

Howard House

Netherton Colliery, Bedlington, Northumberland NE22 6BB

Inspection dates

10 September 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

- The school's safeguarding policy is fit for purpose and meets current legislative requirements. A condensed version of the policy is available on the school's website. The full document is available from the school office.
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is knowledgeable about policy and legislation. She is aware of all pupils and the difficulties they may face. Records are kept securely.
- Staff receive comprehensive training on safeguarding. They are aware of what to do in the event of a concern about a pupil or staff member.
- Pupils feel safe. A survey carried out by leaders shows that parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agree that their child is safe in school.
- There is a strong personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum which personalises learning towards the issues and vulnerabilities of the pupils. The DSL fosters positive relationships with external agencies to ensure the pupils get the most up-to-date information from relevant partners, for example the police, on keeping themselves safe.

Paragraph 11

- The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy which identifies the main roles and responsibilities for health and safety within the school.
- Regular health and safety checks are carried out both by school staff and external specialists. For example, the facilities manager is responsible for the repair and upkeep of the building and grounds. An external company is contracted once a month to carry out checks on the water supply.
- Relevant staff have up-to-date health and safety training, including the proprietor.

Paragraph 12

- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The school has an up-to-date fire safety policy, a fire safety logbook and an evacuation plan.
- Fire alarms, emergency exits and emergency lighting are checked on a weekly basis and externally monitored annually by the fire service.
- Staff and pupils receive verbal training on fire safety and evacuation drills every term. Records show that the time of evacuation is noted, along with any pupil who refused to participate. These pupils receive one-to-one fire safety awareness training.

Paragraph 14

- Senior leaders have ensured that all classes have sufficient numbers of staff to ensure pupils' health and welfare. The current ratio of staff to pupils is one to one and this is expected to continue if the material change is accepted.
- Two additional teachers took up employment in September 2019. Recruitment plans are in place for an additional two teachers and two teaching assistants to support the material change for an increased number of pupils.
- A break- and lunchtime duty rota ensures that the pupils have adequate supervision during unstructured time.

Paragraph 16

- The school has a risk assessment policy in place which clearly outlines the requirements for completing risk assessments for all areas of the school's work.
- The policy is supported by risk assessments which fall under three categories – in school, external visits and outdoor education, and individual pupil risk assessment, which covers such risks as self-harm and physical violence.
- Risk assessments are completed by competent and experienced staff members. All staff involved in the activity or with the pupils sign to acknowledge they have read and understood the risk assessment.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are met and are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

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

Paragraph 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21

- The proprietor has ensured that all checks required to ensure that adults are suitable to work with pupils have taken place.
- There is a single central register of the checks carried out on all adults.
- Personnel files are kept that contain information pertinent to safer recruitment, including references for each employee which are checked and verified by school staff.
- School leaders have ensured that these standards are met and are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23

- School leaders have ensured that there are sufficient toilets to meet the needs of 20 pupils, with one single-cubical toilet with washing facilities on each floor. There is an additional toilet and sink in the medical room. The downstairs facilities are suitable for disabled access.
- There is an additional toilet and washing facility on the ground floor for staff and visitors.
- Plans are in place to renovate an existing, currently closed toilet facility with a new toilet unit and door.

Paragraph 24

- Leaders have ensured that there is a clearly signed medical room in the school. This room has a toilet, sink, bed and fully stocked first-aid box.

Paragraph 25, 26 and 27

- The building and surrounding grounds are well maintained.
- Classrooms are large, bright and well equipped with appropriate furniture to accommodate 20 pupils. Acoustics are appropriate.
- A smaller room is in the process of being repurposed into a sensory room, which will help to meet the complex needs of the pupils attending the school.

Paragraph 28

- Suitable drinking water is provided for pupils in a large, well-equipped kitchen–diner. This is labelled and readily accessible.
- There is an adequate supply of hot and cold water in toilet facilities, and the temperature of the hot water is set so that it does not pose a scalding risk.

Paragraph 29

- The outdoor space surrounding the school is adequate for playing and socialising. The well-maintained area includes a football pitch, horticulture area and chicken pen.
- School leaders have ensured that these standards are met and are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have rewritten and published the school's complaints policy.
- The complaints policy is comprehensive and provides clear guidelines for raising a grievance. The policy clearly states the timeframes that need to be met and how, when required, people not directly involved in the complaint or not aligned with the school will be included.
- Leaders have produced a complaint guide for pupils.

- School leaders have ensured that these standards are now met and are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has taken swift and effective action to address the areas for improvement. This has included: setting up a management committee; appointing a substantive head of school; extending the curriculum; appointing two new teachers; increasing the development opportunities for staff; and bringing in support from an outstanding mainstream school.
- The newly appointed chair of the management committee and the head of school have a clear understanding of the context and difficulties facing the school and its pupils. This is coupled with a strong knowledge of education to support the proprietors, who are from a care background.
- There is a clear rationale for the material change requested which builds into longer term plans for the school. These will include vocational options to link with post-16 progression for pupils.
- Leaders are passionate and committed to the education and support of young people and preparing them for life after school or care. They have high expectations for staff and pupils and this is reflected in the improved curriculum and personal development opportunities on offer.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards have been met and are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

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	132855
DfE registration number	929/6046
Inspection number	10121028

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 special school
Proprietor	Angela O'Neil
Chair	Ian Redford
Headteacher	Mr Amran Suleman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,300
Telephone number	01670 820320
Website	www.howardhousecare.com
Email address	school@howardhousecare.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	26–28 March 2019

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	10 to 18	10 to 18	10 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	9	20	20

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	10	20
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10	20
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	9	20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	9	20

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	31	35

Information about this school

- Howard House is a small independent school that is currently registered for up to 14 pupils from the age of 10 years to 18 years. There are currently 10 pupils on roll. There are no pupils above Year 11. Consequently, there is no sixth-form provision. The school does not operate any alternative education provision.
- This independent special school provides education for pupils who have social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan for their special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- All current pupils are of White British heritage.
- Pupils have experienced significant disruption to their education prior to joining

Howard House.

- The current headteacher has been in post for one week.

Information about this inspection

- The Department of Education commissioned the inspection to establish whether the school was ready to take an additional six pupils, bringing the total capacity to 20 pupils.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietor, head of school and a senior leader. A telephone conversation was held with the chair of the management committee.
- A tour of the premises and a learning walk were carried out alongside the proprietor and head of school.
- The inspector analysed documents, including those required for safeguarding, health and safety, and complaints.

Inspection team

Tricia Stevens, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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