

The Spires

Salisbury, Wiltshire

Inspection date

3 October 2018

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g)–2(2)(i), 4

- The school's vision is to offer each pupil a 'personal development, academic and vocational skills curriculum which provides opportunities for pupils to learn the skills involved in managing their work, lives and relationships'. It is anticipated that many of the school's pupils will have been out of education for prolonged periods of time. Therefore, learning pathways will be bespoke to each pupil and developed to meet their individual needs.
- For younger pupils, and those with the greatest levels of need, learning will be cross-curricular and planned around a central theme. When pupils are ready, they will progress to a more subject-specific curriculum. This will enable pupils to further develop their knowledge and skills and, where appropriate, work towards formal qualifications, such as functional skills and GCSEs.
- Leaders have created schemes of work for subjects across the curriculum, for example English, mathematics, science, physical education (PE), music and food technology. These schemes of work are progressive and take into account pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs.
- Leaders plan to deliver personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education through the wider curriculum, as well as through discrete lessons. These plans encourage respect for other people, and reflect the school's aims to equip pupils with the skills they will require in later life.
- The school's plans and schemes of work do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Paragraph 2(2)(e)–2(2)(e)(iii)

- The school plans to use a suitably qualified independent careers adviser to ensure that pupils receive impartial and up-to-date guidance. This will enable pupils to make informed choices about their future and encourage them to fulfil their potential.

Paragraph 3, 3(a)–3(j)

- The school's curriculum policy and schemes of work set out how teaching will help pupils acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability. If implemented effectively, they will ensure that lessons are well planned and based on teachers' secure understanding of relevant subject knowledge.
- The school's behaviour policy is comprehensive and outlines how teachers will manage pupils' behaviour and encourage them to act responsibly.
- The standards in part 1 are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- The school will promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development through the curriculum, as well as in the pastoral support provided by staff. Due to pupils' vulnerabilities, the primary aim of this work will be to build pupils' self-esteem, self-knowledge and self-confidence. Additionally, there will be a focus of developing life skills.
- Leaders have drawn up detailed schemes of work for the promotion of pupils' SMSC development. A rolling programme of topics will develop pupils' understanding of different cultures. Topics on immigration and the class system, as well as key questions such as 'Is it alright to commit a crime, as long as you're not hurting anyone?' are designed to encourage pupils to be reflective and to engage in structured debate.
- The standard in part 2 is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- The head of education, who is currently acting as the school's designated safeguarding lead, has a secure understanding of statutory safeguarding requirements as set out in 'Keeping children safe in education (2018)'. The school's safeguarding policy has been updated to reflect recent changes in government guidance. Arrangements to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including recruitment procedures, are secure.

Paragraph 9–9(c), 10, 14

- The school's behaviour policy is clear and outlines how it will promote good behaviour among pupils. Additionally, it sets out the sanctions staff will adopt in the event of pupil misbehaviour and how these will be recorded. The school has drawn up an anti-bullying strategy that, when implemented, is likely to prevent bullying as far as is reasonably possible.
- Leaders have planned appropriate staffing ratios, so that pupils are likely to be well supervised. These include during teaching sessions, as well as at break and lunchtimes.

Paragraph 11, 16–16(b)

- The proprietor has in place a comprehensive health and safety policy. Although this policy outlines arrangements across the Five Rivers group, separate bespoke

procedures are in place for the school. The health and safety policy makes reference to the relevant health and safety legislation and sets out how this will be complied with.

- Guidelines for how and when risk assessments should be completed are included in the health and safety policy. Leaders have already completed site-specific risk assessments, as well as those for off-site visits and activities. Leaders will complete risk assessments for individual pupils, as they join the school.

Paragraph 12

- An external fire risk assessment commissioned by the proprietor highlighted a number of areas which needed to be addressed as a priority. Inspection activity confirms that the proprietor has remedied all of these, for example installing additional signage and intumescent strips.

Paragraph 13

- Leaders have drawn up an effective first aid policy. Signage around the school identifies clearly the school's first aiders, as well as the location of first aid kits.

Paragraph 15

- The proprietor has well-established systems in place to maintain admission and attendance registers.
- The standards in part 3 are likely to be met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a)–18(2)(f), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(4), 21(6)–21(7)(b)

- A scrutiny of the school's recruitment procedures, including a review of personnel files, demonstrates that checks for staff, leaders and members of the proprietorial body meet requirements. The single central record is in place and kept in line with statutory guidance, as laid out by the secretary of state.

