

# Fairfield House School

57–59 Warburton Lane, Partington, Manchester M31 4NL

## Inspection dates

4 July 2018

### Overall outcome

**The school is unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

#### *Paragraph 2, 3 and 4*

- Leaders intend that the curriculum offered to students aged 19 to 25 will be closely matched to each individual student's needs. Staff use this approach successfully with current pupils. The main areas covered will include: citizenship and interaction with the wider community; communication; functional skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology; independent living; life and social skills; physical education; project-based learning; sensory awareness and work experience. These areas are suitably broad to allow staff to meet the continuing learning and developmental needs of students. Leaders' overall aim is to equip students to be as independent as possible and able to make their own contribution to society.
- As for existing pupils, teaching and assessment will be organised by the lead teacher and mainly provided by teaching assistants attached to each student. Students will work full time with at least one or, depending on need, two teaching assistants. New members of staff will be appointed, as needed, to allow for this. The school's approach of very close liaison between all staff has successfully ensured that staff are confident to meet current pupils' learning needs. This confidence was clearly observed during this inspection in the positive relationship between staff and current pupils. Leaders intend that very close working between staff will continue to be an important feature of how teaching and learning are organised and monitored.
- Leaders intend to use externally provided accreditation to recognise and record students' learning and skills development. However, many aspects of students' progress, such as their independence, are less easily captured in formal assessment. The school has developed effective systems to evaluate and understand such progress. These will continue to be used for older students.
- The planned location for 19- to 25-year-old students is at Fairfield Residential's farm. This means that students will benefit from the facilities and resources already effectively used there to support the specialist education provided.

- The school is likely to meet these standards in relation to any students aged 19 to 25.

## Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

### *Paragraph 5*

- The curriculum already provided in the school gives pupils many opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) awareness and skills. Some of these opportunities form part of more formal, externally accredited work completed by pupils. Other aspects add to the wider development of pupils' overall skills and independence. Leaders intend that this approach will be extended further for any students aged 19 to 25 as part of the increased focus on helping students to become more independent.
- Leaders intend that the whole school will celebrate major religious festivals and national events. The inspector saw evidence of this type of activity being built into the work of pupils, such as in topics covered about the recent royal wedding and the current football World Cup. Staff use the opportunities provided by such celebrations to help pupils to become more accepting of the noise and visual stimuli which often form part of them.
- Staff are fully aware of the particular challenges some pupils have in developing their SMSC skills. For example, some pupils find it hard to have confidence in people in authority, including the police. In response, staff invite police community support officers into school to meet with pupils in an informal setting over a cup of coffee. Leaders intend to continue this kind of approach with older students and, in so doing, build up students' awareness and ability to engage with people from key organisations they may need to rely on in the future.
- The school's commitment to community interaction includes providing current pupils and future students with opportunities to volunteer. In making such contributions, for example by helping at a local donkey sanctuary, pupils also develop their sense of self-esteem.
- The school is likely to meet these standards in relation to any students aged 19 to 25.

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

### *Paragraph 7*

- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's pages of Fairfield Residential's website. This makes it easily available for reference by parents, carers and others.
- The policy closely matches current government guidance about safeguarding children. However, leaders made minor adjustments during this inspection to ensure that it covered all key issues. While any older students may not be considered to be directly covered by the guidance relating to children, the school's policy provides a suitably secure framework for protecting young adults who have particular vulnerabilities arising from their special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. For example, leaders have included reference to financial and organisational abuse. These kinds of

abuse are more likely affect adults than pupils.

*Paragraph 11, 12 and 16*

- The school has clear policies for health and safety, and risk assessment. These are carefully implemented as they relate to the current school premises. There is also a detailed risk assessment document for the farm intended to be used as the location for students aged 19 to 25. This covers the premises and activities undertaken at the farm including, for example, contact with animals. However, the steps planned to reduce some risks were not implemented at the time of this inspection. For example, a kettle had been left full of water when the school's risk assessment requires it to have been emptied and a farm gate allowing overall access to the site was open when it should have been shut.
- The farm site is shared with other tenants. The pedestrian and vehicular access to their part of the premises is through the area used by the school. The close supervision of pupils and gated access to most of the separate buildings used by the school limits the risks caused by this joint use. However, such risks are not properly considered in the school's documentation. In addition, there is no record that potential risks from the daily presence of adults not connected to the school, but working nearby, have been considered.
- The fire-safety arrangements at the farm premises are not sufficiently thorough. The classroom's fire extinguisher was not in place at the time of the inspection, a kettle in the classroom had an out-of-date electrical safety check and a separate wooden building used as an art workshop (the 'pod') had no smoke alarm or heat detector installed.
- The deficiencies in risk assessment and fire-safety arrangements mean that the health and safety policy is not properly implemented at the farm premises.

*Paragraph 14*

- Leaders plan that there will be close supervision of students at all times. This will be with a minimum ratio of one member of staff to each pupil.
- The school is not likely to meet these standards in relation to any students aged 19 to 25.

