

Sycamore House School

365 Queen Street, Withernsea, East Yorkshire, HU19 2NT

Inspection dates

4 December 2018

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The proprietor has ensured that a written curriculum policy is in place and that there are accompanying schemes of work. The schemes of work cover all subject areas, as required by the independent school standards.
- There are a variety of options within the schemes of work. These are in place so that pupils of all abilities and starting points can follow a curriculum that is personalised to specifically meet their needs.
- The curriculum that is ready will enable pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and communication skills and build knowledge and skills over time, leading to appropriate qualifications such as GCSEs, BTEC National Diplomas and Arts Awards.
- Within the curriculum, pupils will have the opportunity to make progress and to develop a strong understanding of British values. Pupils will learn about equality, diversity, respect and tolerance as part of the everyday teaching.

Paragraph 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)

- Leaders have confirmed that plans are in place for all pupils to attend a careers conference. In addition, pupils will have access to a careers adviser on a one-to-one basis and will receive a follow-up plan for their future careers. Links are established with local colleges so that pupils can find out about a variety of different courses. There are plans for local companies to visit the school and for pupils to learn about apprenticeships. Links with the University of Hull are also in place so that pupils can find out about life at university.
- Leaders are clear that pupils should have high, realistic aspirations for their careers.
- Depending on individual need, some pupils will study a work skills qualification. This is to help them develop skills and be ready for their future world of work.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- The school employs four members of staff. There are two qualified teachers, one of whom is the headteacher, one higher-level teaching assistant and one teaching assistant who is currently completing her higher-level teaching assistant qualification.
- Curriculum plans and lesson plans show that teachers will consider the individual needs of each pupil. There are a variety of activities to help pupils enjoy their education and encourage them to want to learn.
- Resources that have been made or purchased are appropriate to enhance learning and communication and to help pupils to make good progress, for example textbooks to support teaching English and cards to help pupils with their organisational skills.
- The headteacher intends for science and physical education (PE) to be taught off-site. Links have been set up with a local secondary school to access appropriate equipment for science teaching and with a local leisure centre for PE.
- A clear assessment policy is in place. Assessments will take place frequently and leaders plan that teachers and support staff will use this information to plan pupils' future learning.
- The standards in Part 1 are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a policy for teaching spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The policy states clearly how each aspect will be taught and links well to British values.
- The scheme of work for personal, social, health and economic education is well thought out, is in place for each year group and covers a wide range of topics in an age-appropriate way, for example different types of relationships, the wider world, healthy living, politics and the law.
- External speakers who may come to the school to speak with pupils are to be appropriately vetted by the headteacher. Reasonable steps are to be taken to ensure that pupils receive a balanced view of different topics and visitors are accompanied by staff at all times.
- The standards in Part 2 are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The proprietor has ensured that the safeguarding policy reflects the latest guidance from government. The school does not have a website but ensures that parents and carers know how to access the policy by including information in the school prospectus, which is shared at the application stage.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and has recently accessed

appropriate training for this role. The deputy designated safeguarding lead will undertake the same training prior to beginning employment at the school as a teacher.

- Safeguarding systems are in place, including appropriate paperwork to record, report and monitor any concerns that staff may have about pupils. Staff are knowledgeable about the role they have in keeping pupils safe and are well aware of the additional vulnerabilities that pupils attending this school may have. They are clear about the signs to look out for and how to pass on their concerns.
- The headteacher is trained in safer recruitment and quality-assures information from human resources, ensuring that all appropriate checks on staff are made and recorded prior to them beginning employment.
- The headteacher plans to provide regular safeguarding updates to staff during staff meetings and daily briefings. All staff currently employed have completed appropriate safeguarding training.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10

- The proprietor has ensured that an appropriate behaviour policy is in place. The policy is based around a clear system of rewards which encourages pupils to try hard.
- Leaders are clear about how the policy will be implemented and an appropriate system is in place to record incidents of poor behaviour and the consequence applied.
- All staff are to be trained to carry out physical restraint and an appropriate system is in place for recording if this is used. The headteacher is very clear that this will be used as a last resort to prevent pupils from harming themselves or others.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

- All relevant fire safety checks have been carried out. There is regular servicing and checking of fire alarms, extinguishers and electrical equipment. A comprehensive fire risk assessment is in place and exits are clearly signed.
- The proprietor has ensured that a written health and safety policy is in place and that it is implemented effectively so that pupils will be safe on-site. The internal and external areas are maintained to a high standard. The building has been recently renovated and is bright, clean and tidy.
- The written first-aid policy is comprehensive and all staff working at the school are trained in first aid or booked onto a refresher first-aid course so that they will be trained prior to pupils arriving. There is an appropriate system in place to record any accidents that happen during the school day. Appropriate arrangements are in place to safely administer medicine to pupils.
- Although pupils have not yet been admitted to the school, the proprietor has ensured that admission and attendance registers are in place. These documents comply with legal requirements.
- The headteacher has plans to ensure that pupils are appropriately supervised during the day. For much of the time, there will be one-to-one support for pupils. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils will be supervised by school staff.

