

E-Spired

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

Inspection dates

5 April 2019

Overall outcome

The school does not meet the independent school standards relevant to the material change. The material change has already been implemented.

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)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The material change inspection in September 2018 judged this standard likely to be met.
- There are 25 hours teaching each week. The school day begins at 9am and ends at 3pm. Pupils are taught six lessons each day for a total of five hours a day.
- There is a curriculum policy, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work.
- The curriculum provides for pupils to study for GCSEs when appropriate. The key stage 4 curriculum continues to include: English language, English literature, mathematics, physics, biology, information technology, history, religious education/ethics, physical education (PE), creative arts and business studies. Pupils study for GCSEs, entry-level and vocational qualifications.
- The previous material change request included the intention to offer up to GCSE for students aged 16 to 18 years. Suitable schemes of work are available. The proprietor intends to increase the number of GCSEs on offer from September 2019 onwards as staffing levels increase. There are opportunities for pupils to take the examinations.
- Teachers' planning is detailed and sufficiently takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- Pupils receive individual, impartial careers advice from an external careers adviser. Teachers are supporting pupils' career aspirations well. Pupils are well prepared for their future life choices.

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 previous material change inspection judged these standards likely to be met.

- Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. They plan activities to meet pupils' needs and challenge them to make good progress. Work is suited well to pupils' needs so that they acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability. Teachers and teaching assistants are committed to improving teaching and learning and ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress.
- Staff make precise links between pupils' learning plans and the pupils' EHC plans.
- Resources are used effectively and pupils make good use of learning time.
- Teaching promotes good behaviour. Pupils listen and concentrate well. They respond positively to teachers' high expectations and work well together. There are strong relationships between both adults and pupils, and between pupils and their peers.
- Pupils have developed positive attitudes to learning. They are motivated to do well and to continue with their studies at college.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching effectively through visits to classrooms and scrutiny of pupils' books, and they analyse information on pupils' progress.
- The proprietor has ensured that there are effective systems in place to track and monitor pupils' achievement.
- As found at the first material change inspection, the proprietor has ensured that the three independent school standards about the quality of education are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) approves the changes.

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

Paragraphs 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)

- At the time of the previous material change inspection, the curriculum ensured that pupils were provided with a well-rounded education and an understanding of a range of cultures and religions.
- The proprietor ensures that there are opportunities for pupils to develop leadership qualities, and to demonstrate care and respect for others in the youth leadership programme.
- As found at the first material change inspection, the proprietor has ensured that the independent school standard relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The current safeguarding policy meets statutory requirements and is published on the school's website. Leaders shared this policy with staff at the beginning of the academic year.
- Staff have completed training on child and adult exploitation, e-safety, female genital mutilation, positive handling and 'Prevent' duties.
- Leaders are knowledgeable about when and how to make referrals to the appropriate authorities when they are concerned about pupils' well-being.

- As found at the first material change inspection, the proprietor has ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

Paragraph 11

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

- At the previous material change inspection, school leaders were not able to supply a health and safety policy for the proposed main site.
- In their action plan, leaders said that they would produce a risk assessment policy that 'ensures the needs of the growing school are appropriately met'.
- School leaders are now able to provide suitable policy statements relating to risk assessments, and health and safety procedures for the main school site and the additional school site.
- The proprietor has ensured that the two independent school standards are likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

Paragraph 12

- At the time of the previous material change inspection, the proprietor and leaders had not ensured that the school complied with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005). The school's action plan proposed to carry out a fire risk assessment by the end of January 2019.
- In December 2018, leaders commissioned a commercial company to carry out the required fire safety checks. There was 'no detection' in both the reception area and the office behind reception. Emergency lighting needed adding to the site. Fire extinguishers needed checking and the intruder alarm required a reset and a service. Three out of these four actions identified are now completed in accordance with legislation.
- While leaders have ensured that a recent fire risk assessment has been completed, leaders have not responded with sufficient urgency to the findings of the assessment to reduce the risks from fire. There remains incomplete work recommended to take place, for example fitting emergency lighting throughout the building to ensure that risk is minimised. This was identified in December 2018. The work is now scheduled to take place on the 10, 11 and 12 April 2019.
- While the proprietor has made some progress towards meeting the independent school standard, the standard is unlikely to be met if the DfE approves the changes (this is in the context of the proprietor using the site for pupils without the change of premises being approved by the DfE).

