

Unity College

150 West Wycombe Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP12 3AE

Inspection dates

21 May 2019

Overall outcome

The school is likely 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

Paragraph 2

- Leaders have planned an appropriate curriculum for new post-16 students that can be implemented in September 2019, should the material change be granted.
- The proposed curriculum includes two pathways, 'vocational' and 'preparation for employment', which both include the study of English and mathematics.
- The proposed curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and builds on students' starting points, helping them to work towards appropriate qualifications.
- Appropriate plans are in place to provide suitable careers education and work experience that will help students to prepare for the next steps in their education, employment or training.

Paragraph 3

- The school has suitable qualified teachers, tutors and support staff to provide good-quality teaching. Leaders have thought carefully about the skills and knowledge necessary when planning the recruitment of additional staff should the material change be granted. They are likely to recruit additional staff who have the skills and knowledge that leaders have identified.
- Teachers use resources appropriately. They target tasks and their questioning well to the needs of individual pupils.

Paragraph 4

- Teaching staff with subject responsibility outlined very clearly to Her Majesty's Inspector how the school's current assessment procedure works, and were able to explain how it will be adapted for post-16 education.
- School 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 changes.

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

Paragraph 5

- The school's policy and planning in this area are fit for purpose.
- Displays in the school hall about the student council, anti-bullying week, fundraising for Red Nose Day, a school trip to Silverstone, an 'odd-socks day' celebrating equality and difference, and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme reflect the richness of the curriculum and the contribution it makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- School leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The school's safeguarding policy complies with latest statutory guidance and reflects carefully the context of the school.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding ensure that staff are well trained and vigilant to keep pupils safe from harm. Weekly safeguarding updates are well received by staff who say the information they receive helps them to keep up to date with the risks affecting pupils in the wider community.
- Leaders work well with other professionals to take all necessary actions to try and keep pupils safe from harm. It is likely that this will continue should the material change be approved.
- Leaders are aware of their statutory responsibilities, for example around the recruitment of suitable staff. They know the procedures to follow should any issues arise about the conduct of staff.

Paragraph 11

- The proprietor has wide-ranging health and safety policies that are adapted for, and applied well at, Unity College. The current policies and procedures will remain suitable should the material change be granted.

Paragraph 12

- A full fire risk assessment was carried out in December 2018. All required actions have been addressed by the proprietor.

Paragraph 14

- Her Majesty's Inspector observed pupils during their free time at break. Levels of supervision were more than adequate. The proposed increase in pupils and staff will actually mean there will be a higher staff-to-pupil ratio should the material change be granted.

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

- The risk assessment policy ensures that all risks are assessed and managed appropriately. Each individual pupil also has a risk assessment that is updated regularly. These risk assessments will be updated as students' needs change as they

enter post-16 education.

- School leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

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

Paragraph 18

- All required pre-employment checks have been carried out on current staff. There are well-established procedures in place that will ensure that the same checks will be carried out on any new staff members required by the material change before they commence employment.

Paragraph 19

- The school only uses supply staff rarely. There are well-developed procedures between the school and its preferred supply agency to ensure that all the required pre-employment checks are carried out. These procedures will continue if the material change is permitted.

Paragraph 20(6)

- All required checks have been carried out on members of the proprietary body. The material-change proposal will not require any change to the proprietary body.

Paragraph 21

- The single central record of recruitment checks currently meets requirements. Well-established processes within the Keys Group will ensure that this remains the case when any new staff are appointed as a result of the proposed material change.
- School leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 23(2), 28(1)(b)

- The current toilet, washing, changing and showering facilities available for the sole use of pupils meet all the required standards. They will remain suitable with two additional pupils and a slightly extended age range.

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

- Current medical-room provision will continue to be suitable for pupils if the increase in roll and age range is granted.

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

- The school is well maintained. The classrooms are an appropriate size for the small numbers of students in each class. Classrooms are light and the acoustic conditions are good, including in the popular music room.
- The plans to convert the current 'salon' into a dedicated room for new sixth-form students are well thought out. This will provide older students with a dedicated entrance and base room, while still maintaining some facilities to enable the school to

continue offering vocational courses in hair and beauty.

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

- There is hot running water in each bathroom, and fresh drinking water in the kitchen area, which is accessible at all times. The current facilities are perfectly adequate for the proposed small increase in pupil numbers and for the extended age range of pupils.

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

- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has refurbished the outside area by laying artificial grass. This means it can be used for sport, play and recreation all year round.
- School leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's current safeguarding policy is published on the Unity College page of the Keys Group website. Leaders will ensure that updated versions of the policy will continue to be published in this way.
- School leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are likely to be met should the material change be granted.
- Leaders have maintained the quality of education at the school during a period of staff changes and as the number of pupils on roll has increased.
- The proprietor has strong procedures in place to give leadership oversight of the school, the outcomes, and the well-being of pupils. These procedures will ensure that the introduction of more pupils and increased sixth-form provision is likely to be well managed by the headteacher and her team.
- School leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's policies in this area will remain fit for purpose should the material change be granted.
- School leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

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	136373
DfE registration number	825/6043
Inspection number	10100484

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 special school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Keys Group
Chair	The Director of Education for the Keys Group
Headteacher	Vicky Carrick-Lynch
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,800
Telephone number	01494 446371
Website	www.keyschildcare.co.uk/services/education/unity-college
Email address	head.unitycollege@keyschildcare.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	26–28 September 2017

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16	11 to 18	11 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	12	26	26

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	12	26
Number of part-time pupils	0	26
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	12	26
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	10	Up to 26
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	10	Up to 26

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	5
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	2

Information about this school

- Unity College provides full-time education for up to 24 boys and girls between 11 and 16 years of age requiring support with social, emotional and mental health issues.
- It caters for those who are accommodated in residential homes operated by the school's proprietor, and a small number of day pupils.
- All pupils have experienced significant difficulties and disruption to their education.
- The school opened and first admitted pupils in January 2011. It is run by the Keys

Childcare Group under a contractual arrangement with the Thames Valley Cross-Regional Project. This is a partnership of six local authorities that places and funds the pupils at the school.

- The current headteacher has been in post since October 2016. The school is led by the headteacher, with oversight from the proprietor's director of education, regional director of operations and director of the cross-regional project.
- Currently, 12 full-time pupils are on roll aged between 12 and 16 years of age. All current pupils are in the care of their local authority, and 10 of the pupils currently on roll have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has an arrangement with two local organisations, Aylesbury motor project, which is part of Aylesbury College, and The Round House, to provide additional education and training opportunities.
- The school was last inspected in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE to evaluate the school's material-change application.
- The school is seeking to increase the maximum number of pupils on roll from 24 to 26. The school is also seeking to extend the upper age of students to 18 by providing sixth-form provision.
- This was the first material-change visit.
- Her Majesty's Inspector met with the headteacher, and the director of education from the Keys Group, who is the proprietor's representative. He also met with the assistant headteacher and a sample of staff. He talked informally to other staff and pupils around the school.
- The inspector observed learning in both classes that were in school on the day of the inspection. He also observed pupils during a breaktime.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation relating to safeguarding, the curriculum and the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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