

# Blackford Education (Schools) Ltd T/A the Libra School

Edgemoor Court, South Radworthy, South Molton, Devon EX36 3LN

**Inspection date**

3 March 2017

**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(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)*

- The school has a highly developed culture of safeguarding. School leaders have a good understanding of their responsibilities with regard to keeping children safe. Staff receive frequent and regular updates on safeguarding issues and undertake extensive safeguarding training. Thorough induction processes ensure that all new staff understand the school's safeguarding expectations and procedures. As a result there is a culture of vigilance in the school that places the safety of pupils at its centre.
- The school's safeguarding policy has regard to the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State, 'Keeping children safe in education', September 2016. It is published on the school's website.

#### *Paragraph 11*

- The school has a thorough and comprehensive range of health and safety policies to ensure that the relevant laws are complied with. For example, all gas safety checks and portable appliance testing are up to date.

#### *Paragraph 12*

- The school complies with the relevant fire safety regulations. The school's appointed fire warden undertakes regular checks on fire safety equipment and procedures. For example, the fire alarms are checked on a weekly basis. Regular fire drills take place and any issues that arise are addressed before the next drill. Annual maintenance of items such as fire extinguishers ensures that they are in operational condition.

#### *Paragraph 14*

- Pupils are well supervised at all times, both during lessons and at social times. Staff numbers are sufficient to ensure this and have recently been increased in anticipation of the rise in pupil numbers that the school is proposing in its material change request.

- Given the special educational needs and/or disabilities of the pupils at the school, they sometimes present challenging behaviour. The school uses restrictive physical intervention in a considered fashion and all staff are trained in it. The record-keeping of such incidents is extremely thorough and aimed at analysing incidents in order to reduce their frequency. The school's records show that pupils' behaviour improves during their time at the school and that the occasions when physical intervention is used reduce as a result.

*Paragraph 16–16(b)*

- The school's policies on risk assessment and risk management are up to date and thorough. Individual risk assessments exist for all educational and extra-curricular activities. They are used effectively to identify risks and to take steps to reduce them.
- School leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

*Paragraph 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3)*

- The school makes all the necessary pre-employment checks on teachers and other members of staff.

*Paragraph 19(2)–19(2)(d), 19(3)*

- The school does not currently use any supply staff. When they are employed, they are subject to the same checks as permanent members of staff, in addition to the information supplied by any agency.

*Paragraph 20(6)–20(6)(c)*

- The school does not have a governing body. The proprietors undergo the same checks as members of staff.

*Paragraph 21(1)–21(5)(c)*

- The single central register of checks on teachers and other staff is very thoroughly and efficiently maintained.
- School leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraph 23(1)–23(1)(c)*

- Suitable toilet facilities are provided for the use of pupils. They are all individual toilets that are lockable from the inside. Suitable changing and shower facilities are provided for pupils who receive physical education.

*Paragraph 24(1)–24(2)*

- The school has a medical room for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. It has a bed, toilet, sink and shower.

*Paragraph 25*

- The school's premises and facilities are maintained to an extremely high standard, ensuring that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are well catered for. The school has sufficient space to accommodate the proposed increase in numbers without this being compromised.

*Paragraph 26*

- The acoustic conditions of the classrooms ensure that they are suited to the activities that take place within them.

*Paragraph 27–27(b)*

- The lighting in all rooms is suitable. Automatic external lighting is in place outside all the school's buildings.

*Paragraph 28(1)–28(2)(b)*

- Pupils have ready access to drinking water at all times. Washing facilities are available in all toilets. The temperature of the hot water does not pose a scalding risk to users.

*Paragraph 29(1)–29(1)(b)*

- The school has large grounds which pupils can use during physical education or to play outside.
- School leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

**Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

*Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that all the standards checked on this material change inspection are likely to be met if the proposed increase in pupil numbers is implemented.
- As a result, the standards in Part 8 are also likely to be met.

## **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	133392
DfE registration number	878/6202
Inspection number	10033489

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	Special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Blackford Education Ltd T/A the Libra School
Headteacher	Joan Wilkes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,550–£70,200
Telephone number	01598 740044
Website	<a href="http://libraschool.co.uk">libraschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@libraschool.co.uk">admin@libraschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	20–22 January 2016

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	24	30	30

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	24	30
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	24	30
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	23	30
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	24	30

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	7	9
Number of part-time teaching staff	4	4
Number of staff in the welfare provision	17	22

## Information about this school

- The Libra School is owned by Blackford Education (Schools) Ltd. It is an independent special school that caters for pupils with severe social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Virtually all the pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. All have been placed at the school by the local authority.

- The school's last standard inspection was in January 2016, when it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The school is applying for a material change to the number of pupils in the school. It proposes to raise the number from 24 to 30.
- Prior to arriving on-site, the inspector reviewed the school's application for a material change and other documentation, including that available on the school's website, such as the safeguarding policy.
- He undertook observations in lessons and conducted a full inspection of the premises. In addition he held meetings with the proprietor, school leaders and the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector considered documentation relating to the school's policies and procedures with respect to health and safety, fire regulations and risk assessments.
- The inspector examined the single central register of pre-employment checks made on teachers and other staff.

## Inspection team

Stephen Lee, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector



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