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

- The proprietor has ensured that an appropriate risk assessment policy is in place and that risks are assessed and recorded appropriately.
- A sample of risk assessments were evaluated as part of this inspection. They clearly identify risks and the actions to take to minimise the risk, for example when using the outdoor equipment, going on a school trip and moving around the school building.
- 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)(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)

- The proprietor has ensured that all appropriate checks have been made on adults to assess their suitability to work with children. Where relevant, checks have been made prior to the appointment of staff.

Paragraph 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)

- The single central register provides an up-to-date and accurate record of all the checks that have been carried out on adults working with children.
- The standards in Part 4 are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c)

- There are appropriate toilet and washing facilities that are provided for the sole use of pupils. There is also a shower that is available for pupils to use.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 24(2)

- A large medical room is in place for the short-term treatment of sick or injured pupils. There is a new first-aid kit, an appropriate bed and access to a sink. The medical room is situated close to a toilet. The school does not intend to cater for pupils who have a complex medical needs.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- The classrooms are bright, with appropriate lighting and acoustics.
- External lighting is in place to ensure that pupils can leave and enter the school building safely when it is dark.
- The building is well maintained and provides a safe and secure environment for pupils to learn in. There is a secure fence around the school and gates are locked during the day.

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

- Drinking water is available for pupils throughout the day, is readily accessible and is clearly labelled.

- The toilets have an adequate supply of hot and cold water and the temperature of the hot water does not pose a scalding risk to pupils.

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

- There are two outside spaces available for pupils to use. The first is a courtyard area with seating and activities, which is suitable for pupils to use to socialise and play during breaktimes and lunchtimes. The second is a larger lawn area that is suitable for some aspects of PE. The headteacher has arranged for other aspects of PE to be taught off-site.
- The standards in Part 5 are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f)

- The proprietor has ensured that all policies required for Part 6 of the independent school standards are available to parents. These include policies on admissions, behaviour, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who speak English as an additional language, the curriculum, bullying, health and safety, first aid, child protection and complaints. The policies are listed in the school prospectus, with information about how they can be obtained from the school.
- The format for the annual written report to parents will follow that of other schools with the same proprietor. The report contains information about pupils' academic progress, as well as their behaviour and attitudes to learning. The report also provides parents with the current grade their child is working at in each subject, as well as their target grades.
- Leaders plan to review pupils' education, health and care plans regularly. There is a format for this review to take place and pupils are invited to contribute their views in a manner that suits them. The format for review is comprehensive.
- The proprietor has ensured that a format is ready to use to account to placing local authorities for the expenditure incurred by the school for pupils.

Paragraph 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(d)

- The school prospectus contains contact details for the headteacher and the proprietor and contains a clear statement about the school's ethos. The prospectus states that 'Helping one person might not change the world but it might change the world for that person.'
- The standards in Part 6 are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)

- The complaints policy is appropriate and well detailed, with clear timescales and stages set out for the resolution of complaints.

- This standard is 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)

- Leaders and managers are knowledgeable about the independent school standards and about education. They are passionate and committed to improving the life chances of each pupil who attends the school.
- The headteacher is an experienced senior leader and brings a wealth of life experience to the role.
- Policies and other documents are well organised and clearly communicated to staff, including the staff code of conduct.
- Systems for quality assurance are in place and there is accountability at all levels. The proprietor and head of education for Hexagon Care Services meet regularly with the headteacher to evaluate the quality of the school.
- The proprietor ensures that staff have access to appropriate training to allow them to fulfil their roles effectively and ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently.
- Through the carefully planned curriculum, planned one-to-one support, safeguarding systems and opportunities to be involved in the wider community, leaders are in a strong position to actively promote the well-being of pupils who join the school.
- The standards in Part 8 are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a carefully considered equality policy and accessibility plan in place. The plan is detailed well, with appropriate timescales to improve access to the curriculum, the physical environment and the delivery of information to pupils with a disability.
- This standard is likely to be met.

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.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	146333
DfE registration number	811/6018
Inspection number	10070488

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	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Francis Ashcroft
Headteacher	Martin Evington
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,940
Telephone number	07791 471811
Website	No website
Email address	headoffice@hexagoncare.com
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	11–18	11–18
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	4	4

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	4

Number of part-time pupils	N/A	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	Up to 4
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	Up to 4
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	4

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	3	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

Information about this proposed school

- The school has a sole proprietor, is part of Hexagon Care Services and does not have or propose to have a governing body.
- Sycamore House is in a coastal location in Hull. The school proposes to cater for up to four children aged between 11 and 18 years who are looked after and who have autism spectrum disorder.
- The school will cater for pupils who are resident in the attached children's home.
- The school may use alternative education provision but this will be decided on an individual basis.
- The school operates on one site.
- The school does not have a religious character.

Information about this inspection

- This first pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education and took place on 4 December 2018.
- The inspection was conducted with two days' notice.
- The inspector reviewed policies and documents associated with the independent school standards and met with the headteacher, the head of education for Hexagon Care Services, the proprietor and other school staff. The school building was toured inside and out.

Inspection team

Debbie Redshaw, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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