

# E-Spired

Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9TW

## Inspection dates

24 September 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

#### *Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a)–(b), 2(2), 2(2)(a)–(i)*

- There will be 25 hours teaching each week. The time allocated is suitable to cover the proposed curriculum for key stage 4.
- The school day will start at 9am and end at 3pm. Pupils will be taught six lessons each day for a total of five hours a day.
- There is a written curriculum policy that reflects the provision currently available for key stage 4. It aims to develop pupils' self-esteem and social skills well.
- The key stage 4 curriculum includes: English language, English literature, mathematics, physics, biology, information technology (IT), history, religious education/ethics, physical education (PE), creative arts and business studies. Pupils study for GCSEs and entry-level qualifications.
- The material change request includes the intention to offer GCSEs only from 16 to 18. Suitable schemes of work are in place to cover the curriculum. The schemes include subject-specific knowledge as well as skills. In addition to schemes for academic subjects, there are those for the youth leadership programme, and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). The proprietor intends to increase the number of GCSEs on offer as staffing levels increase.
- The curriculum plans and schemes of work take into account the aptitudes and needs of pupils sufficiently, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Teachers' planning is detailed and leads to teaching which engages pupils and makes the learning explicit.
- Pupils receive good-quality, external, independent careers advice and support. There is a planned programme for careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner. It enables pupils to make informed choices about a range of career options. Pupils receive guidance on how to write a curriculum vitae (CV) and an opportunity to practise and develop interview skills.

*Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j)*

*Paragraph 4*

- The teaching methodology has been carefully thought through to meet the behavioural and social needs of pupils alongside their academic performance. Pupils are well behaved and encouraged to act responsibly at all times.
- The teachers appointed have sufficient subject knowledge to cover the range of subjects taught. Subjects are taught by subject specialists. Teachers use teaching assistants and resources effectively to help pupils of different abilities make good progress.
- Levels of staff supervision are high. All pupils are supervised by one teacher and a minimum of one teaching assistant. Teachers and teaching assistants were observed working together effectively to support pupils and setting high expectations for their learning.
- Leaders have put in place measures to monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress, combined with training for teachers to improve their practice.
- Pupils are assessed on entry to determine their level of need and to allow teachers to set them challenging targets. A framework to assess pupils' work regularly is in place.
- Formative assessments are made throughout each unit. Staff have a system for tracking pupils' progress over time.
- Summative assessments are linked to external accreditation.
- School leaders have ensured that the three independent school standards for the quality of education are likely to be met.

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

*Paragraphs 5, 5(a)–(d)*

- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is threaded throughout the curriculum and specifically in the youth leadership programme.
- The scheme of work for PSHE identifies the knowledge that pupils will gain about, for example, religions, cultures and beliefs. All of the required aspects are suitably covered.
- School leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)*

- The school's safeguarding procedures are effective.
- The school's draft safeguarding policy reflects the Secretary of State's most recent guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2018). It is thorough and contains relevant information.
- A safeguarding policy is available on the school website. This school policy is out of date and does not have regard to the current guidance from the Secretary of State.
- All visitors are checked in at reception on arrival before being permitted to enter the school.

- The designated officer for child protection has undertaken suitable training.
- All staff receive appropriate induction, safeguarding training and regular updates on the latest safeguarding statutory requirements. Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They keep a close eye on pupils and make sure that any concerns are reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Staff consider the differing needs of pupils as part of the admissions procedures. The curriculum and teaching methods are tailored accordingly.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils are confident to talk to an adult if they have worries or concerns.
- When required, the designated safeguarding lead liaises closely with external agencies and makes sure that records are kept up to date.
- School leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met.

*Paragraph 11*

*Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- Leaders were able to provide suitable policy statements relating to risk assessments, and health and safety procedures for the first school site. Risk assessments and a suitable health and safety policy for the proposed second site were not available.
- School leaders have not ensured that the two independent school standards are likely to be met.

*Paragraph 12*

- Leaders were able to provide documentation which demonstrates compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 for the first school site but this was not available for the proposed second school site.
- A risk assessment has been completed on the first school site. Records are available for the school's safety tests, including emergency lighting tests and fire drills. Information was not available for the proposed second school site.
- School leaders have not ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met.