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

*Paragraph 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21*

- Leaders are aware of the checks that are needed to ensure that staff in the school are suitable to work with pupils and adults who have SEN and/or disabilities. These checks are organised systematically as part of the Fairfield Residential's recruitment procedures. The required information is recorded on a computer spreadsheet. These records are detailed and complete.
- The school currently does not use supply teachers or intend to do so in the future.
- The school is likely to meet these standards in relation to all staff appointed, including any who will work with students aged 19 to 25.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraph 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31*

- The current school premises remain suitable for use with pupils. However, the premises at the farm intended as the full-time base for 19- to 25-year-old students have aspects that mean that they are not ready for this use.
- While a number of toilet facilities are available over the farm site, none has been identified solely for pupils' use. In addition, leaders have not considered whether it is more suitable to have separate toilet facilities available for pupils aged 18 and under, students aged 19 to 25, and staff.
- Leaders have not identified a room suitable to be used as a medical room on the farm site. The most suitable room available has a washing facility with cold water only and no bed.
- While hand-sanitizer gel is available for use on the farm, the washing facilities available for students are not suitable because these currently lack a running hot water supply. Cold water supplies are not marked to indicate whether these are suitable for use as drinking water.
- Some maintenance issues were identified during the inspection. The lack of running hot water was because broken water heaters had not been replaced. In addition to the kettle with out-of-date electrical safety certification, the classroom also contained an old, portable electric cooker that leaders said should have already been removed and discarded.
- The classroom, the 'pod' and a temporary building (the 'log cabin') have sufficient space for the educational activities intended. The rooms have suitable lighting inside and outside, to allow safe access. The rooms present no difficulties in allowing people using them to hear each other.
- The school is not likely to meet these standards in relation to any students aged 19 to 25.

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

### *Paragraph 34*

- Leaders have identified that there is a local need for continuing specialist provision for some pupils after they leave sixth-form provision and to accommodate other students aged 19 to 25 who have the types of SEN and/or disabilities already provided for in the school. Leaders' effective planning for the curriculum, teaching and learning for any such students means that they are likely to meet the independent school standards relating to this educational provision. However, the intended premises for these older students have deficiencies that mean that these are not likely to meet the relevant standards. Some of the standards not likely to be met relate to students' welfare, health and safety and, therefore, their well-being.
- The school is not likely to meet these standards in relation to any students aged 19 to 25.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely 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.

### **The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards**

- The proprietor must ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005<sup>1</sup> (paragraph 12).
- The proprietor must ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils (paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils. This should include: accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils; and accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, with a washing facility and near to a toilet facility. The accommodation provided for the medical examination and treatment of pupils, and for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided that it is always readily available to be used for the medical examination and treatment of pupils, and for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils (paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b) and 24(2)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities therein are maintained to such a standard that, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25).
- The proprietor must ensure that cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such; and the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users (paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(c) and 28(1)(d)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently. They must fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

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<sup>1</sup> S.I. 2005/1541, to which there are amendments not relevant to these Regulations.

## School details

Unique reference number	136239
DfE registration number	358/6019
Inspection number	10056171

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	Mrs Tzaraine Cope
Headteacher	Mrs Leanne Doherty
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,769
Telephone number	0161 7762827
Website	<a href="http://www.fairfieldresidential.co.uk">www.fairfieldresidential.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:management@fairfieldresidential.co.uk">management@fairfieldresidential.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	16–17 May 2017

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	8 to 19	8 to 25	8 to 25
Number of pupils on the school roll	4	8	8

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	4	5
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	4	8
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	4	8
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	4	8

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2	2

## Information about this school

- Fairfield House is a small special school for pupils with autism spectrum disorder, severe learning difficulties, complex health needs and challenging behaviours. It is located in north-west England.

- The school is currently housed in purpose-built premises. The premises also include a children's home which is owned and run by Fairfield Residential.
- The school uses the Fairfield farm project for off-site provision for pupils. The farm is located approximately six miles away from the school and is owned and run by Fairfield Residential. The farm is the proposed location of the provision for students aged 19 to 25.
- The address of the Fairfield farm project is Higher Thorns Green Farm, Castle Mill Lane, Ashley, Altrincham, WA15 0QZ.
- The farm has a small classroom; a wooden building currently used as an art workshop; and a wood-clad temporary building with a small kitchen, living area, two bedrooms, and a shower and toilet room. Outside, there is a garden area which also has cages for small animals and poultry and a sheltered space of living willow; fields for donkeys and calves; and grassed areas for recreation and access to other fields.
- The school is registered for up to five pupils between the ages of eight and 19 years.
- There are currently four pupils on roll. All pupils have an education, health and care plan in relation to their autism spectrum disorder and associated SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school was last inspected by Ofsted in May 2017.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned in relation to the school's request to change its age range from eight to 19 years to eight to 25 years to allow it to admit students aged older than 19. In order to accommodate these older students, the school requested a change to its registered capacity from five to eight pupils.
- The inspection was the first material change inspection concerning these proposed changes.
- The regulatory authority required the inspection to consider the following parts of the independent school standards:
  - Part 1. Quality of education provided, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4
  - Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, paragraph 5
  - Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils, paragraphs 7, 11, 12, 14 and 16
  - Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors, paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21
  - Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools, paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31
  - Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools, paragraph 34.
- The inspector held meetings with the lead teacher and two representatives of the proprietor. The inspector toured the school and the farm used by the school, accompanied by the lead teacher.
- The inspector scrutinised school policies and other documents including those relating to safeguarding, the planned curriculum for learners aged over 19 and samples of schemes of work used by the school.
- The inspector observed staff and pupils working together.

## Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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