

Sheiling School (Thornbury)

Thornbury Park, Thornbury, Bristol BS35 1HP

Inspection dates

11 November 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 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The proprietor has ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are in line with the latest statutory guidance. The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has a secure understanding of the risks faced by pupils and how these are often exacerbated by pupils' vulnerabilities and complex needs. However, the proprietor has not made suitable arrangements to ensure that pupils' welfare is promoted at all times. For example, a lack of rigour around fire risk assessments and deficiencies in the school's premises have the potential to place pupils at risk.

Paragraph 11

- Although the proprietor has put in place a comprehensive health and safety policy, they have not ensured that it is implemented effectively or monitored with sufficient rigour.

Paragraph 12

- The proprietor has ensured that fire risk assessments have been completed for the different parts of the school's premises. However, they have not ensured that all identified remedial work has been addressed within the stated time frame. For example, at the time of this inspection, some items identified as being high priority in December 2018 had still not been rectified.

Paragraph 13

- The proprietor has put in place a comprehensive first-aid policy and ensured that staff have received training appropriate to their role. Information gathered during the inspection provides evidence that this policy is being implemented effectively.

Paragraph 14

- Supervision ratios are appropriate for the pupils currently attending the school with all pupils receiving at least one-to-one support. Leaders have plans in place to increase the number of support staff in the school. 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.

Paragraph 15

- The school maintains admissions and attendance registers which are kept in line with the relevant regulations. The destinations of pupils leaving the school are recorded and information is followed up as appropriate.
- The proprietor has not 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

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(4), 21(6)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders and administrative staff display a secure understanding of safer recruitment. Consequently, the school's procedures for ensuring the suitability of adults working in the school are thorough and in line with the latest statutory guidance. All the required checks have been undertaken for school leaders, including the trustees and governors. The headteacher and designated safeguarding lead have ensured that staff are recruited in line with safer recruitment practices.
- The school's single central record is fully compliant with the latest guidance issued by the secretary of state. This provides evidence that checks have been made in line with statutory guidance.

Paragraph 19(1)–19(3), 21(5)–21(5)(c)

- When necessary, leaders use agency staff to maintain the appropriate staff to pupil ratios. The safeguarding checks for these staff are suitably robust and in line with those for permanent school staff.
- The proprietor has 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

Paragraph 23(1)–23(1)(c)

- Due to their complex needs, pupils do not routinely change for physical education (PE) lessons. The exception is swimming and there are suitable single-sex facilities for pupils to change for this. Although the proprietor has ensured that there are separate toilets for boys and girls, they have not provided toilets for the sole use of pupils. In a few areas of the school, pupils are required to use the same toilets as those used by members of staff.

Paragraph 24(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2)

- The proprietor has not ensured that there is a medical room which complies fully with the independent school standards. While it is always available for pupils' use and is close to a toilet, it does not contain washing facilities.

Paragraph 25, 26, 27–27(b), 29(1)–29(1)(b)

- The school's premises are generally well maintained and in good order. However, in

not ensuring that recommendations from the fire risk assessment are implemented, the proprietor has not paid due regard to pupils' welfare and wellbeing.

- Classrooms and other areas of the school are appropriate for their intended use. This includes both internal and external lighting, and acoustic conditions. The site has an abundance of outdoor space, as well as a sports hall and a swimming pool.

Paragraph 28(1)–28(1)(d), 28(2)–28(2)(b)

- The proprietor has ensured that pupils have access to fresh drinking water. However, this is not always clearly labelled as such. Toilets and bathrooms have hot and cold running water but, in a few locations, the temperature of the hot water poses a possible risk of scalding.
- The proprietor has not 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 34–34(c)

- The proprietor has not ensured that the school is currently meeting all the independent school standards. It is, therefore, unlikely that these standards would be met should the DfE agree to the material change. A number of the unmet standards relate to pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's self-evaluation or improvement procedures pay sufficient regard to the independent school standards. Systems for monitoring the school's continued compliance with the standards lack rigour.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely 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, as set out in the annex of this report.

School details

Unique reference number	109353
DfE registration number	803/6000
Inspection number	10127675

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	Thornleigh Camphill Communities Limited
Chair of trustees	Anthony Nowlan
Chief executive officer	Nico Sialelli
Headteacher	Dean Frances Hawksley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£74,391
Telephone number	01454 412 194
Website	www.sheilingschool.org.uk
Email address	mail@sheilingschool.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	20–22 June 2017

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	6 to 19	6 to 19	6 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	38	50	50

Although there are currently 38 pupils on the school's roll, the school is only registered for 30. In the inspector's opinion, the school has the capacity to cater for the additional pupils as stipulated in the material change application. At the time of this material change inspection, the school was judged to not be meeting all the relevant independent school standards.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	30	40
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	8	10
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	38	50
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	38	50
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	38	50

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	63	75
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

Information about this school

- Sheiling School is an independent, co-educational special school. It is registered for pupils who have moderate and severe learning difficulties. Many pupils have one or more additional need(s), including autistic spectrum disorder, sensory impairment and

social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan and have been placed at the school by their home local authority.
- The school's educational philosophy follows the principles of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. This incorporates the use of therapeutic techniques to support pupils' development and encourages pupils to develop independence skills. The school has a Christian ethos.
- No pupils attend alternative provision.
- The previous standard inspection was in June 2017. At this inspection, the school was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- The proprietor has proposed to increase the capacity to 50 pupils. At the time of this inspection, there were 38 pupils on the school's roll. This is in excess of the school's registered capacity of 30 pupils.
- This material change inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education 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 head of resources and the chief executive officer. 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 and head of resources, he undertook a tour of the school's premises.
- The proprietor, Thornleigh Camphill Communities Limited, is a registered charity. At the time of the inspection, the name of the proprietor was not recorded on the DfE's Get Information About Schools (GIAS). The chief executive officer contacted the DfE about this during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, 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

- 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.
- 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

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils;
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 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.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 28(1)(c) cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such; and
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

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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