

# Thornhill Park School

24 Thornhill Park, Ashbrooke, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 7LA

## Inspection dates

14 November 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 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The proprietor has ensured that the school's safeguarding policy is compliant with the latest government requirements and is available to parents and carers on the school's website. The policy reflects a strong commitment to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable pupils on the school's roll.
- The designated safeguarding leader ensures that all staff receive regular safeguarding training. This includes face-to-face sessions and online training.
- Leaders work closely with parents, carers and a range of other agencies. They maintain exemplary chronological records of the steps that they take when a concern is identified.

#### *Paragraph 11, 12*

- There is an appropriate health and safety policy in place which is complemented by a comprehensive monitoring process. The policy is available on the school's website.
- The proposed new premises have been refurbished and redecorated to a high standard. A team of qualified staff will be located at the new site and will ensure that a wide range of regular checks are carried out and that the premises are maintained to a high standard.
- Leaders have ensured that the new premises are fully compliant with the requirements of the Regulatory Fire Reform Order 2005.
- A new alarm system, smoke detectors, and extinguishers have been installed by a specialist company. Clear signage throughout the building shows how the building should be evacuated if there is an emergency.

#### *Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- A written risk assessment policy is in place. It provides clear guidance on situations that may require a risk assessment. It details the responsibilities of staff in ensuring that they complete risk assessments. Leaders have a clear understanding about

hazard identification and the implementation of control measures.

- Risk assessments have been produced which cover the use of different areas of the new premises. They follow a common format and are completed to a consistently high standard. All were found to be appropriately assessing and minimising risks to pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in Part 3 are likely to continue to be met should the DfE approve the material change.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The proposed new premises are a former pupil referral unit that has been extensively refurbished and redecorated. These premises offer significantly more space on one level and with a large outdoor area. In addition, the buildings offer greatly improved access for disabled people, a gymnasium and large dining hall. The kitchen has been completely refitted with modern cooking and refrigeration equipment.
- The school is proposing to admit pupils with the same special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as those who already attend. There is ample space within classrooms and social areas to accommodate an additional 35 pupils, together with their support assistants and additional teaching staff.

*Paragraph 22, 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c)*

- There are suitable toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils in the school. There are also facilities for disabled people to use.
- Toilets have hot and cold water available and there are suitable changing and showering facilities.

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

- There is a suitable medical room available for the short-term care or examination of injured pupils that has a sink and is close to a toilet.
- A lockable cabinet and a refrigerator for the safe storage of medication are to be fitted. The room will also contain first-aid equipment.

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

- The new premises are clean and bright. Each classroom has sufficient lighting and the acoustic conditions are such that lessons can run alongside each other without interruption. During refurbishment, great attention has been paid to the creation of a safe learning environment that will meet the physical and sensory needs of pupils.
- External lighting is provided to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.

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

- There are clearly labelled water supplies for pupils to use in several classrooms. In addition, the proprietor intends to install fresh water stations in each corridor and the dining hall.
- The water supply in the toilets is working and toilets are flushable. The temperature of the water for hand washing does not pose a scalding risk to pupils.

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

- Pupils will have access to a large outside space for them to socialise at breaktime and lunchtime. This can also be used for some physical education activities.
- A grassed area is also available for outside play and will also be used for horticultural activities.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in Part 5 are likely to continue to be met should the DfE approve the material change.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Leaders understand the importance of ensuring that the school meets the independent school standards consistently. They carry out regular checks to ensure compliance.
- School leaders ensure that systems are in place to check that pupils are safe and that a bespoke education is provided for very vulnerable young people.
- Pupils' welfare and success are a priority for the leaders of the school. Their comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems are designed to ensure that the highest standards are maintained. Their proposals for the new premises and increase in pupil numbers, and the coherent, authoritative way they can explain their plans underline this.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in Part 8 are likely to continue to be met should the DfE approve the material change.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a relevant and up-to-date plan in place to improve access to the curriculum, physical environment and written materials for pupils with a disability. This is to be updated appropriately as new pupils are admitted, and additional access arrangements need to be put in place.

## **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	108877
DfE registration number	394/6015
Inspection number	10126408

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 special school
Proprietor	John Phillipson
Chair	Gavin Bestford
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Cave
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,640–£103,301
Telephone number	0191 565 3965
Website	<a href="http://www.ne-as.org.uk">www.ne-as.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:thps@ne-as.org.uk">thps@ne-as.org.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	3 to 19	3 to 19	3 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	45	80	80

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	45	80
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	45	80
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	45	80
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	45	80

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	7	14
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

## Information about this school

- Thornhill Park School opened in 1981.
- Thornhill Park is a special school for pupils with autism spectrum conditions. Some pupils have additional neurodevelopmental needs.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan, and this is a requirement to be admitted to the school. Pupils are currently admitted from an area including nine local authorities.
- The school currently has 44 pupils on roll and is nearly at full capacity.
- The school's last standard inspection was in November 2018.
- The proprietor has formed a board of trustees that provides the function of governance in the form of a governing board, which meets regularly.

- The school has no specific specialism or religious affiliation.
- The school is currently based in two buildings on the same site. The school has an off-site delivery programme designed to support pupils who require an extended transition to the main school building.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out over one day, with two days of notice.
- The DfE commissioned Ofsted to consider the school's application to move to new premises and to increase the number of pupils on the school roll to 80.
- The inspector toured the proposed new premises and all buildings currently used by the school, both inside and outside.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and the director of education of the North East Autism Society.
- The inspector evaluated a range of documentation, including leaders' plans for relocating the school, policies, child protection and safeguarding information. The inspector also looked closely at other documents and policies required as part of the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

Steve Rogers, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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