

Holme Court School

Abington Woods, Church Lane, Little Abington, Cambridgeshire CB21 6BQ

Inspection dates

13 February 2020

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, 7a

Paragraph 32 (1) (c)

- Leaders have established suitable arrangements to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. The clear processes in place reflect the well-considered policies. Monitoring arrangements ensure that pupils remain safe.
- The induction programme, including child protection training, covers all areas in the latest statutory guidance, including the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are well trained. They understand and carry out their responsibilities to safeguard pupils effectively.
- Leaders and staff consider pupils' individual needs based on information received and their own initial assessments. Detailed records of any safeguarding concerns are kept.
- The safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance and is available on the school's website.
- The proprietor has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c) and 10

- There is a suitable behaviour policy in place, and this links closely to the school's anti-bullying policy. Staff implement the policies and follow the school's approach to rewards and sanctions.
- Staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave and challenge any inappropriate behaviour quickly and effectively. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour or bullying. Pupils observed throughout the day in different settings behaved very well.
- Staff effectively promote pupils' good behaviour.
- The proprietor has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- There are a range of suitable policies in place to cover health and safety, fire safety and supervision.
- Fire equipment is checked and serviced regularly. All of the required checks are completed to make sure that fire alarms and emergency lighting remain in good order. Fire drills are carried out at suitable intervals to ensure that pupils can exit the building quickly and in an orderly fashion. Fire evacuation notices are situated appropriately throughout the school.
- Regular health and safety checks are carried out to ensure that any potential hazards are identified are addressed. Leaders from both schools have drawn up plans to coordinate joint checks for fire equipment and health and safety.
- There are detailed, written risk assessments in place at the moment. These are fully implemented. There are suitable risk assessments drawn up for likely activities on the new site.
- The existing high staff-to-pupil ratios will be maintained in the new premises. Staff will be able to supervise pupils closely and provide individual support for pupils. Leaders plan to open the school with up to 50 pupils. There will be a maximum of 10 pupils per class.
- The proprietor has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18, 18(1), 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(2)(f) and 18(3)

- Leaders complete all of the necessary pre-employment checks to make sure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Paragraph 19(2), 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)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3) and 19(4)

- Leaders make sure that agencies have completed all of the required checks that need to be made before any person undertakes any supply work.
- Leaders could produce letters of assurance from agencies confirming these checks on supply staff had taken place.

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), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)

- Checks on the suitability of staff and the proprietor are recorded on the school's single central record appropriately.
- In the new premises, leaders will ensure that there is a joint single central record that contains the information about checks on staff from both schools.
- The proprietor has ensured that the requirements of the standard in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b)

- The premises have recently undergone a significant refurbishment. There are five separate classrooms. They are all clean, well kept, safe and secure.
- The lighting and acoustics are suitable throughout the building.
- The five separate classrooms are well resourced. They are all fitted with sinks and interactive whiteboards. Some have adjoining break-out rooms that provide ample space for one-to-one support sessions with pupils.
- Drinking water is freely available to pupils throughout the day and appropriately labelled.
- There is also a hall area that would be shared with the other school and used for assemblies. Leaders will draw up suitable timetables to facilitate shared usage.
- There is a communal reception area, a meeting room, and a suite of offices.
- Staff and pupils are provided with separate toilet facilities. All are equipped with hot and cold running water. There is a specially adapted toilet for use by disabled pupils.
- The site is located in Cherry Hinton park. This provides ample space and lots of opportunities for pupils to play outside.
- There is also a communal dining and sports area. This, again, would be shared. Leaders have planned staggered lunchtimes to ensure that this would be suitable for pupils. This adjoins council storage provision. This would benefit from some sort of barrier between the two to demarcate where pupils can and cannot walk, and to safeguard pupils if vehicles are on site.
- The room provided for the short-term care of sick pupils is on the first floor. Leaders have provided suitable provision that includes a specially resourced room, complete with sink and close to a toilet.
- The proprietor has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- The headteacher has put in place effective plans to ensure that the move to new premises runs smoothly. She has discussed arrangements with the other school's headteacher. There is clarity around which areas will have shared usage, and those where the new school will have sole access.
- The relocation plan details how areas, including the staff room, hall and dining area will be shared so as to minimise disruption to pupils. Leaders have drawn up appropriate risk assessments and joint school protocols for any areas that are to be shared.
- The plan includes how office staff from Holme Court will work downstairs at the start and end of each day. This means these staff will be available to speak with parents.

- The headteacher has carefully considered how the new premises could accommodate up to 50 pupils. The proposed premises would accommodate this increase in pupil numbers. There are also plans involving additional teaching rooms, should the school wish to apply for further expansion in the future.
- The headteachers have considered joint monitoring arrangements for health and safety, fire and first aid checks. There are plans in place for both sets of staff to be listed on a single central record.
- Pupils from the different schools will arrive at different times. This will stagger entry times and ensure an orderly start to the school day. The two separate schools will have different breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Staff will escort pupils from the drop-off point in the morning and vice versa at the end of the school day.
- Leaders have devised suitable risk assessments to mitigate against the potential dangers to pupils' safety when playing outside in a public park.
- The proprietor has ensured that the requirements of the standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

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	108886
DfE registration number	873/6051
Inspection number	10135728

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 school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Harriet Sturdy
Headteacher	Anita Laws
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,616
Telephone number	01223 778030
Website	www.holmecourt.com
Email address	admin@holmecourt.com
Date of previous standard inspection	21–23 November 2017

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	32	50	50

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	32	50

Number of part-time pupils	N/A	N/A
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	32	50
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	16	Not yet determined
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	16	Not yet determined

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	Not yet determined
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	Not yet determined
Number of staff in the welfare provision	N/A	N/A

Information about this school

- Holme Court School is registered to admit up to 32 pupils between the ages of seven to 16 years old.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Most pupils have dyslexia.
- The previous standard inspection was conducted by Ofsted in November 2017. The school's overall effectiveness was judged to be outstanding. All of the independent school standards were met at the time of the inspection.
- A few pupils access provision off site, such as through college days or specialist lessons in other schools. They are accompanied at all times by staff from Holme Court.

- The current proprietor of the school is Dr Harriet Sturdy. She has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to seek two material changes for the school: a change of premises and an increase in the number of admissions to the school to 50 pupils.
- The new premises are proposed to be at Cherry Hinton Hall, Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge, CB1 8DW.
- If the school moves to these premises, it will share them with the Oaks International School (OIS). The OIS opened as a new, small independent school in January 2019. It is registered with the DfE for children from two to 11 years of age. The school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2019 and adjudged to be good.
- Leaders' plans indicate that pupils will be accessing the same site, facilities and outdoor space together. There would be staggered start times, as well as different breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with two working days' notice.
- The DfE commissioned Ofsted to consider the school's request for material changes to increase the number of pupils on roll from 32 to 50 and for a change of premises.
- The DfE asked Ofsted to report on whether the proprietor was likely to meet the independent school standards contained in the paragraphs commencing 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16 and 34(1); and all relevant independent school standards in Part 4 (the suitability of staff) and Part 5 (the suitability of premises and accommodation).
- I met with some pupils to discuss their experiences in school.
- I scrutinised school policies and other documentation relating to the proposed material changes.
- The school's records of the recruitment checks on staff were scrutinised. Additional documents and records relating to safeguarding matters were reviewed.
- I undertook a tour of the existing premises and the proposed new premises, with the headteachers from both schools.
- A meeting was held with the proprietor, the headteachers of both schools and the bursar.

Inspection team

John Randall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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