

Priory Hurworth House

Westfield Drive, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, County Durham DL2 2AD

Inspection dates

13 March 2019

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The proprietor and leaders ensure that the arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective. They have put in place a suitable safeguarding policy and other related documents that take account of the current guidance of the Secretary of State. Leaders supplement the school's information to parents and carers by making the full policy available to them on request. They ensure that safeguarding leaders and all other staff have up-to-date, relevant training. As a result, staff are vigilant for any signs of abuse or neglect. They know what to do if they have a concern and use the school's referral protocols effectively.
- Those responsible for governance check regularly that the records of all the required pre-employment checks have been completed. They talk with pupils to find out about their understanding of how to keep safe. They challenge leaders to present regular analyses of safeguarding concerns. They evaluate these with leaders to seek continually incremental improvements in the light of the changing contexts or issues presented by pupils. This sustains the school's focus on safeguarding as its first priority, creating a safe culture for all.
- Safeguarding leaders keep extremely detailed notes of any concerns they have about pupils' safety and well-being. They carefully record their work with appropriate agencies and external teams to keep pupils safe. Leaders use their in-depth knowledge of each pupil to write a personalised risk assessment. This ensures they have in place actions to minimise risks and keep pupils safe.
- Leaders carry out detailed evaluation of all the alternative provisions they use to personalise pupils' learning and development. They record their checks on alternative providers' safeguarding arrangements before placing pupils with them. They keep in regular contact with providers to check that pupils attend and are being kept safe.

Paragraph 11

- The proprietor has in place a wide-ranging, comprehensive health and safety policy, underpinned by the school's overarching risk assessment policy.
- The site maintenance team keeps extensive records of the range of checks it carries out regularly and periodically. With leaders, the team ensures that maintenance and service agreements are in place to check the correct operation of equipment, such as the boiler and oil tank. They ensure that safety certificates are up to date, and that any repairs needed are carried out quickly.
- Leaders ensure that robust risk assessments are in place for activities on site, keeping materials safe, such as medicines or cleaning materials, and for managing safely the movement of any vehicles. There are specific risk assessments for visitors to supplement the school's arrangements to keep the site secure.
- Staff ensure that rooms are kept tidy. Any potentially dangerous equipment is kept safely locked away, such as knives in the food technology room. Staff ensure that all emergency exits are unencumbered, to allow for swift evacuation of the building if required.

Paragraph 12

- The proprietor and leaders have ensured that arrangements for fire safety comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Certified installations and regular maintenance schedules, alongside regular checks, ensure that fire-safety equipment is fully operational. The fire alarm is tested weekly. The regular safety and maintenance checks on equipment carried out under the school's health and safety schedules, for example on portable appliance testing, reduce the risk of fire.
- Fire wardens are trained and evacuation drills are carried out regularly to test the evacuation plan. This ensures that everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency. Leaders note any learning points that need to be followed up to ensure efficient evacuation. For example, they put in place personal evacuation plans for some pupils, who can become distressed on hearing alarms.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils are closely supervised throughout the day according to their needs from arrival at school right up to the moment when taxis take pupils home at the end of the day. The school keeps a personalised risk assessment for each pupil to mitigate any risks and deploys staff in the light of these plans to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils have personalised learning and behaviour plans, which take account of their needs. Learning plans are adjusted in order to promote pupils' well-being in response to known or emerging needs.
- Leaders ensure that during break- and lunchtimes, pupils are well supervised in whichever activity they join. Leaders make sure that there are further staff on duty, who provide additional support as needed around the school.

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

- The school's written risk assessment policy is central to the intense focus on keeping pupils, and adults who work with them, safe. The policy is written in straightforward

language. It makes explicit the range of areas that must be taken into consideration to keep members of the school safe.

