

# Sheridan House School

Thetford Road, Northwold, Thetford, Norfolk IP26 5LQ

**Inspection date**

19 September 2017

**Overall outcome**

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

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The school has a proactive and thorough approach to safeguarding pupils. Staff are vigilant and sensitive to pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Norfolk local authority conducted a review of the school's overall provision in June 2017, including the arrangements for safeguarding pupils. With the exception of updating the safeguarding policy, no issues were raised about pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- The safeguarding policy on the school's website is generally fit for purpose. The policy had not been updated to reflect the most recent statutory guidance or the restructuring of staff roles and responsibilities. By the end of this inspection, senior leaders had already taken action to make the appropriate amendments.
- Four staff are designated as safeguarding officers and have the appropriate training and understanding of child protection.
- The supervision of pupils as they arrive on site and have the option of breakfast, facilitates a smooth, relaxed and prompt start to the day.
- Relationships between staff and pupils observed during this inspection were very positive and supportive. Staff continually engaged pupils in conversation and held firm expectations for good behaviour. Pupils responded promptly and appropriately to the guidance from staff.
- Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibility for, and to accept the consequences of, their own behaviour. During this inspection, pupils were observed to behave well in lessons and when moving around the site, and making safe use of equipment for science experiments and cooking.
- The school tracks pupils' attendance appropriately and makes referrals to external support services when needed. Most pupils attend in line with national averages for all secondary-aged pupils.
- There have been no permanent exclusions since the inspection in May 2016. The

number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly as a result of changes to the policies and practices for behaviour management and admissions.

*Paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- The risk assessment policy is up to date, and suitable to address risks for a range of activities and eventualities, appropriate to the needs of the pupils and the school site. There are five areas of assessed risk: site; classroom; equipment; activity; and child.
- Risk assessment procedures are well thought through. Potential problems are identified and acted upon swiftly, such as recent changes to pupils' access to some areas of the site.
- The head of school and the proprietors have assessed the potential risks associated with the proposed increase in the number of pupils on roll methodically and with a clear rationale for what the school wants to achieve. Although applying to register for an additional 10 pupils, a clear plan is in place to raise the total on roll slowly so that existing and new pupils are not disadvantaged or destabilised, academically or socially, by the change.
- The external security of the site, together with appropriate levels of supervision, allow pupils to move between different areas of the premises safely.
- A suitable health and safety policy is in place.

*Paragraph 12*

- The proprietor uses a commercial company to conduct an annual risk assessment for fire, and for checking fire extinguishers, lighting, alarms and electrical equipment. All equipment has been checked within the prescribed periods.
- The most recent fire risk assessment recommended some minor improvements. These have been made but the actions are not formally recorded.
- Some of the fire extinguishers are contained behind locked doors with a label on the doors to say that they are inside the room, while others are easily accessible within corridors or classrooms. Leaders will reassess the suitability, according to risk, of the extinguishers that are not as readily available as others.
- School leaders have ensured that the independent school standards for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of 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)–iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i)–(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(b)(i)–(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)–(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)*

- The head of school and the proprietors have clear and high standards for the skills required of staff to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Over the past year, the proprietors have increased their expectations for the skills and qualifications required of prospective and existing staff. The proprietors actively support existing staff in developing their expertise and qualifications relevant to the educational and social needs of the pupils.

- There are subject specialists for the teaching of English, mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, food technology and physical education, and the nurture group and personal, social and health education.
- The appointment of additional staff to support the proposed increase in the number of pupils on roll is already in hand.
- The school does not use supply staff.
- The single central register shows all of the relevant checks for staff and proprietors.
- School leaders have ensured that the independent school standards for the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 23(1), 21(1)(a), 21(1)(b), 21(1)(c), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2)(a) and 28(2)(b)*

- The existing toilets and showering facilities are sufficient and appropriate and conveniently located for the proposed increase in the number of pupils on roll.
- Drinking water is readily accessible and labelled as such.

*Paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a) and 24(1)(b)*

- The existing arrangements for sick or injured pupils are sufficient and appropriately located for the proposed increase in the number of pupils on roll.
- There are no pupils who have complex medical needs so no specialist facilities are provided.

