

# Pear Tree School

Toy Top Farm, Houghton Bank, Heighington, Darlington, County Durham DL2 2UQ

**Inspection date**

14 July 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, 7(a), 7(b)*

- The proprietor has ensured that the safeguarding policy is fit for purpose and references the latest guidance from the government. He is aware of the new version of 'Keeping children safe in education (2020)' and intends to update the policy for September 2020.
- Staff are appropriately trained to deal with any safeguarding incidents or concerns they may have. Training is refreshed annually.
- Safeguarding records are detailed and show that appropriate responses are made, and external agencies are involved as needed to keep pupils safe.

#### *Paragraph 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- There is a comprehensive health and safety policy in place that covers both school sites. Accompanying this policy is documentation showing that checks are carried out frequently on the building to ensure it is maintained to a high standard. During the premises check, the buildings were found to be clean, tidy and safe.
- Both buildings have fire risk assessments in place that are refreshed every three years. Anything noted during the risk assessment process has been worked upon to ensure the buildings are safe. Regular checks take place on fire safety equipment, and pupils take part in frequent fire drills.
- Pupils are well supervised during learning time and social time. Classes contain no more than four pupils and each class has at least two members of staff.
- The risk assessment policy and accompanying risk assessments are comprehensive. They cover all aspects of the school, trips and activities based on and around the working farm. The proprietor has followed government guidance and gone beyond these requirements to keep pupils safe and in education.
- If the material change is approved, the standards in this part are likely to continue to be 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)*

- The proprietor has ensured all appropriate checks on staff are made prior to staff beginning to work with pupils. These include safeguarding checks, medical checks, right to work in the United Kingdom, overseas checks and checks on employment history.

*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)*

- The single central record is up to date and records all of the checks that have been made to ensure staff are suitable to work in the school.
- If the material change is approved, the standards in this part are likely to continue to be met.

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

*Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c)*

- Toilets are provided for the sole use of pupils. These are single-use cubicles with handwashing facilities. There are specific toilets for girls and boys. Staff and visitor toilets are clearly marked. The toilets are in pristine condition and some are brand new.
- Suitable accommodation for changing is available. There are a number of showers for pupils to use after physical education (PE) and after carrying out activities on the farm.

*Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)*

- Each site has its own medical room. Both contain a fully stocked first-aid kit and the facility to carry out a medical examination on a pupil if required. The rooms have washing facilities within them and a toilet next door.

*Paragraph 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)*

- The buildings are maintained to a high standard. They are well cared for by staff and pupils. Some areas are new and are furnished to a very high standard.
- Classrooms are spacious and airy. There are both indoor and outdoor classrooms. Lighting and acoustics have been well considered and are appropriate.
- External lighting is in place and working on both sites. This ensures that pupils and staff have a safe entry and exit to and around the buildings when it is dark.

*Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)*

- Drinking water is readily available for pupils to collect from kitchen areas close to where they are taught. Water that is unsuitable for drinking is marked. The proprietor ensured that water suitable for drinking was marked during the inspection.
- Hot water is set to an appropriate temperature and does not pose a scalding risk.

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

- The school is set in large grounds that provide much space for pupils. There are a range of areas where they can socialise, including picnic tables, comfortable sofas indoors and outdoors, and areas where they can go for a walk around the farm.
- There is plenty of space for PE, particularly when undertaking activities such as horse riding and mountain biking. There is a lake for pupils to use when kayaking or paddle boarding.
- If the material change is approved, the standards in this part are likely to continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor and his staff are knowledgeable about the running of this school. They have exceptionally high standards. This ensures that they are well organised and constantly reviewing how they can provide the highest quality of education for pupils.
- Leaders propose that the number of pupils on roll grows over time and that they will review and employ staff as this happens, ensuring that the staff to pupil ratio remains as it is currently.
- The proprietor has a strong understanding of the requirements of the independent school standards and ensures that they are met consistently.
- Staff training is a priority and the proprietor ensures that training is revisited frequently.
- If the material change is approved, the standards in this part are likely to continue 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	135113
DfE registration number	841/6003
Inspection number	10154716

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	David Bartlett
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	David Bartlett
Annual fees (day pupils)	£20,135
Telephone number	01388 776799
Website	<a href="http://www.peartreeprojects.co.uk">www.peartreeprojects.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@peartreeprojects.co.uk">info@peartreeprojects.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	18–20 June 2019

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	8 to 18	8 to 18	8 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	17	30	30

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	17	30
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	18	Up to 30
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	14	Up to 30
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	17	30

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	10	16
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

## Information about this school

- Pear Tree School is a small, independent special school that is currently registered for 18 pupils. This material change inspection was to consider increasing the number of pupils from 18 to 30.
- All pupils attending the school have identified special educational needs and most are supported with an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils spend time at both sites: Toy Top Farm and Stapleton Manor.

- The school does not use any alternative education provision.
- The last standard inspection took place in June 2019 and the school was judged to be outstanding.
- The school operates over two sites: Toy Top Farm and Stapleton Manor, Stapleton, Darlington.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic of 2020. Some of the inspection was conducted remotely. This was due to restrictions placed on non-essential travel during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- I reviewed the majority of school documents remotely, including the health and safety policy and safeguarding policy. I checked the independent school standards relevant to this material change request, such as those relating to fire safety and the premises, during a short on-site visit. I spoke with the proprietor via telephone and while on site.
- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE because the proprietor requested to increase the number of pupils on the school's roll from 18 to 30.
- The school proposes to meet the needs of pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- This is the second material change visit that the school has requested. The first took place in September 2012.

## Inspection team

Debbie Redshaw, lead inspector

Senior Her Majesty's Inspector



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