

The Amicus School

The Coach House, Arundel Road, Fontwell, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 0SX

Inspection dates

16 March 2020

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7

- Pupils join the school having experienced significant trauma in their past. Leaders understand the vital importance of ensuring the school is safe and feels safe. Promoting pupils' safety and well-being is therefore central to the school's work.
- The school's written safeguarding policy is fit for purpose. It is available to pupils and parents via the school website. Ongoing training and constant dialogue ensure that staff are alert to pupils' specific risks and vulnerabilities. This enables staff to be vigilant in their safeguarding work. Where concerns arise, leaders take prompt, sensitive and appropriate action to address them. Records of leaders' actions are clear and show persistence in pursuing additional support when necessary.
- Staff invest in helping pupils to develop safe and appropriate relationships with the adults who care for them. They make sure that pupils have opportunities to discuss any worries they may have in a timely way, so that concerns can be addressed swiftly.

Paragraphs 11 and 12

- Leaders take their responsibility for health and safety seriously. A written policy shows the careful thought that has been given to managing potential risks. This includes those that are unique to the school's context, such as around forming appropriate relationships with adults.
- Useful systems enable leaders to monitor health and safety arrangements carefully. Checks on the school site and operating procedures are carried out routinely, to make sure the site is safe for pupils and staff. Leaders use experts from beyond the school to check that health and safety arrangements remain fit for purpose.
- The school complies with its legal duties in relation to fire safety. Fire alarms and appropriate fire-fighting equipment are in place and suitably maintained. Well-established routines ensure that pupils and staff understand what to do in the event of the fire alarm sounding.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils are well supervised while on the school site. Pupils are never on their own. Leaders have sensible plans in place to recruit more staff in the near future. This should provide the capacity to sustain the current levels of supervision if permission is granted for more pupils to be admitted to the school.

Paragraph 16

- The school has an appropriate policy for managing risks. It is underpinned successfully by a wide range of risk assessments relevant to pupils and the activities they undertake as part of the school's work.
- During this inspection, leaders demonstrated their deep-rooted awareness of potential risks and how to manage them. They consider this an ever-changing piece of their work, with risk assessments reviewed and adapted in a timely way. They take account of risks that might arise around the social dynamics within a class, for example when a new pupil joins the school.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the material change is granted.

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

All paragraphs

- Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out for adults working on the school site. Where necessary, they call on advice from beyond the school to help them with this work, such as when vetting members of staff who have lived or worked overseas. They are suitably trained in safe recruitment of staff. They place great emphasis on ensuring that potential new staff understand the school's context and are suited to supporting pupils' specific needs.
- Supply staff are rarely used by the school, as there are sufficient staff to cover in the event of someone being absent due to illness. Nevertheless, leaders have appropriate arrangements in place for recruiting and vetting short-term agency or bank staff where needed.
- The school's central record of recruitment checks meets requirements. All relevant checks are in place and recorded clearly and carefully. Leaders and representatives of the advisory board monitor arrangements as a matter of routine, ensuring that nothing is missed.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the material change request is granted.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

All paragraphs

- The school is based on a quiet, well-maintained site, with secure boundaries that keep pupils safely away from the adjacent busy road. Outside spaces are safe and inviting, providing pupils with places to play, reflect and exercise. Outside lighting ensures the site is safe for pupils and staff to move around in the hours of darkness where this is necessary. The small, shallow pond in the grounds is supervised and

managed carefully.

- Classrooms are adequately sized for the number of pupils and adults they are intended to accommodate. There is capacity within the existing classrooms to accommodate the additional two pupils requested by the school.
- Rooms are light and bright, providing a safe and suitable environment where pupils can learn. Acoustics are appropriate in classrooms. There are also designated quiet spaces for pupils to use when the need arises. Since the last inspection, an additional room has been developed to support
- Pupils have access to suitable toilet, washing and showering facilities. Drinking water is readily available throughout the day. Water not intended for drinking is clearly labelled as such. Hot water is of an appropriate temperature.
- Appropriate provision is in place to cater for pupils' medical needs. Clear routines ensure that pupils' regular medication is stored securely and administered carefully. A medical room exists for the temporary care of any pupils who become unwell during the school day.
- Pupils access some of their physical education provision off site. These facilities have been risk assessed carefully to ensure that they are appropriate for pupils.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the material change is granted.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Leaders' understanding of their roles and responsibilities is clear. Together, the headteacher, proprietor and members of the advisory board use their collective expertise and experience well. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of their work. This is evident throughout the school's policies and practice.
- The proprietor demonstrates a secure understanding of her work. She plays an active role in the school's leadership, holding the headteacher and other leaders successfully to account for the impact of their work. In turn, she is held successfully to account by the advisory board.
- Ongoing and planned reviews of provision help leaders to ensure that they consistently meet the independent school standards. Leaders actively seek feedback from experts beyond the school to validate their work and inform ongoing development.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the material change is granted.

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	131504
DfE registration number	938/6265
Inspection number	10145743

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 school
Proprietor	Rebecca Newton
Headteacher	Leeha Watney
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,300
Telephone number	01243 544 107
Website	www.theamicuscommunity.com
Email address	info@theamicuscommunity.com
Date of previous standard inspection	8–10 May 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 16	5 to 16	5 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	16	18	18

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	16	18

Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	16	18
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	16	18
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	16	18

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	8	9

Information about this school

- This is an independent special school. It caters for up to 16 pupils who have social, emotional and/or mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. They have all experienced significant trauma in their early family life. Pupils are referred to the school by local authorities.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a change of headteacher. The current headteacher took up her post in January 2020, having previously been assistant headteacher at the school.
- The school has an advisory board which fulfils a governance role.

Information about this inspection

- Ofsted is aware of the challenges that Covid-19 is currently posing to those we inspect. During this visit, the inspectors took into consideration the impact of any measures being taken to slow the spread of Coronavirus by the school. This has included the effect these measures have had on the current attendance of the pupils and staffing arrangements.
- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to a material change request from the proprietor. The request was for the school to be able to admit a further two pupils, increasing the school roll from 16 to 18 pupils.
- The inspection was carried out with two days' notice.
- I met with the proprietor, headteacher and a member of the advisory board. Along with the headteacher, I toured the school site, speaking to pupils and staff. I met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed relevant safeguarding documents, including the school's record of recruitment checks on adults working in the school. I also scrutinised other documents relevant to the parts of the independent school standards considered as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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