

# Aurora Grace House School

Carisbrooke Lodge, Westbury Park, Bristol BS6 7JE

**Inspection dates**

12 February 2020

**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)*

- The emergency inspection in October 2019 found that safeguarding was ineffective. Leaders had not implemented statutory safeguarding requirements set out in 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- The school's action plan identifies several actions linked to improving safer recruitment practices and intensifying safeguarding training for all staff.
- There are clear actions in place to make sure that leaders carry out relevant checks, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on all permanent staff. Recruitment checks on school staff now comply with what is expected. However, leaders have not applied the same level of vigilance to agency workers. They have not ensured that the school's recruitment processes comply with those set out by the Secretary of State.
- Staff keep up to date and regularly consider different safeguarding scenarios in staff meetings. All have updated their safeguarding training and hold a level 2 training qualification. The school's designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs) also hold the appropriate, more advanced training qualifications.
- Staff have received training on how to record safeguarding concerns about pupils. Adults are using the relatively new electronic system confidently and logging concerns about pupils methodically. The school's DSLs review each concern and respond appropriately, including referring to wider agencies such as social care. However, the DSLs do not always document their response, including their initial decision about what should happen next.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. However, the policy does not identify which members of staff act as the school's DSLs. The school's safeguarding policy is not specific enough nor personalised adequately to this school.
- Leaders have not ensured that these standards are met.

### *Paragraph 11*

- In the school's action plan, the proprietor identified several actions needed to comply with health and safety regulations. Planned works included the removal of asbestos and monthly site health and safety checks.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have fully addressed recommendations made by external agencies during routine health and safety inspections. For instance, leaders commissioned and ensured the safe removal of asbestos from some parts of the building.
- Leaders have acted on an urgent recommendation made following a recent tree survey. The survey highlighted an issue with a particular tree as it posed a public liability risk. Leaders commissioned remedial tree surgery. This work has been completed satisfactorily and in a timely manner.
- Leaders have reinstated monthly health and safety checks, as identified on the action plan. The site maintenance team now meet regularly with leaders. These meetings are documented clearly and follow-up actions are addressed.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is met.

### *Paragraph 13*

- At the emergency inspection in October 2019, it was reported that staff recording of first aid incidents was insufficient. The school's action plan stated that staff would receive training on how to report first aid and injury incidents. This training has been completed.
- Leaders have revised the school's first aid policy. The policy is now clearer and reflects the school's approach accurately.
- Leaders have checked that what is set out in policy is replicated in practice. Classroom areas now have fully stocked first aid points. Staff know where first aid points are located. The school nurse reviews the contents of first aid kits monthly and restocks kits as necessary.
- Staff now routinely report any accidents or observed injuries to a pupil using the correct form. Leaders oversee this well. When site issues contribute to accidents, such as slippery steps, the maintenance team are promptly informed. Appropriate remedial action is initiated.
- The school makes sure that parents are informed if their child has required first aid or had an accident. Information sharing at handover from school to parent and vice versa is now more stringent.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is 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*

- All staff have received the required level of check. Leaders have overhauled this aspect. Staff's personnel folders have been reviewed systematically to ensure that all the relevant information is in place. The enhanced DBS check, barred list information,

section 128 management check and prohibition check are in place for all staff as appropriate to their roles.

- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met.

#### *Paragraph 19*

- In the action plan, the proprietor identified that on the first day of employment for agency workers, all relevant checks and documentation would be gathered. This has not happened. Agency staff have commenced work at the school without any safer recruitment checks. Leaders did not, for example, see an enhanced DBS check concerning an agency staff member. Safer recruitment protocol is not followed.
- Leaders have not ensured that these checks are in place.

#### *Paragraph 21*

- The single central record is not compliant. It does not contain information relating to agency staff as is required.
- In the action plan, the proprietor identified that the headteacher would undertake monthly checks of the school's single central record. These take place but lack the necessary rigour. Consequently, leaders do not identify errors for themselves. Leaders' understanding of safer recruitment procedures remains insecure.
- 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*

- Leaders maintain the premises to a satisfactory standard. The school's action plan identified actions linked to acting upon received external health and safety expert advice. Health and safety recommendations have been fully addressed as set out in paragraph 11 above.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is met.
- Leaders have 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), 34 (1)(c)*

- Leaders' action planning aimed to ensure that the single central record is compliant. However, the plan did not indicate which staff recruitment checks, including for agency staff, are completed, as contained in paragraphs 18 and 19. During this inspection, leaders had not ensured that agency workers had received the correct level of check in a timely manner. A recently employed worker was not listed on the school's single central record.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's safeguarding policy contains all the relevant information. Leaders do not ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are enacted.
- While there has been effective action to address some of the weaknesses identified in the previous emergency inspection, there are some standards that remain not met.

- This standard remains unmet.
- 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. 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	109342
DfE registration number	801/6008
Inspection number	10143903

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	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Aurora Group
Chair	Shay Ramalingham
Headteacher	Tyne Grant-Rafter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£79,000
Telephone number	01179 733 301
Website	<a href="http://www.the-aurora-group.com/gracehouse">www.the-aurora-group.com/gracehouse</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:kim.welsh@the-aurora-group.com">kim.welsh@the-aurora-group.com</a>
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 on October 2019, the school has changed its name from Aurora St Christopher's School to Aurora Grace House School.

- The headteacher, who was the school's deputy headteacher, took up post in November 2019. The previous headteacher left in October 2019. There have been some changes to the proprietorial body including the appointment of a new chair.
- 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.
- The school is due to close on 27 March 2020. Some pupils are still awaiting new placements.
- The school's previous inspection history:
  - The Aurora Group, which formed in October 2015, purchased and took over the school in April 2016.
  - The last standard inspection took place in December 2018. At this time, the school was judged to require improvement. Several independent school standards were unmet.
  - In October 2019, Ofsted conducted an emergency inspection. At this time, several independent school standards were unmet.
  - In November 2019, the school submitted an action plan to Ofsted about how it was going to address unmet standards. The plan was deemed not acceptable.

## 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 progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This inspection is the first progress monitoring inspection of the school since the emergency inspection in October 2019. This inspection was carried out with no notice.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher who also acts as the school's designated safeguarding lead. The inspector also met with the deputy designated safeguarding lead and the school business manager.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, school policies and procedures. A site visit was also conducted to consider the premises, and facilities.
- The school's safeguarding policy was scrutinised. The school's single central record was checked.

## Inspection team

Elizabeth Farr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector



## **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 unmet at this inspection*

#### **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.

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

- 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(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 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.

## **The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards**

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

- 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.
- 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.

#### **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.

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