

# E-Spired

Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9HE

**Inspection dates**

6 November 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  
Part 6. Provision of information

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

*Paragraph 31(1), 32(1)(c)*

- Safeguarding arrangements met the independent school standards at the material change inspection in April 2019.
- The safeguarding policy is up to date and has due regard of the current guidance of the Secretary of State. The policy is, therefore, suitable. The policy is personalised to the school. The safeguarding policy is made available to parents on the school's website.
- The designated lead professionals for safeguarding pupils have the up-to-date knowledge they need. Leaders have in place systems to check that staff have received, read and understood the latest statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), 'Keeping children safe in education, September 2019'. Leaders are aware of the changes in the new version.
- Staff are knowledgeable and vigilant because of the training that they have received. Staff completed training in September and October 2019 on 'an introduction to understanding abuse', 'disclosures and how to manage them', 'peer-on-peer sexual abuse' and 'online safety'. Staff are highly attuned to possible safeguarding risks to pupils, such as exposure to drug abuse and sexual exploitation. They have a detailed understanding of the risks associated with the criminal exploitation of children, known as 'county lines'.
- Staff work well with external agencies and are well trained to spot the signs and symptoms of abuse. Leaders have established links with the local authority's safeguarding team. The local authority do not have concerns about the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The personal, social, health and education (PSHE) curriculum provides pupils with frequent opportunities to learn about how to keep safe. Pupils learn about the dangers and misuse of using drugs and alcohol, online safety, gang culture, the dangers of knife crime, sexting and peer-on-peer bullying. Outside speakers are invited to the school to

talk about their own experiences, to prevent pupils from taking the same path in life.

- The proprietor has ensured that the two independent school standards continue to be met.

#### *Paragraph 15*

- The standard inspection in April 2018 identified this standard as met.
- The school's admission register is not up to date. It is not maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, because there are gaps in the information recorded on the register.
- The proprietor has not ensured that this independent school standard remains met.

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

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3)*

*Paragraph 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3)*

*Paragraph 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c)*

- The single central record of the pre-employment checks carried out on the suitability of staff, governors and the proprietor are up to date. It is scrutinised by senior leaders to determine whether all relevant checks have been made and recorded appropriately.
- Luton Borough Council safeguarding team reviewed the single central record as part of their procurement process in July 2019. No serious concerns were identified.
- The proprietor has ensured that the three independent school standards continue to be met.

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

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

#### *Paragraph 12*

#### *Paragraph 25*

- These standards were not likely to be met at the material change inspection in April 2019 because the proprietor and leaders had not ensured that the school complied with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. While leaders had ensured that a recent fire risk assessment (December 2018) had been completed, leaders had not responded with sufficient urgency to the findings of the assessment to reduce the risks from fire. There remained incomplete work recommended to take place. The fitting of emergency lighting throughout the building at The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Ampthill Road, Bedford MK42 9HE, to ensure that risk is minimised, was incomplete. This work was scheduled to take place on the 10, 11 and 12 April 2019.
- In the school's action plan, the proprietor proposed to install emergency lighting throughout the building to ensure that risk was minimised. The action plan stated that this action is now complete. The proprietor proposed to arrange for a fire safety audit with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. The action plan specified that the previous

tenant provided the proprietor with a copy of the fire safety report from Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, dated December 2013. The proprietor was awaiting an appointment from Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to complete a fire audit.

- Since the material change inspection in April 2019, emergency lighting has been fitted throughout the premises. The proprietor provided documentary evidence that a commercial company installed emergency lighting throughout the building on the 10, 11 and 12 April 2019. The fire log book shows that checks on the emergency lighting are completed monthly. Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have scrutinised the school's fire risk assessment and have discussed with leaders the fire safety in the building. An audit is deemed to take place at a future date.
- The proprietor has ensured that these two independent school standards are now met.

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

##### *Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b)*

- The standard inspection in April 2018 identified this standard as met at Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9TW.
- Currently, the room identified for the short-term sick and injured pupils at the Mile Road site has a collapsible bed and a desk. There is no sink in the room. The window in the door has no covering to ensure privacy. The inside of the room can be viewed from the school reception area.
- The proprietor has not ensured that this independent school standard continues to be met.

