

# Phoenix Academy

Brook Farm, Newton Road, North Petherton, Somerset TA6 6NA

**Inspection dates**

26 November 2019

**Overall outcome**

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

## Main inspection findings

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

#### *Paragraph 7, 7a, 7b*

- Leaders have ensured that there are effective arrangements in place to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare. Safeguarding arrangements follow the guidance set out in 'Keeping children safe in education, 2019'. The safeguarding policy meets current requirements and is published on the school's website.
- Staff receive appropriate training, so they know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders also provide staff with additional training that helps them understand specific risks for pupils in school. As a result, staff are vigilant and report concerns promptly. Leaders take the right action and work closely with external agencies when necessary. Leaders are tenacious and provide effective challenge to other professionals to ensure that pupils get the right help, as soon as possible.

#### *Paragraphs 11, 12*

- The proprietor has set out a clear health and safety policy. Appropriate, timely and effective checks are in place to ensure that the school complies with current, relevant legislation.
- Leaders ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to comply with relevant fire safety laws at the school. For example, fire equipment is checked regularly and well maintained. Evacuation procedures are in place and practices take place regularly.

#### *Paragraphs 14, 16, 16a, 16b*

- Leaders have recently reviewed their risk assessments. They have thought carefully about pupils' individual needs and how to reduce their risk of harm. They work closely with staff to review these regularly. This includes checking how much supervision each pupil needs and changing arrangements accordingly. As a result, pupils are supervised well.
- Leaders have put an effective risk assessment policy in place. Staff complete suitable assessments for a range of risks, such as off-site visits, the use of equipment and potential hazards in the school building. These assessments identify appropriate risks

and suitable control measures.

- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met. They are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

##### *Paragraphs 17, 18(1)–18(4)(c)*

- Leaders have worked closely with the proprietor to ensure that effective systems are in place to check that staff are suitable to work with children. Leaders ensure that all the required checks take place before a member of staff starts work at the school.

##### *Paragraphs 19(1)–19(4)(c)*

- Appropriate checks for supply staff are in place. Leaders rightly seek confirmation that supply staff are suitable to work with children and that all necessary checks are complete when they arrange cover.

##### *Paragraphs 20(1)–20(9)*

- Records show that the directors of Phoenix Learning and Care and members of the school's governing body have been subject to required checks.

##### *Paragraphs 21(1)–21(8)*

- Leaders maintain detailed records of suitability checks on the single central register. This is checked and updated regularly.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met. They are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

##### *Paragraphs 22, 23(1)–23(2), 28(1), 28(1)(a)–28(1)(d), 28(2)*

- Suitable toilet, changing and washing facilities are available for pupils. These are for the sole use of pupils. They have an adequate supply of cold water and the temperature of hot water does not pose a risk to pupils.
- Drinking water is available for pupils in a suitable location and is clearly marked.

##### *Paragraph 24, 25, 26, 27, 29(1)–31(c)*

- The accommodation is maintained to a good standard. There is sufficient space and appropriate facilities to cater for four additional pupils as well as those currently at the school. There are four main classrooms and further rooms for teaching. The classrooms currently contain very small numbers of pupils. There is room for at least four more pupils. The outside space is large enough to enable pupils to play outside. The medical room has a sink and is close to a toilet.
- Throughout the premises the acoustic conditions are suitable. There is sufficient lighting both inside and outside of the school buildings.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met. They are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

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

- The headteacher has high expectations for both pupils and staff. She has communicated them clearly in her ambitious improvement plans. Since her appointment, the school has undergone a number of important changes to improve the facilities and strengthen the quality of provision for pupils. There are also more rigorous systems in place to ensure that the independent school standards (ISS) are met and pupils' welfare is actively promoted.
- Leaders place pupils' interests at the centre of their work. They demonstrate this in the way that they check carefully that pupils' individual needs are met. Leaders want to increase the numbers of pupils in the school but make it clear that any growth needs to be proportionate and the right decision for pupils currently at the school.
- The headteacher has appointed additional leaders to support her improvement work. For example, there is a curriculum leader who is focusing on enhancing the quality of education in the school.
- The proprietor and the governing body work together to hold leaders to account effectively. The headteacher reports regularly to the governing body and the proprietor. Minutes of meetings show that governors check important aspects of the school's work such as arrangements for safeguarding routinely.
- The head of education for Phoenix Learning and Care provides appropriate support and challenge to leaders. She regularly checks that the school complies with the ISS and that improvement work is on track and carefully directed to address the school's priorities.
- Governors have benefited from training that supports them in their work to challenge leaders. They are continuing to develop this. Nevertheless, the proprietor has sought valuable external advice to check the quality of leaders' work and ensure that those responsible for governance are not over-reliant on the information that leaders provide.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met. They are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

## **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	135673
DfE registration number	933/6216
Inspection number	10124986

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	Independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Phoenix Learning and Care Limited
Chair	Jon Pain
Headteacher	Mrs Pat Sheridan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,704.80
Telephone number	01271318110
Website	<a href="http://www.phoenixlearningcare.co.uk">www.phoenixlearningcare.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:psheridan@phoenixschools.org.uk">psheridan@phoenixschools.org.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	11–13 December 2018

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	10	16	16

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	10	16
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10	16
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	10	16
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	10	16

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	9	14
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

## Information about this school

- Phoenix Academy is an independent special school. It provides for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum disorder and communication and interaction needs. All of the pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has a governing body. The chair of governors is also the chief executive of Phoenix Learning and Care Limited.
- Some pupils attend alternative provision at REACH, Equine and The Conquest Centre.
- The last standard inspection took place in December 2018. The school was judged as requires improvement. Some independent school standards relating to the quality of education and leadership and management were not met. These standards were judged to be met at a progress monitoring inspection in June 2019.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to consider the school's request for a material change. The proprietor would like to change the school capacity from 12 to 16 pupils.
- The inspector met with senior leaders and two members of the governing body. These two governors are also the chief executive officer and the head of education of Phoenix Learning and Care.
- The inspector discussed the school's safeguarding arrangements and review documents relating to safeguarding. She also looked at the school's single central record of checks on the suitability of staff.
- A range of documents relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils and leadership and management were considered.
- The inspector toured the premises to check that they were compliant with the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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