*Paragraphs 25, 29(1), 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b)*

- If the DfE approves the increase in the number on roll, the pupils will be taught in two additional groups of five pupils in each group. The space available for teaching, outside physical education and play, and social areas, is sufficient to support the proposed change.
- All areas of the premises and accommodation are clean and tidy, and there are no signs of damage, neglect or misuse.
- There are seven classrooms for general teaching and specialist rooms for science, design and technology, cooking and art. There is a nurture room. Each room is suitable for a group of six pupils. Most of the classrooms are located on two floors across from the administrative block. Two of the seven classroom are additional rooms, and have recently been refurbished. They were formally residential accommodation.
- The assembly room and the dining room are not used for all pupils at once and this will be the case if the DfE agrees to the proposed change. Secondary and primary pupils use the facilities at separate times. These arrangements are suitable to accommodate the proposed increase in the number of pupils on roll.
- The outside areas are extensive and well maintained to promote pupils' safety.

*Paragraphs 26, 27, 27(a) and 27(b)*

- The staff have given careful consideration to the sound and lighting of the new classrooms and also to the existing rooms. In response to pupils' sensory sensitivities associated with autistic spectrum disorder, carpets will cover the wooden floors in rooms that were formerly bedrooms.
- School leaders have ensured that the independent school standards for the premises of, and accommodation at schools are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

## **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	121246
DfE registration number	926/6133
Inspection number	10039918

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 special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd
Chair	Mr James Imber
Headteacher	Mr Paul Sanderson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,000 to £62,000, plus £18,500 for one-to-one support
Telephone number	01366 726040
Website	<a href="http://www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk/find-a-location/sheridan-school-thetford">www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk/find-a-location/sheridan-school-thetford</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:sheridanschool@priorygroup.com">sheridanschool@priorygroup.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	24–26 May 2016

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	8 to 19	N/A	N/A
Number of pupils on the school roll	60	70	70

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	N/A

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	60	N/A
Number of part-time pupils	0	N/A
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	60	N/A
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	60	N/A
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	60	N/A

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	12	14
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	19	21

## Information about this school

- Sheridan House School was registered with the DfE on 10 November 1983. The school is registered to admit up to 60 boys and girls aged 8 to 19 years. There are currently no pupils over the age of 16 years. There are many more boys than girls.
- All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. The proprietor does not propose to cater for any other types of special educational needs within the material change request.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- All placements at the school are funded by local authorities. The school admits pupils

predominantly from Norfolk and some pupils are funded by Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and London boroughs.

- Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Most pupils are entitled to support through the pupil premium funding.
- The school ceased to provide residential accommodation in June 2016.
- The school use two alternative providers for some pupils for part of each week:
  - Brambles Care Farm, School Road, Bedingham, Norfolk NR35 2DB
  - Open Road West Norfolk, 17 Rollesby Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 4LS.
- The school's most recent Ofsted inspection was a standard inspection in May 2016. At that time, the school's overall effectiveness was judged good and all of the independent school standards were met.
- Since the inspection in May 2016, the senior leadership team within the school and the responsibilities within the proprietorial body have been restructured:
  - there is no longer a principal or headteacher. There is now a head of school, a head of secondary provision and a head of primary provision
  - across the proprietor's five schools in the region, there is an operations director and a head of local authority engagement.



## Information about this inspection

- The proprietor has applied to the DfE for a material change to admit an additional 10 pupils, increasing the maximum number on roll from 60 to 70. There is no proposal to change the age range, the special educational needs of the pupils or the premises.
- This material change inspection was commissioned by the DfE to look specifically at:
  - standards 7, 11, 12, 14 and 16 in Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils
  - all of the standards in Part 4 Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors
  - all of the standards in Part 5 Premises of and accommodation at schools
  - whether the school’s safeguarding policy is published on the school’s website or made otherwise available, and to check the suitability of the policy.
- The following inspection activities were conducted by the inspector:
  - a tour of the premises and accommodation with the head of school, including short visits to lessons
  - meetings with the head of school, the proprietor’s operations director, the business manager and the site manager
  - a phone call with a representative of Norfolk local authority to gain their views
  - scrutiny of documents relating to safeguarding pupils, including the safeguarding policy, the single central register of employment checks, the review of the provision undertaken by Norfolk local authority, the checks on fire safety, and the policies for risk assessments and health and safety
  - scrutiny of the school development plan and self-evaluation document
  - information about pupils’ attendance and exclusions
  - a check on Parent View, although there were insufficient responses to check
  - a check of the school’s website to verify that the school publishes the arrangements to safeguard pupils at the school.

## Inspection team

Heather Yaxley

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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