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

- The standard inspection in April 2018 identified this standard as met at Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9TW.
- Currently, the proprietor has not ensured that there is a suitable outdoor area for pupils to play and socialise at the Mile Road site.
- The proprietor has not ensured that this independent school standard continues to be met.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

##### *Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(h)*

- The standard inspection in April 2018 identified this standard as met.
- Currently, leaders have not provided to the local authority an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of a pupil wholly or partly funded by the local authority.
- The proprietor has not ensured that this independent school standard remains met.

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

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

- The standard was not likely to be met at the material change inspection in April 2019 because the proprietor had not ensured pupils' welfare, health and safety. In addition, the proprietor provided education for students above compulsory school age, but was

not registered to do so. It remains the case that the school is operating beyond the requirements of the registration.

- In the school's action plan, the proprietor set out how the standards that were likely to be unmet, would be met. The proprietor proposed not to increase the age range of pupils, to provide post-16 education, until authorisation was received from the DfE. The proprietor planned to confirm with the DfE that the registered address would remain the same and that they would also use another site at The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Bedford, MK42 9TW. The proprietor intended to maintain its original school address at Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford MK42 9HE. The action plan stated that the emergency lighting was installed in April 2019.
- This inspection confirms that leaders have taken effective action since the material change inspection in April 2019 in meeting the requirements contained in paragraphs 12, 25 and 34(1)(c).
- With regard to safeguarding arrangements, the standards in this area of leaders' work continue to be met since the material change inspection in April 2019.
- Leaders have made a material change request to increase the age range of the pupils and the number of pupils it is registered for with the DfE (see details below). The school's material change request was considered as part of this progress monitoring inspection.
- Towards the end of this progress monitoring inspection, the proprietor changed his mind in relation to which site he wanted pupils educated on. The proprietor stated that the registered school address, which is at Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK42 9TW, will now be used solely for educational meetings with professionals. The proprietor stated that it will not be used to educate any age group of pupils registered at the school. The intention now is to use the main school site at The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Ampthill Road, Bedford MK42 9HE to cater for all pupils in key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- This progress monitoring inspection concludes that some of the standards that were previously met are now not met. The proprietor has not demonstrated good skills and knowledge nor fulfilled their responsibility effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.
- The independent school standard remains not met.

### **The school's application to make a material change**

- The material change request to the DfE is:
  - to increase the school's registration, which is currently for 20 boys and girls, to 70 pupils
  - to increase the age range of the pupils from 14 to 16 years, to 14 to 18 years.
- The registered address of the school is Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9TW. The number of pupils on roll across the two school sites is 14.
- The school is operating fully in buildings on two sites.

- The school offers provision for boys and girls in Years 9, 10 and 11 at the main school site. The main site is at The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Bedford MK42 9HE.
- The school offers post-16 provision for boys and girls at the additional school site (the school's registered address). The registered address is at Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9TW. The registered address is also used for education meetings that school leaders hold with professionals.
- As explained above in the section for Part 8, during this progress monitoring inspection, the proprietor stated the intention not to use the Mile Road site (the school's registered address) for pupils' education. The intention is that all pupils will be educated at The Nursery Building.
- Based on the resources available at this stage for teaching and leadership, the premises and accommodation at The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Bedford MK42 9HE is suitable to support additional pupils. The provision is suitable for a total of 40 pupils between the ages of 14 and 18 years, including a maximum of five students between the ages of 16 and 18 years. The proprietor plans to increase the number of pupils on roll gradually to phase in the growth of the school.
- The proprietor will request a material change for the registered address as appropriate.
- Five of the 12 independent school standards checked at this progress monitoring inspection are not met.
- **The unmet independent school standards are not likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change as originally requested for the two sites. If the DfE decides to approve the material change without the use of the registered address for pupils' education and for a total of 40 pupils, the two independent school standards for the premises and accommodation are likely to be 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. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	144807
DfE registration number	822/6007
Inspection number	10120244

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.

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Mr Mark Hudson
Headteacher	Mr Mark Hudson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,000 to £32,000
Telephone number	01234 357 777
Website	<a href="http://www.espired.org">www.espired.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@espiced.org">info@espiced.org</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	24–26 April 2018

## Information about this school

- The school opened as an independent school for up to 20 pupils in September 2017, following its registration with the DfE as a day school in August 2017.
- Prior to its registration, the school had been operating as an alternative provider since October 2016, with 18 part-time pupils who attended for two days a week in partnership

with local schools.

