

# Blackford Education (Schools) Ltd T/A the Libra School

Edgemoor Court, South Radworthy, South Molton, Devon EX36 3LN

**Inspection date**

14 June 2019

**Overall outcome**

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

## Main inspection findings

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

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

- Leaders pay high regard to the safety of pupils attending the school, many of whom are highly vulnerable. Policies and procedures are detailed, published on the school's website, and applied robustly. Leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, have a secure understanding of current guidance and have ensured that the school's practices are in line with the latest statutory legislation, such as 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2018).

#### *Paragraphs 11, 12, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- Leaders have established secure systems to maintain the safety and well-being of pupils while they are on the school site. The health and safety policy is appropriate to the setting and in line with statutory guidance. It outlines clearly the expectations placed on all members of the school's community.
- The fire risk assessment is updated regularly so that it identifies and mitigates any identified risks to pupils' safety. Additionally, there is a robust suite of risk assessments in place to cover different aspects of the school's work. This includes bespoke risk assessments for lessons, off-site visits, the premises and individual pupils.

#### *Paragraph 14*

- Supervision ratios are appropriate for the pupils currently attending the school and leaders have plans in place to increase the number of teachers and support staff. When implemented, this increase in staffing is likely to provide effective supervision for the additional pupils as proposed by the school's material change application.
- School leaders have ensured that the standards in Part 3 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(2)(a)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(4) and 21(6)–21(7)(b)*

- Leaders and administrative staff display a deep understanding of safer recruitment. Consequently, the school's procedures for ensuring the suitability of adults working in the school are extremely thorough and in line with statutory guidance. All the required checks have been undertaken for school leaders, including the directors. The headteacher and designated safeguarding lead have ensured that teaching staff are recruited in line with safer recruitment practices.
- The school's single central record is fully compliant and exemplifies best practice. This provides evidence that checks have been made in line with statutory guidance.

*Paragraphs 19(1)–19(3) and 21(5)–21(5)(c)*

- Due to the complex needs of the pupils attending the school, leaders do not currently utilise supply staff.
- School leaders have ensured that the standards in Part 4 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)–29(1)(b)*

- The school's premises are well maintained and, at the time of this inspection, were fully compliant with the independent school standards. An increase in pupil numbers, as proposed by the school's material change application, will not require leaders to make any structural changes to the premises. The existing premises are suitable for the additional pupils and so it is not anticipated that there will be any detrimental impact on the school's ability to continue to meet the independent school standards contained in this part.
- School leaders have ensured that the standards in Part 5 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

*Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)*

- Leaders, including the directors, have a secure understanding of the independent school standards. There are established systems in place to ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils are ensured as much as is possible.
- Leaders have considered fully the implications that any increase in numbers might have on the school. Any possible risks have been taken into account and mitigated appropriately.
- School leaders have ensured that the standards in Part 8 are likely to be met by the

school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets 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	133392
DfE registration number	878/6202
Inspection number	10107702

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 compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Independent special school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Blackford Education (Schools) Limited
Headteacher	Kirsten Crosby
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,066 to £78,000
Telephone number	01598 740044
Website	<a href="http://www.libraschool.co.uk">www.libraschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@libraschool.co.uk">admin@libraschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	13–15 November 2018

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	30	40	40

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	30	40

Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	30	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	30	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	30	40

## Staff

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

## Information about this school

- The Libra School is an independent special school and therapeutic community for pupils with severe social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The school opened in July 2001 and relocated to its current site in 2007.
- The school is currently registered for 30 pupils. These are referred to the Libra School by local authorities, social services and health departments from around the country. The Libra School works with boys and girls between the ages of five and 18 years old. At the time of the inspection, there were no students in the sixth form.
- All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan and about a third of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The school was last inspected in November 2018, when it was judged to be good. At that time, the school met the independent school standards and complied with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- The proprietors, who are the company representatives, have responsibility for the

governance of the school.

- No pupils attend alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This material change inspection was commissioned by the DfE in order to assess whether the school is likely to meet the independent school standards, should the proposed material change be implemented.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead, the school manager and a director. The inspector examined the school's material change application and looked at other documents provided by the school, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Along with the headteacher, he undertook a tour of the school's premises.

## Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2019