Paragraph 19(1)–19(3), 21(5)–21(5)(c)

- The school does not intend to use any supply staff.
- The standards in part 4 are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–23(1)(b), 28(1)–28(2)(b)

- At the school's main site, there are either separate toilet facilities for boys and girls or individual toilets which are lockable from the inside. However, at the additional site, the proprietor has not yet drawn up procedures to ensure that there is a toilet for the sole use of pupils.
- The proprietor has ensured that suitable drinking water will be made available for pupils. However, at the additional site, this drinking water is not labelled as such.
- At the additional site, the hot water supply is not set at a safe temperature.

Paragraph 23(1)(c), 29(1)–29(1)(b)

- The school intends to use a local leisure centre for pupils' PE lessons. Changing and shower facilities will be available at this site. Leaders understand that this will need to be risk assessed prior to commencement.
- At the additional site, there is no outside area where pupils can play outside.

Paragraph 26, 27–27(b)

- The proprietor has ensured that rooms at both sites have lighting and acoustic conditions which are suitable for their intended use.
- Both sites have suitable external lighting.

Paragraph 24(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2)

- The school's main site has suitable facilities for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. However, the proprietor has not ensured that this is the case at the additional site.

Paragraph 25

- The proprietor has put systems in place to maintain the school's premises to a high standard. Every effort has been made so that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured.
- The premises at the school's main site, The Spires, are in line with the independent school standards. However, overall, the standards in part 5 are unlikely to be met, due to deficiencies in the school's additional site.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(c), 32(2)(2)–32(3)(d), 32(3)(f)

- The proprietor has a website. This provides contact details and information about their registered office.
- Once the school is open, the proprietor's aim is to provide information through a school-specific page on the Five Rivers' website. This will be in line with the pages for the proprietor's already operating schools.
- Assuming this is the case, the standard in part 6 is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–33(k)

- The school has a written complaints procedure, which will be made available on its website. It sets out clear timescales for the management of complaints and allows for a complaint to be considered informally in the first instance.
- Should a complainant be dissatisfied with the school's response to a complaint, the procedures outline clearly the steps they may take to escalate their concerns further. This consists of a formal written stage, considered by the head of education, followed by representation to the school's complaints committee. Procedures state that the school's complaints committee will consist of at least three people not involved in the matters relating to the complaint. The chair of the committee will be independent of the school.

- The school's policy outlines the arrangements for maintaining records of complaints and how these will be kept confidential. The exceptions to this, for example during an inspection, are stated clearly.
- The standard in part 7 is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- The proprietor has not ensured that all the independent school standards are likely to be met when the school opens. These unmet standards relate wholly to the unsuitability of the additional site that the proprietor intends to use as an annex to the main school site.

Paragraph 34(1)(c)

- All the standards that relate specifically to the health, safety and welfare of pupils are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standard in part 8 is unlikely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an appropriate equalities policy, which meets the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The school's aims state clearly how all pupils are to be supported in accessing the curriculum.
- Facilities at the school's main site, The Spires, meet the latest accessibility requirements. For example, the site is accessible to all users and accessible toilets are available.

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, as set out in the annex of this report.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	146166
DfE registration number	865/6051
Inspection number	10070554

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Five Rivers Child Care Ltd
Chair	David Howard
Head of Education	Mark Barcroft
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,700
Telephone number	07540 760 104
Website	www.five-rivers.org/education/schools/the-spires/
Email address	mark.barcroft@five-rivers.org
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	N/A	8 to 25	8 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	22	22

- During the inspection, the proprietor requested that the upper age range be reduced to 18. This is due to the school not having provision for pupils' needs beyond key stage 5. The inspector supports this view.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	N/A	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	N/A	22
Number of part-time pupils	N/A	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	22
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	To be confirmed
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	To be confirmed

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	N/A	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	N/A	4

Information about this proposed school

- The Spires is operated by Five Rivers Child Care Ltd and will be an independent special day school, located in Salisbury, Wiltshire. The school intends to open as soon as its registration is granted.
- The Spires will offer provision for up to 22 pupils who have severe social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many of these pupils will have been out of education for prolonged periods of time.
- Pupils will be placed by their respective local authority. Many, but not all, of the pupils will have an education, health and care plan.
- The school proposes to use two sites. The vast majority of school activities will take place at the main site, The Spires. The school's application also details its plans to use an additional site, which is about two miles from the main site.

Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in order to assess the school's readiness to open. This was done by checking whether it is likely to meet the independent school standards, should it be registered.
- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietor, the head of education, the school business manager and an external consultant. He examined the school's application and looked at other documentation provided by the proprietor. The inspector visited the two sites which the proprietor had cited in its application.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including-
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 28(1)(c) cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such; and
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable-
 - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

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.

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