- The proprietor is the sole proprietor and the headteacher.
- The school is owned by the E-Spired Community Interest Company. There is a sole proprietor and a board of directors. Three directors of the company work full-time in the school as the headteacher, the operations manager and the curriculum lead.
- A governing body was appointed in the school from January 2017.
- The proprietor is not involved in any other proprietorship of independent schools.
- There are currently 13 full-time pupils and one part-time pupil on roll. The part-time pupil is in Year 12. The 13 full-time pupils are in Years 9, 10 and 11. Key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils are educated at The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Bedford MK42 9HE. The part-time Year 12 student is educated on both sites. As at the material change inspection in April 2019, the proprietor has a pupil above the age range that the school is registered to admit.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, and those who have histories of poor attendance.
- Some pupils are looked after by their local authority.
- Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have an education, health and care plan.
- The proprietor will use supply staff when necessary.
- The school has links with Bedford College, Bedford Free School, Mark Rutherford School, Bedford Academy, Biddenham Upper School and St Thomas More School.
- At the school's standard inspection in April 2018, all of the independent school standards were met. The standard inspection was conducted at the school's registered site: Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9TW. The overall effectiveness was good.
- Ofsted conducted a material change inspection in September 2018, commissioned by the DfE. The proprietor proposed to relocate to a new school site, The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Bedford MK42 9HE, to extend the age range from 16 to 18 years and to increase pupil numbers from 20 to 70. At the material change inspection, the inspector judged that the school was unlikely to meet 12 of the independent school standards if the DfE approved the material change.
- After the first material change inspection, without the approval of the DfE, the proprietor relocated the school to the proposed new school site, The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Bedford MK42 9HE on 9 January 2019, initially accommodating 17 pupils aged 14 to 18 years. The proprietor planned to use the original premises, Unit C, Bedford Business Centre, Mile Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9TW for a maximum of 20 post-16 students and the new site for a maximum of 20 pupils aged 14 to 16 years.
- The second material change inspection was conducted on 5 April 2019. It was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the DfE to reconsider the proprietor's application for a material change to relocate to a new school site, The Nursery Building, Raleigh Centre, Bedford MK42 9HE, to extend the age range from 16 to 18 years and to increase pupil numbers. It was judged that three of the independent school standards were unlikely not



to be met if the DfE approved the changes.

- Since the second material change inspection, the proprietor had confirmed with the DfE that the registered address will be the same as the current registration.
- Following the second material change inspection, the DfE issued a statutory notice on the 21 May 2019. The proprietor was required to provide an action plan to highlight how unmet standards were going to be addressed. The action plan was received in June 2019, evaluated by Ofsted as acceptable in July 2019 and approved by the DfE in August 2019.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the school's compliance with the statutory notice issued by the Secretary of State on the 21 May 2019. The inspector monitored the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with in the annex of the statutory notice. The independent school standards checked were those not met at the material change inspection in April 2019, and others were checked as appropriate to the findings during the inspection
- At the request of the DfE, this progress monitoring inspection also considered the proprietors material change requests.
- This is the first progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in April 2018. The inspection was conducted with no notice.
- This is the third inspection to consider the proprietor's material change requests. Material change inspections were conducted by Ofsted in September 2018 and April 2019. At each material change inspection, the inspector judged that the independent school standards were not likely to be met if the DfE approved the changes.
- The proprietor remains the same as at the April 2018 standard inspection. The proprietor was available to meet the inspector at this first progress monitoring inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the proprietor, the deputy headteacher who is the designated safeguarding lead, and the curriculum area leader.
- The inspector observed pupils at work and informally during the school day.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including health and safety documentation, school policies, information found on the website, information relating to safeguarding pupils and the single central register of employment checks.
- The inspector spoke by telephone to one representative from the local authority.
- The admissions register and attendance was checked during the inspection.

## Inspection team

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Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain not met at this inspection*

#### **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.

*Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection*

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

- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].

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

- 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)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
  - 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.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable—
  - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

#### **Part 6. Provision of information**

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 32(1)(h) where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006[16]) is registered at the school, an

annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State.

## **Previously unmet standards that the school now meets**

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

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

### **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 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**

- This inspection confirms that leaders have taken effective action since the material change inspection in April 2019 in meeting the requirements contained in paragraph 34(1)(c).

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