

Aurora Grace House School

Carisbrooke Lodge, Westbury Park, Bristol BS6 7JE

Inspection dates

15 October 2019

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- Leaders have not taken the required action set out in 'Keeping children safe in education', 2019, to ensure that pupils are safe. While they have updated safeguarding policies and processes, this is not sufficient. Leaders have not checked that staff follow the school's safeguarding policy well enough. Concerns about pupils are not recorded in sufficient detail. Records do not show clearly what action has been taken because of these concerns. This is poor practice. In addition, leaders have not ensured that concerns are referred to the right agencies and in a timely manner.
- Leaders have implemented a new online method for recording concerns. However, this has not been working for some time. Leaders have not ensured that the alternative arrangements for logging concerns are effective.
- Leaders have made improvements to ensure that training is in place for staff and to ensure that there is a shared responsibility for leading safeguarding. While these changes are positive, there is a need for greater scrutiny of concerns and ensuring that these are recorded and dealt with as set out in the school's safeguarding policy. This includes ensuring that these are passed on promptly to the relevant agencies.
- Leaders have not ensured that recruitment processes are robust enough. They cannot be sure that all staff are suitable to work with children.
- Leaders have not ensured that these standards are met.

Paragraph 9, (9a), (9b), 9(c)

- Leaders implement their behaviour policy effectively. They keep a log of behavioural incidents, should they occur. Line managers monitor incidents, so they can analyse any patterns or trends. This system is relatively new and has yet to be fully embedded. However, behavioural incidents have reduced. Leaders have ensured that the use of physical intervention has also reduced.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met.

Paragraph 11

- The proprietors have invested in the school's premises and facilities. They are of good quality. The premises are finished to a high standard and suitable for their intended purpose.
- School leaders have ensured that they have consulted external agencies to complete checks on the premises. These checks led to several recommendations to keep pupils safe. However, leaders have not carried out these actions. This undermines the strong work that has taken place to improve the environment for pupils.
- Leaders have not ensured that this standard is met.

Paragraph 12

- Leaders have a strong understanding about how to keep pupils safe from risk of fire. Each room has suitable fire equipment. This equipment has been recently checked by external agencies. Over time, actions have been recommended to leaders by these agencies to ensure that the site conforms with fire regulations. This work has been completed.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is met.

Paragraph 13

- Leaders have ensured that there are a greater proportion of staff trained to administer first aid. This is encouraging. However, staff recording of first aid incidents is insufficient and does not match the requirements set out in the school's first aid policy. Staff are not making clear what actions have taken place. In addition, it is not clear whether parents or carers have been made aware of any incidents at school involving their child.
- The new first aid policy is in place. However, there is some ambiguity in the policy. Leaders are not wholly clear where first aid equipment should be. This causes confusion. Leaders cannot be sure they are meeting the expectations contained within their own policy. Leaders recognise that this needs to be clearer, so they can be wholly confident that this standard is met.
- Leaders have not ensured that this standard continues to be met.

Paragraph 15

- The attendance register is compliant with the independent school standards. Pupils register twice daily. Leaders use the correct register codes so they can accurately record a pupil's whereabouts. The admissions register, at the beginning of the inspection, was not compliant. There was missing information. Leaders made the needed changes during the inspection. As a result, the admissions register is now compliant.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is met.

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

- Leaders have ensured that a risk assessment policy is in place. This policy informs risk assessments for specific activities, hazards and takes into account pupils' individual needs. During the summer, leaders reviewed risk assessments. Leaders recognise that they will need to regularly review them to ensure that they remain relevant and

effective.

- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met.
- Leaders have not ensured that the overall standard in this part is met.

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

Paragraph 18

- Checks on staff are not complete. There are staff who have not had an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, barred list check or a prohibition check. There is a lack of vigilance about how well leaders check the suitability of staff to work with children.
- Leaders have not ensured that these standards are met.

Paragraph 19

- Leaders have not ensured that necessary checks have been completed for agency staff before they start work at the school. Without these checks, they cannot be sure that these staff are suitable to work with children.
- Leaders have not ensured that these standards are met.

Paragraph 20

- The required checks on members of the board of the named proprietor have been completed.
- These standards are met.

Paragraph 21

- The single central record is not compliant. It does not contain the information it should. The missing information in paragraph 18 and 19 contribute to this standard failing. Despite several checks by leaders, this was not noticed until recently as being not compliant.
- Leaders have not ensured that these standards are met.
- Leaders have not ensured that the overall standard in this part is met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- This standard is not met due to failings in paragraph 11. Leaders have not taken the recommended actions to maintain the premises and facilities to a satisfactory standard.
- Leaders have not ensured that this standard is met.
- Leaders have not ensured that the overall standard in this part is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Leaders do not have secure knowledge of the school's effectiveness or the independent school standards. They have wrongly evaluated the school as meeting the standards in full, and this has prevented essential improvements from taking

place. Leaders have prepared an improvement plan, but this is not precise or based on the school's current strengths and weaknesses.