*Paragraph 14*

- The proprietor ensures that on the first school site that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- School leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a)–(f), 18(3)*

*Paragraph 19(2), 19(2)(a)–(d), 19(3)*

*Paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(a)–(c)*

*Paragraph 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)–(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a)–(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, these standards were met.

- The single central register includes the names of staff and governors. Each person has been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Checks are made to confirm the identity of staff, their qualifications and their right to work in the United Kingdom.
- Leaders are clear about the difference between a DBS check and a prohibition order check.
- Staff already appointed have a range of relevant professional qualifications and experience to teach the curriculum on offer and to support the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- Leaders could not provide evidence that a person's medical fitness is checked on appointment.
- The school does not plan to use supply staff. However, leaders acknowledge that there may be times where this is necessary. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that all the necessary safeguarding deterrents linked to agency staff are in place.
- School leaders have not ensured that all the standards for the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietor are likely to be met. One of the three standards is not likely to be met.

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

- The present school premises were refurbished to an extremely high standard by the proprietor before the school opened and continue to meet all seven of the standards for premises and accommodation.
- The material change request includes the intention to open a second school site. A full site inspection was undertaken to ensure its fitness for purpose. None of the areas designated for the prospective second school site are ready in time for the proposed opening date, 4 September 2018, originally submitted to the Department for Education (DfE).

##### *Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c)*

- There are unsuitable toilets and hand basins for use by pupils, staff, visitors and disabled persons. The pupil toilets are the wrong size. Toilets and hand basins are dirty and do not have running water. There are no changing facilities for physical education.
- There is one shower in the girls' toilets. One shower is not sufficient for the proposed number of boys and girls.

##### *Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b)*

- There are no facilities to cater for short-term care of sick and injured pupils.
- There will be no pupils with complex needs.

##### *Paragraph 25*

- The proposed second school site is an old two-storey Victorian building, previously a nursery.

- The current building comprises:
  - a secure entrance and hallway
  - a reception area and office
  - a waiting room area
  - a main hallway
  - five large learning spaces
  - a dining area
  - a kitchen area
  - office space
  - an exam storage room with an adjacent room
  - male and female toilets
  - staff toilets
  - an office area on the second floor
  - secure external outdoor space, ample in size.
- The proposed second school site is dirty and compromises the health, safety and well-being of pupils and adults. Classrooms and office areas are tatty and unwelcoming. Most areas are in a poor state of repair or maintenance.
  - Carpets and paintwork are grubby.
  - Some areas are cluttered with unused equipment or furniture.
  - Furniture is grimy.
  - See also areas identified in the independent school standards in paragraphs 11 and 12 (above), which are unlikely to be met.
- A full range of detailed health and safety checks have not been undertaken and documented.

*Paragraph 26*

*Paragraph 27, 27(a), 27(b)*

- The acoustic conditions of rooms are unsuitable due to not all rooms having appropriate flooring and furniture. The acoustic conditions have not been tested to ensure that they have full regard to the requirements of the activities to be undertaken.
- All rooms and internal spaces have sufficient natural light.
- There is insufficient external lighting so that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.

*Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)*

- There is no running hot and cold water for toilets and washing facilities.
- Drinking water is not labelled as such.

*Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)*

- The outdoor space for pupils to play is unsuitable because the large garden area is overgrown with weeds and is untidy.
- The proprietor intends to provide physical education in the local gym.
- School leaders have not ensured that all seven of the standards for the premises and accommodation are likely to be met.

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

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

- The proprietor is very clear about what he wants to provide and achieve by opening a second school site. He is ambitious for prospective pupils. His rationale for the second site is informed by the work with local schools and the discussions held with Bedford Local Authority.
- The proprietor and leaders have ensured that policies and procedures for safeguarding comply with the independent school standards.
- The proprietor is committed to modernising the proposed school site to bring it up to the same high standard as the present school site. The proposed site is spacious and more than adequate for the number and age range of pupils on roll. The proprietor has received a building quote to renovate the proposed second school site.
- The proprietor and leaders have a detailed understanding of the independent school standards and agree that there is still a lot to do before the standards are likely to be met on a consistent basis for the proposed second school site.
- School leaders have not ensured that the independent standard for the quality of leadership and management of schools is likely to be met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school is not 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, as set out in the annex of this report.