Paragraph 14

- The proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff on the main school site. There were no students at the original school site on the day of the material change.
- As found at the first material change inspection, the proprietor has ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

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), 18(3)

Paragraph 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(d), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3)

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), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c)

- The previous material change inspection found that leaders could not provide evidence that a person's medical fitness is checked on appointment. The proprietor has added a new medical fitness form to the school's pre-employment documentation. All staff have signed a declaration of medical fitness. The school's action plan submitted to the DfE stated that 'the [medical] form is to be included at the point of shortlisting'. The school's most up-to-date action plan states that the form is to be given once an offer of employment has been made. This is in accordance with Section 60 of the Equality Act 2010, that the school does not ask health-related questions of applicants before a job offer.
- All of the required checks for existing and prospective staff are complete and recorded appropriately.
- The proprietor has ensured that the three independent school standards are likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The original school premises at Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford MK42 9TW were previously refurbished to a high standard. On this original site, the proprietor continues to meet all seven of the standards for premises and accommodation.
- The proprietor proposes to use the original school premises as the additional site. The site will be used for post-16 students.
- The material change request in September 2018 included the intention for the main school site to be at The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Amphill Road, Bedford MK42 9HE, with additional premises at the original school site. A full site inspection was undertaken to ensure its fitness for purpose. None of the areas designated for the prospective main school site were ready in time for the proposed opening date, 4 September 2018, as originally submitted to the DfE. The proprietor had not ensured that all seven of the standards for the premises and accommodation were likely to be met.
- Following the first material change inspection, the proprietor put in place a programme of renovation to the proposed main school premises. Before the second material change, the proprietor opened the main school site on the 9 January 2019. The school has 17 pupils on roll who attend this building. The proprietor is aware that moving pupils to the new site without approval from the DfE is in breach of the current registration of the school.

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

- There are suitable toilets and hand basins for use by pupils, staff, visitors and disabled persons. Toilets and hand basins are new.
- An appropriate Legionella risk assessment has been undertaken by a commercial company to identify any potential risks.
- The proprietor has ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

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

- A suitable room has been identified for short-term care of sick and injured pupils. The room has a collapsible bed, a locked medical cabinet, a toilet and a sink. The small window in the door has frosted glass.
- There are no pupils with complex needs.
- The proprietor has ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

Paragraph 25

- The main school site is an old two-storey Victorian building, previously a nursery.
- The building comprises: a secure entrance and hallway; a reception area and office; a waiting room area; a main hallway; five large learning spaces, one of which acts as the dining area; a kitchen area; office space; a proposed exam storage room with an adjacent room, which has yet to be renovated; male and female toilets; staff toilets; an office area on the second floor; and a secure external outdoor space, ample in size.
- The main school site is well maintained, clean and tidy. Classrooms and office areas are maintained to a high standard. Carpets and paintwork throughout the building are new. No areas are cluttered with unused equipment or furniture. Furniture is clean and respected by the pupils. Some of the furniture has been transferred to the new proposed main school site and is adequate to cater for the number of post-16 students who currently use the accommodation.
- The safety of pupils is compromised due to no emergency lighting in the building. See also the area identified in the independent school standards in paragraph 12 (above), which is not likely to be met.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes (this is in the context of the proprietor using the site for pupils without the change of premises being approved by the DfE).

Paragraph 26

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

- The acoustic conditions of rooms are suitable due to the rooms having appropriate flooring and furniture. The acoustic conditions have full regard to the requirements of the activities to be undertaken.
- All rooms and internal spaces have sufficient natural light.
- There is sufficient external lighting so that people can safely enter and leave the

school premises.

- The proprietor has ensured that the two independent school standards are likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

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 running hot and cold water for toilets and washing facilities.
- Drinking water is labelled as such.
- The proprietor has ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

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

- The outdoor space for pupils to play is suitable because the large garden area is well maintained and tidy.
- The proprietor provides PE at the local gym and at a local secondary school.
- The proprietor has ensured that the independent school standard is likely to be met if the DfE approves the changes.

