

Avon Park School

St John's Avenue, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 5HR

Inspection dates

11 September 2018

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website and has due regard for guidance issued by the secretary of state.
- The safeguarding policy and wider procedures are shared with staff and form a central part of staff induction.
- Staff new to the school now complete a feedback form following induction. This strategy is used effectively by leaders to establish the extent to which key policy and procedures are understood by staff before they start work with the organisation.
- Child protection files are detailed. Records set out the actions taken by leaders to safeguard pupils. The school is aware of its statutory responsibilities and shares any concerns appropriately with other agencies.
- Leaders have conducted surveys of staff and pupils to establish how happy and safe they feel in the school. All staff who responded to the survey state that they now feel safe in the school. This view was also shared by staff that I spoke to directly during the inspection. The vast majority of pupils state that they enjoy coming to the school and that staff care about them.
- The school conducted a parent survey in July 2018. The vast majority of parents and carers stated that they feel their children are safe and are well looked after.

Paragraphs 9, 10

- Following the last inspection, the school's day-to-day management of behaviour was fully reviewed. The school's behaviour policy now ensures effectively that staff have the appropriate training and skills to promote good behaviour.
- The school has adopted a positive approach to behaviour management. During the inspection, staff were observed managing pupils' behaviour effectively. Staff state that their approach is now more consistent.

- The general school environment, including 'break-out' spaces, has been enhanced. The school is clean, bright and welcoming. Leaders state that no spaces are used in any way to restrict pupils' liberty.
- Leaders have invited pupils to form a 'behaviour focus group'. Pupils meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss how behaviour is improving in their school. The group provides an effective platform for pupils to share their views and talk openly about how they feel.
- Leaders have reviewed the management of unstructured times during the school day. Where appropriate, pupils now have a wider range of activities to take part in during social times.
- Staff have received further training in the use of restrictive physical intervention. Leaders state that this type of intervention is only used as a last resort. The school keeps detailed records and undertakes analysis of any interventions. Following an incident, staff and pupils are given time to discuss what has happened and why. Analysis shows that incidents are reducing over time.
- The strategies outlined above, combined with wider training, have resulted in a considerable reduction in behaviour incidents. In the last six months, the frequency of behaviour incidents has halved.
- Leaders have reviewed the anti-bullying policy and strategy. The curriculum has been re-designed to incorporate more opportunities for pupils to discuss bullying and share their views. Pupils have taken part in a range of events to help them have a clear understanding of what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour. A survey undertaken in June 2018 revealed that 83% of pupils feel staff deal effectively with bullying when it happens.
- Staff and most pupils state that behaviour has improved.

Paragraph 16

- Risk assessments are detailed and include appropriate control measures. Risk assessments are modified following any incidents. During the inspection, staff stated that they understood the contents of risk assessments and knew what actions to take in the event of specific incidents such as a pupil attempting to leave the school without permission.
- Leaders have ensured that the standard is now met.

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), 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(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b).

- Though not in scope of the inspection, the single central record was checked. This is because several new staff have joined the school since the last inspection. The record of recruitment and vetting checks is compliant. The checks made by the Witherslack Group

are comprehensive and recorded in detail. These checks include the suitability of references, medical fitness and professional qualifications.

- The school does not employ any supply staff. However, staff are aware of the necessary checks required for recruiting supply staff.
- Leaders have ensured that the standard continues to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has ensured that persons with leadership and management responsibilities now have the skills and knowledge to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently.
- Leaders with specific expertise from across the Witherslack Group have offered high-quality support to address previously unmet standards.
- The interim headteacher has dealt with key areas for development in a very organised manner. Staff state that they value the way leaders have gone about improving the school. Staff also acknowledge the quality of training that has been provided following the previous inspection.
- Leaders' actions have been highly effective. The school's action plan responds directly to key issues and has appropriate milestones and aims. As a result, all standards are now met. However, leaders are realistic and focused on securing further improvement. For example, they plan further work to develop the curriculum and recognise that middle leaders have even more to offer.
- Much has happened in the last nine months to ensure that change is managed effectively. Leaders have taken the time to gather the views of key stakeholders. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Directors and leaders recognise that these improvements must now be embedded and sustained further, under the leadership of the new headteacher. Clear transition plans are in place to ensure that this is the case.
- Leaders have ensured that the standard is now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour among pupils by ensuring that:
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.
- 10 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	140354
DfE registration number	937/6008
Inspection number	10068615

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Witherslack Group
Chair	Mike Barrow
Headteacher	Mr Christian Williams
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,444–£95,606 depending on individual needs
Telephone number	01788524448
Website	https://witherslackgroup.co.uk/avon-park-school/
Email address	Admin@avonparkschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	31 January–2 February 2018

Information about this school

- Avon Park is a day school that is part of the Witherslack Group.
- There are 44 pupils on the roll, 39 boys and five girls across key stages 1 to 4.
- The school is registered to admit up to 70 pupils between the ages of six and 16 years old.
- The school uses five alternative providers: Motorvate, Warwickshire College, Dare2Dream, Educ8 and Rightrax.

- The school caters for pupils with a range of complex learning difficulties, communication difficulties and challenging behaviours. A significant number have been diagnosed as having autistic spectrum disorders. All have an education, health and care plan.
- A new headteacher joined the school in August 2018. The school has also recruited several new teachers and support staff.
- The previous standard inspection took place from 31 January to 2 February 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection. This is the first progress monitoring inspection.
- The school was first registered with the Department for Education (DfE) in October 2013 and admitted its first pupils in November 2013. The last inspection took place from 31 January to 2 February 2018 and the school was judged to be inadequate.
- Following the last standard inspection, the DfE required the school to prepare an action plan. Ofsted evaluated the plan in June 2018. The DfE accepted the plan.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The inspector undertook the following activities to determine the school's effectiveness: a review of the single central record and documents relating to safeguarding; a learning walk with the regional director across primary and secondary phases; meetings with the designated safeguarding lead to scrutinise incidents of behaviour and restrictive physical intervention; discussions with staff and pupils throughout the day; a telephone discussion with the chair of the board of governors; and a discussion with the local authority designated officer.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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