

# Access School

Holbrook Villa Farm, Harmer Hill, Broughton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 3EW

## Inspection dates

20 June 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

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy that reflects current statutory guidance, and many aspects of the schools arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are thorough.
- The health and safety policy promotes effective actions to provide and maintain a safe working environment for pupils, staff and visitors. It details arrangements for handling health and safety matters, including training requirements, and sets out individual and organisational responsibilities. Health and safety is a standing item on staff meeting agendas.
- The school policy for fire safety sets out clear intentions designed to keep everyone safe through set procedures, appropriate training and regular evacuation drills. A weekly check of the premises by designated staff and a six-monthly check by an external fire safety company provide a measured approach to reducing risk. These checks are logged and then overseen by the headteacher.
- Risk assessments are taken very seriously by the school and include premises-related issues, curriculum activities and events. The individual risks posed by the difficulties associated with the potentially risky behaviours of pupils are also taken into account. The risk assessment policy brings all these features together to enable inclusion rather than prevent pupils from participation.
- The school's policy framework is maintained on a shared drive that enables staff instant access to all school policies, and staff are required to sign to say they have read and understood the policies. This proactive approach by leaders sets clear expectations about individual responsibilities towards keeping children, staff and visitors safe.
- Staff duty rotas and a school timetable are in place to ensure that pupils are adequately and appropriately supervised at all times through the school day. If individual pupil risk assessments indicate higher levels of supervision are needed, then the school responds accordingly.

- The school is sensitively organised into designated key stage areas that helps to support the age-related needs of pupils. A split lunch also helps to separate the identities of older and younger pupils, and reduces the risk of age-related bullying during social time.
- Providing the school continues to manage behaviour effectively, the proposed increase in pupil numbers and staffing levels is unlikely to affect adversely the arrangements to promote safeguarding and keep pupils safe.
- The requirements for these standards are likely to be met if the implementation of the material change is approved.

#### 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(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)(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(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)*

- The single central register is kept in electronic format, accessible by the parent company's human resources team, and the school's headteacher and administrator.
- All staff, regardless of their roles and responsibilities, are subject to the same checking procedures and are included on the register of checks.
- The school uses a regular agency when supply staff are required. The school also performs its own checks in addition to those of the agency on any staff supplied in this way. On occasion, the headteacher has sent supply staff away if they have not arrived with the necessary documents.
- The school has demonstrated rigour in pursuing right to work authorisation for overseas employees. New staff do not start until all relevant checks have been made.
- The requirements for the standards in this part are likely to be met if the implementation of the material change is approved.

#### 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), 29(1)(b)*

- Teaching groups are kept at four to five pupils, and classroom spaces are large enough to accommodate this number of pupils and their staff. There are always more rooms available than there are classes. This arrangement enables some one-to-one work if tensions start to surface or if learning needs demand a different activity in a quieter setting. From September 2017, two more rooms are coming into service and this added capacity should enable the school to absorb the proposed increase with minimal, if any, disruption.
- In addition to the designated teaching spaces, three new pods have been installed in

the centre of the site as a therapeutic 'village'. This provision is managed by a qualified play therapist, and offers a nurturing environment to deal with emotional issues.

- The school accommodation is well maintained. It is in the process of being updated and redecorated throughout, and both educational and site management staff are working hard to create a safe and attractive learning environment.
- Adequate arrangements for managing sick pupils are set out clearly in the school's first aid policy.
- Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils. Key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils take their physical education lessons at local leisure facilities where access to shower and changing facilities are provided. Drinking water is clearly labelled.
- The school benefits from an extensive outdoor space that enables play, socialising, gardening skills and care of small animals to take place. The grounds are well kept and contribute towards an atmosphere of calm.
- The requirements for these standard are likely to be met if the implementation of the material change is approved.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

##### *Paragraph 32(1)(c)*

- The school's prospectus is published on its website. The school prospectus contains a suitable and clearly expressed safeguarding policy statement, and also informs parents that the full safeguarding policy is available from the school on request.
- The requirements for this standard are likely to be met if the implementation of the material change is approved.

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

##### *Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- School leaders and managers have continued to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and ensured that the school continues to meet all the independent school standards specified in this material change inspection, and in doing so demonstrated good skills and knowledge to ensure that those standards are met consistently.
- School leaders and managers are ambitious to be the best they can be, and have taken appropriate steps through the solid development of policies and procedures matched with staff training and rigorous monitoring to safeguard and keep children safe. They have planned strategically and effectively to meet the needs of pupils they propose to admit.
- The requirements for the standards in this part are likely to be met if the implementation of the material change is approved.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a suitable three-year accessibility plan in place.

## **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	132772
DfE registration number	893/6096
Inspection number	10038143

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	Day school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Family Care (Group) Ltd
Chair	Andrew Williamson
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Earing
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,515
Telephone number	01939 220 797
Website	<a href="http://www.family-care.co.uk">www.family-care.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:sarah.earing@family-care.co.uk">sarah.earing@family-care.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	13–15 September 2016

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 16	5 to 16	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	27	30	Not applicable

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	27	30
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities	27	30
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	26 with 1 pending	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	27	30

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	5.2 qualified teachers 1 unqualified teacher	6.2 qualified teachers 1 unqualified teacher
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	1 qualified therapist 5 learning support	1 qualified therapist 6 learning support

## Information about this school

- Access School is a small independent special school set within the grounds of a farm, on the outskirts of Wem in North Shropshire. It is part of a broader organisation known as Family Care (Group) Limited, which provides care and fostering services.
- The school is currently registered for 25 pupils aged five to 16, with a temporary

increase approved to 27 until the end of July 2017 by the Department for Education.

- Pupils admitted to the school have social, emotional and associated mental health difficulties. Pupils often join the school after a history of exclusion or long-term absence from mainstream or other special school provision.
- Pupils are placed at the school by different local authorities, but most of those that attend are from Shropshire. Many pupils are children looked after.
- The school is seeking a permanent increase to 30 places in order to extend the support and learning experiences of pupils within each key stage.
- The key stage 1 and key stage 2 facilities includes four teaching rooms which will increase to five, from September 2017.
- The key stage 3 and key stage 4 facilities include five teaching spaces with an additional one becoming available from September 2017.
- In the centre of the complex is a 'therapy village' of three pods that provide resources and accommodation for therapeutic and sensory approaches for pupils experiencing emotional overload.
- Livestock is kept at the school for therapeutic use.
- At the last inspection on the 13 to 15 September 2016, the school was judged to be good in all areas of provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to consider a material change request to increase the numbers on roll from 25 to 30.
- The scope of the inspection in relation to the proposed increase in numbers included safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety, risk assessment, supervision of pupils, suitability of staff, premises and accommodation and leadership and management.
- This one-day inspection took place with a notice of two days.
- The inspector had meetings with the headteacher and met other staff and pupils during an inspection of the premises. She reviewed policies within the scope of the inspection, the single central register and staff files. She also reviewed health and safety and fire safety audits and monitoring logs, risk assessments for pupil activities and the premises and minutes of staff meetings. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the selected regulations for independent schools.

## Inspection team

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Elizabeth Ellis-Martin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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