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 knowingly operating outside the current registration of the school. The proprietor must, as a matter of urgency, resolve this matter with the DfE.
- Pupils have been at the proposed site without the DfE agreeing to the proposed change. The proprietor has been operating from the proposed main site since the 9 January 2019. The proprietor is aware that permission should have been granted first.
- The proprietor currently provides education for students above compulsory school age but is not registered to do so.
- Although a number of the independent school standards are likely to be met if the DfE approves the material changes, others to do with the welfare, health and safety of pupils do not currently meet the requirements of the standards.
- The proprietor has not ensured compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Emergency lighting has not been fitted in the premises before pupils attended the main site on a regular basis.
- The proprietor has modernised the proposed main school site to bring it up to the same high standard as the original school site. The new site is spacious and more than adequate for the number and age range of pupils on roll.
- The proprietor has ensured that policies and procedures for safeguarding comply with the independent school standards.
- The proprietor has a detailed understanding of the independent school standards.
- The proprietor's rationale for the material changes for a new main school site and increasing the age range is informed by the work with local schools and the discussions held with Bedford local authority.
- As discussed and agreed with the proprietor at the first material inspection, increasing

the number of pupils on roll from 20 to 70 is not recommended. To increase the number to 40 is a realistic proposal, given the current number on roll and the gradual increase that the proprietor anticipates.

- The proprietor has not ensured that the independent standard for the quality of leadership and management of schools is met (this is in the context of the proprietor using the site for pupils without the change of premises and the increased age range being approved by the DfE).

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not 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	10099741

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
Headteacher	Mark Hudson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,000 to £32,000
Telephone number	01234 357 777
Website	www.espired.org
Email address	info@espiced.org
Date of previous standard inspection	24 to 26 April 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	14 to 18 (although the school is only registered for pupils up to the age of 16)	14 to 18	14 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	17	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

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	17	70
Number of part-time pupils	1	Up to 70
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	7	Up to 14
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	7	Up to 14
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	7	Up to 14

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
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 sole proprietor and 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 17 full-time pupils and one part-time pupil on roll.
- The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs, and those 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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The school has links with Bedford College, Bedford Free School, Mark Rutherford School, Bedford Academy, Biddenham Upper School and St Thomas More School.
- The school occupies a site within a business park in Bedfordshire.
- At the school's standard inspection in April 2018, all of the independent school standards were met. The overall effectiveness was good.
- Ofsted conducted a material change inspection in September 2018, commissioned by the DfE. The proprietor proposed to relocate to a new school site, to extend the age range from 16 to 18 and to increase pupils numbers from 20 to 70. At the material change inspection the school did not meet 12 of the independent school standards.
- Since the material change on 24 September 2018, the proprietor has relocated to the proposed main school site on 9 January 2019, accommodating 17 pupils aged 14 to 18 years. The proprietor plans to use the original premises for a maximum of 20 post-16 students and the main site for a maximum of 20 pupils, aged 14 to 16 years.
- The proposal (already implemented without approval of the DfE) is to base the school on two sites five minutes' drive from one another. The detail in the report applies to both sites.
- The new school site is at The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Bedford MK42 9HE. The original school site is at Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9TW.
- The school is owned by the E-Spired Community Interest Company. There is a sole proprietor and a board of directors. Three directors of the company work full-time in the school as the principal, the operations manager and the curriculum lead.
- 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.
- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the DfE to consider the proprietor's application for a material change to relocate to a new school site, to extend the age range from 16 to 18 and to increase pupil numbers from 20 to 70.
- This was the school's second material change inspection. The focus of the inspection was to consider whether the independent school standards in Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 were likely to be met if the proposed material changes were approved.
- This inspection was conducted with two days' notice.
- The inspector undertook a tour of the proposed main school site and the original school site with the proprietor.
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietor, the operations manager and the curriculum lead.
- The inspector visited classes, and all of these were joint visits with the proprietor. The inspector spoke to pupils in classes and viewed their exercise books.
- A telephone discussion took place with a representative of Bedford local authority to gain their views.
- 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 of 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

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 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.

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)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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