- The wide range of well-considered individual risk assessments, training records, schedules for maintenance and checks on equipment demonstrate that the risk assessment policy is put into practice effectively.
- Leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of the material change.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(20)(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(2)(f), 18(3), 19(1), 19(3), 21(5), 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) and 21(4)

- As part of their rigorous adherence to safer recruitment practices, leaders ensure that all the required pre-employment checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully.
- The school is careful to check for any gaps in employment history and that professional references have been received and subsequently checked thoroughly.
- Checks on the suitability of those responsible for governance to fulfil their roles and work with pupils are carried out with equal rigour.
- The school maintains a single central record of the information about staff identity and the checks on their suitability to work with children. The register is completed without any omissions. Personnel files for staff confirm the accuracy of the register.
- The school does not make use of teacher supply agency staff. High staffing ratios to meet the particular needs of pupils make the employment of agency staff unnecessary.
- The attention to detail in executing safer recruitment procedures demonstrated during this inspection provides confidence that the same procedures will be used effectively as new staff are appointed.
- Leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c) and 24(2)

- The proprietor and leaders ensure that there are ample separate toilet, washing and showering facilities for boys and girls. These are kept clean and are well maintained. Staff toilets are also separate.
- Leaders have set aside a room with suitable facilities, including a bed and washbasin, for the care of sick pupils or for medical examination purposes. This room is not used for other purposes, and is adjacent to both the girls' and boys' toilets.

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

- Leaders ensure that teaching rooms are fit for purpose. There is ample space to accommodate the increased number of pupils, for which the school is applying in this material change. Rooms are well lit and their acoustic qualities are suitable for the lessons conducted in each of the rooms.
- In addition to the internal emergency lighting, the proprietor has installed external lighting to ensure that pupils can enter and leave the school safely when it is dark.

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, clearly marked as such, is readily available throughout the day at a number of points around the school. Provision of drinking water is separate from the toilet facilities.
- Toilet facilities are plentiful, clean and provided with hot and cold water. Hot water is kept at a temperature that poses no risk of scalding when used. Soap and hand-drying towels are available in all toilet blocks.
- There are ample toilet, showering and changing facilities to accommodate the additional number of pupils for which the school is applying in this material change.

Paragraphs 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b) and 30

- The school has a generous space for pupils to play outside in different areas around the building. In addition to the gymnasium, the pupils benefit from access to a large area of playing fields a short distance from the main school building.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c) and 34(2)

- The sharp attention to detail in all aspects of the school's arrangements for promoting health and safety and safeguarding ensures that these arrangements are of the highest order. This provides confidence in leaders' firm focus on prioritising these as a prerequisite for their education programmes.
- Attention to detail ensures that the proprietor gathers high-quality information from those responsible for the school's governance. They can, therefore, have confidence that leaders understand and are able to fulfil their responsibilities fully. As a consequence, leaders, on behalf of the proprietor, ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently.
- The intense focus demonstrated by the school on health and safety and safeguarding arrangements amply illustrates leaders' active promotion of pupils' well-being.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school meets the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It has drawn up a detailed statement and action plan in respect of accessibility to the education and associated activities provided by the school.
- Leaders take into account how they can improve the physical environment and how they can best address the communication of needs of all pupils.

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 that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	137511
DfE registration number	841/6006
Inspection number	10099064

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	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Simon Coles
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Blackett
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,800 to £79,763
Telephone number	01325 729080
Website	Not applicable
Email address	claireblackett@priorygroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	20–22 November 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 19	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	57	80	80

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	57	80

Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	57	80
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	57	80
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	57	80

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	16	19
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	4	7

Information about this school

- Priory Hurworth House School currently accepts up to 67 pupils. They are aged between five and 19 years, with social, emotional and health needs, and/or who have a diagnosis for autism spectrum disorder, attachment disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder. The school is seeking to increase the number of places it offers to 80, for pupils with similar diagnoses.
- The school has two separate departments on the same site. In total, there are currently 57 pupils on the school's roll. The primary department currently has 17 pupils. The secondary department currently has 40 pupils, including four students aged 16 and above.
- At times, older secondary-aged pupils attend work-based placements and other education providers.
- At the time of the inspection, five pupils were attending alternative education

providers. The school uses Middlesbrough College, Darlington College, Stockton Riverside and Toolbox as alternative education providers.

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Alongside education, the school provides a number of therapeutic interventions.
- The school was last inspected in November 2018, when it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and a representative of the Priory Group with responsibility for the governance of the school. He met also with other members of the senior management team.
- The inspector made a full tour of the school site with the headteacher and site maintenance staff, visiting all classrooms, and inspected the full range of facilities offered by the school.
- The inspector talked informally with a small group of pupils, during the tour of the school, and observed informally how pupils interacted with each other and adults.
- A large range of documents was scrutinised, in particular those relating to the school's safeguarding and health and safety arrangements.

Inspection team

Chris Campbell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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