- The leadership structure has changed and will continue to change. While there are many people in place to take responsibility for the school, there is some confusion among roles. Currently, leaders are relying on external support to help them undertake part of their roles.
- Leaders have significant work to do if they are to ensure that pupils are safe and the independent school standards are met in full. While they have made some needed changes, weaknesses affect the school. Essential systems to enable effective oversight are not in place.
- Leaders found it increasingly difficult to demonstrate their effective oversight and locate key documentation during the inspection. The representative of the proprietor is providing additional oversight to the school. She recognises that systems and processes are in their infancy and not providing accurate information about the school's performance.

Paragraph 34, 34(1)(c)

- Leaders are not ensuring that pupils' well-being is met. There are weaknesses in systems to help safeguard pupils and promote their welfare. Leaders' oversight of this essential work has been lacking.
- Leaders have not ensured that these standards are met.
- Leaders have not ensured that the overall standard in this part is met.

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 were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	109342
DfE registration number	801/6008
Inspection number	10118977

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Aurora Group
Chair	Jeanette Young
Headteacher	Thereza De Lucca
Annual fees (day pupils)	£79,000
Telephone number	01179 733301
Website	www.the-aurora-group.com/gracehouse
Email address	kim.welsh@the-aurora-group.com
Date of previous standard inspection	11–13 December 2018

Information about this school

- Aurora Grace House School is an independent special school. The school provides specialist education for pupils aged five to 19 years with a range of needs resulting in severe and complex learning difficulties. The most common diagnoses include autism spectrum disorder, global development delay and epilepsy.
- Since the previous independent school standard inspection, the school has changed its name from Aurora St Christopher's School to Aurora Grace House School.
- The last standard inspection took place in December 2018. At this time, the school was

judged to require improvement.

- The school provides education for 40 weeks of the year.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out as an emergency inspection, as a result of concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils. The Department for Education (DfE) instructed inspectors to consider specific independent school standards, relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils, the school premises and the leadership and management of the school.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, the executive principal, the school improvement partner, the safeguarding leadership team and a representative of the proprietor.
- Inspectors requested specific documentation, specific to the standards that were considered as part of this emergency inspection. Inspectors also carried out a site walk to consider the premises and facilities.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, including the school development plan and leaders' checks on the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tina Maddison

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 18(2)(a) no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction
 - 18(2)(d) the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment.
- 19(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 19(2)(a) a person offered for supply by an employment business to the school only begins to work at the school if the proprietor has received–
 - 19(2)(a)(i) written notification from the employment business in relation to that person–

- 19(2)(a)(i)(aa) that the checks referred to in paragraph 21(3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vii) and (b) have been made to the extent relevant to that person
- 19(2)(a)(i)(bb) that, where relevant to that person, an enhanced criminal record check has been made and that it or another employment business has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate in response to such a check; and
- 19(2)(a)(i)(cc) if the employment business has obtained such a certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school, whether it disclosed any matter or information; and
- 19(2)(a)(ii) a copy of any enhanced criminal record certificate obtained by an employment business before the person is due to begin work at the school
- 19(2)(b) a person offered for supply by an employment business only begins work at the school if the proprietor considers that the person is suitable for the work for which the person is supplied
- 19(2)(c) before a person offered for supply by an employment business begins work at the school the person's identity is checked by the proprietor of the school (irrespective of any such check carried out by the employment business before the person was offered for supply)
- 19(2)(d) the proprietor, in the contract or other arrangements which the proprietor makes with any employment business, requires the employment business to provide–
- 19(2)(d)(i) the notification referred to in paragraph (a)(i); and
- 19(2)(d)(ii) a copy of any enhanced criminal record certificate which the employment business obtains.
- 19(3) Except in the case of a person to whom sub-paragraph (4) applies, the certificate referred to in sub-paragraph (2)(a)(i)(bb) must have been obtained not more than 3 months before the date on which the person is due to begin work at the school.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(2) The register referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is–
- 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether–

- 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act
- 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction
- 21(3)(a)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S
- 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d)
- 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.
- 21(5) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to supply staff–
 - 21(5)(a) whether written notification has been received from the employment business that–
 - 21(5)(a)(i) checks corresponding to those referred to in sub-paragraph (3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vi) and (vii) have been made to the extent relevant to any such person; and
 - 21(5)(a)(ii) an enhanced criminal record check has been made and that it or another employment business has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate in response to such a check
 - 21(5)(c) where written notification has been received from the employment business in accordance with a contract or other arrangements referred to in paragraph 19(2)(d) that it has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate, whether the employment business supplied a copy of the certificate to the school.

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)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the

independent school standards are met consistently

- 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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