## School details

Unique reference number	144807
DfE registration number	822/6007
Inspection number	10056681

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 school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Mark Hudson
Chair	Jacqueline Brown
Headteacher	Mark Hudson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,000 to £24,000
Telephone number	01234 363400
Website	<a href="http://www.espired.org">www.espired.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@espiced.org">info@espiced.org</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	24–26 April 2018

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	14 to 16	14 to 18	14 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	10	70	40

### *Reason for inspector's recommendations*

- The proprietor plans to increase the number of pupils on roll gradually and a maximum of 40 as a starting point is appropriate, given the proposed number of staff and the proprietor wanting to phase in the growth of the school.
- The accommodation is suitable to support additional pupils and the proprietor will request a material change as appropriate.



## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	10	70
Number of part-time pupils	1	Up to 70
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	1	Up to 14
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	3	Up to 14
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	3	Up to 14

## Staff

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	5	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	3	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	0

## Information about this school

- The school opened as an independent school for up to 20 pupils in September 2017, following its registration with the Department for Education as a day school in August

2017.

- Prior to its registration, the school was operating as an alternative provider, since October 2016, with 18 part-time pupils who attended for two days per week in partnership with local schools.
- The proprietor is the headteacher.
- The proprietor will use supply staff when necessary.
- The proprietor is not involved in any other proprietorship of independent schools.
- There are currently 10 full-time pupils and one part-time pupil on roll in Years 10 and 11.
- The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs, who have histories of poor attendance and who have failed to thrive in mainstream schools.
- Some pupils are looked after by their local authority.
- Some pupils have an education, health and care plan for their SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school has strong links with Bedford College, Bedford Free School, Mark Rutherford School and Bedford Academy.
- The school occupies a site within a business park in Bedfordshire.
- The proprietor had planned to open the second school site on 4 September 2018. During this inspection, a revised date for opening was fixed for January 2019. This delayed start is in recognition of the planning and building work that still needs to be done.
- E-Spired Community proposes to base the school on two sites, which are a 5-minute drive from each other. The detail in the report applies to both sites.
  - The first school site is at Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9TW.
  - The second proposed school site is at The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Bedford MK42 9HE.
- The school is owned by the E-Spired Community Interest Company. There is a sole proprietor and a board of directors. Two directors of the company work full-time in the school as the principal and the operations manager.
- A governing body was appointed in the school from January 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by Ofsted at the request of the Department for Education under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The school applied for a material change to consider the proprietor's request to consider the proposed second school site, and also increase the age range from 14–16 to 14–18, and the school's registration to extend the number of pupils in the school from 20 to 70.
- This inspection was conducted with two days' notice, by Her Majesty's Inspector in one day.
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietor and the operations manager.
- A telephone discussion took place with a representative of Bedford local authority to gain their views.
- A meeting was held with a school representative who has pupils dual-rolled.
- The inspector audited the premises and accommodation on both sites against the independent school standards requirements.
- The inspector scrutinised various school documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding, health and safety, fire checks and the maintenance the building and appliances

## Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

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

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 16(a) 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
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
  - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person—
  - 18(2)(c)(ii) the person's medical fitness;

#### **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;
  - 23(1)(b) separate toilet facilities for boys and girls aged 8 years or over are provided except where the toilet facility is provided in a room that can be secured from the inside and that is intended for use by one pupil at a time; and
  - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 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; and
- 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).
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school

premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

- 26 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the acoustic conditions and sound insulation of each room or other space are suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 27(b) external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 28(1)(a) suitable drinking water facilities are provided;
  - 28(1)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water;
  - 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.
- 28(2) The facilities provided under sub-paragraph (1)(a) will be suitable only if—
  - 28(2)(a) they are readily accessible at all times when the premises are in use; and
  - 28(2) (b) they are in a separate area from the toilet facilities.
- 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)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and
  - 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; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils

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