c)

- The school's current buildings have been appropriately refurbished to provide its curriculum and wider offer to pupils. This includes facilities for teaching academic

subjects and providing therapeutic support. The site is well maintained, with appropriate external lighting in place and suitable outdoor space. The proprietor has ensured that the site meets health and safety requirements, including those relating to fire safety. Established processes are in place to check and maintain the buildings to the required standard. For instance, there is a well-planned and implemented maintenance schedule for checking water quality. The school has well-considered plans to manage vehicular movement around the site should the material change be granted.

- The proposed new building is a former boarding house. It is spacious, well lit and well ventilated across both the ground and first floors. The proprietor's plans to refurbish and reorganise the current buildings are well conceived. Works have been undertaken to create a range of different-sized rooms. For example, larger teaching spaces have been created by removing walls between former bedrooms. A kitchen for teaching pupils life skills has been installed. However, at present, the building works have not been fully completed. For example, the flooring in the kitchen and boxing of hot water pipes in some rooms are not finished. Equipment for therapeutic work has not been installed. Consequently, the building is not ready to admit pupils.
- The proposed new building houses the school's current medical room. This has been temporarily moved during the building works. The medical room in the new building has a sink but does not currently have any other facilities, such as a bed or medicine storage. There is a toilet room adjacent to the medical room, but the toilet itself has not yet been fitted. The medical room, once complete, will be solely used for first aid, medical examination and for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. Medicines are currently stored in a suitably secure space in another building.
- There are suitable toilet facilities in the building. There are separate boys' and girls' toilets, as well as gender-neutral toilets, for the sole use of pupils. Separate staff toilets will be located on both floors. Pupils aged 11 years or over will continue to benefit from suitable changing accommodation and showers when they receive physical education. This is located adjacent to the school's existing indoor sports facilities.
- Pupils have access to suitable drinking-water facilities in the current school buildings. However, these facilities are not in place in the new building. The school has appropriate plans to ensure pupils have access to drinking-water once the building works are complete.
- The proprietor's plans, and current systems and processes, show that it is well placed to ensure the independent school standards in part 5 are likely to remain met once building works are complete and if the material change is granted.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The school's plans for the material change are convincing and robust. It works closely with relevant local authorities to help ensure that provision meets local need. This has led to the exploration of an improved site to allow the school to strengthen its curriculum offer, as well as meet the increase in demand identified by local authorities.

From this, leaders have developed detailed plans to manage the redevelopment of the site and staffing arrangements to provide for more pupils. There is compelling evidence that the proprietor will ensure that part 8 of the independent school standards will remain met if the material change is granted.

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	123933
DfE registration number	933/6185
Inspection number	10342651

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	Aspris Children's Services Ltd
Chair	John Anderson
Headteacher	Emily Bott
Annual fees (day pupils)	£93,637 - £120,150
Telephone number	01278641632
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/sedgemoor-manor-school-somerset/
Email address	sedgemoormanorschool@aspriscs.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	23 to 25 May 2023

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	73	100	100

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	73	100
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	73	100
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	73	100
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	73	100

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	23	27
Number of part-time teaching staff	4	4.5
Number of staff in the welfare provision	47	53

Information about this school

- Sedgemoor Manor School is a specialist provision for pupils with diagnosis of autism and associated complex needs. All pupils have EHC plans. Their placements are funded by several different local authorities.
- The school is included on the list of approved independent special schools, in accordance with section 41 of the Children's and Families Act 2014.
- The proprietor is Aspris Children's Services Ltd.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school received its last standard inspection in May 2023.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to the proprietor's request to change premises and increase the pupil capacity from 76 to 100.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, site staff and the chair of governors.
- The inspector toured the current school site as well as the proposed new building. During both tours, the inspector reviewed current provision and discussed leaders' plans to develop the proposed new site. The inspector considered the suitability and safety of the proposed new accommodation, as well as the feasibility of this allowing an increase in pupil numbers.
- The inspector reviewed and evaluated documents provided by the school, including risk assessments, policies, the single central record and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

James Oldham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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