

On Track Education Barnstaple

16a Castle Park Road, Whiddon Valley, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 8PA

Inspection dates

28 July 2020

Overall outcome

The school meets the independent school standards relevant to the material change.

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- Leaders, including directors, have a good understanding of the requirements to keep pupils safe. They comply fully with the current guidance issued by the Secretary of State to promote a strong culture of safeguarding.
- The safeguarding and child protection policy is published on the school's website. This is a comprehensive policy, clearly setting out personnel, roles and responsibilities, and procedures for protecting pupils. It is fully compliant with the expectations of 'Keeping children safe in education' 2019. Leaders are also aware of the revisions that will be required when the 2020 version comes into effect.
- Leaders implement the safeguarding and child protection policy effectively. Staff are well trained to identify and refer concerns promptly to one of the many designated safeguarding leads. Staff's rapid intervention and extensive work with multi-agency partners keep pupils safe and provide essential support for their futures.
- Leaders ensure that systems for maintaining vigilance and keeping pupils safe are paramount. These include implementing robust pre-employment checks and vetting procedures, as seen in the single central register. Leaders have detailed risk assessments for each pupil. As a result, pupils are likely to feel safe and nurtured, particularly at times of stress or potential harm.
- Leaders have taken appropriate steps to ensure that the premises and accommodation are safe and fit for purpose. Where the site was previously used as a gymnasium, the proprietor has ensured that potential risks arising from its former use have been assessed. For example, a large mirror in the dance hall has been removed for pupils' safety.
- Similarly, leaders have taken effective action to enhance the premises so that there are therapy rooms available for pupils. As every pupil will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, these spaces will be essential to help manage pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs.

- Leaders apply the full range of policies to keep pupils safe, happy and well. For example, due to the nature of the pupils' needs, including a significant proportion who are in care, the school worked through the recent COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown. Government guidance and measures are strictly adhered to, including checking pupils' symptoms, introducing sanitising and social distancing measures, and providing a separate quarantine room.

Paragraph 11

- The directors maintain an up-to-date written health and safety policy. This includes the latest guidance for meeting all relevant health and safety laws, for example Legionnaire's disease (water temperature) checks and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. As a result, the school is a safe site for pupils, staff and visitors.
- The health and safety policy is implemented rigorously. Responsibilities for health and safety are clearly set out. The school's appointed health and safety officer oversees regular maintenance and site checks. The records of these are scrutinised fastidiously by the headteacher and directors to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all.

Paragraph 12

- The directors ensure that the school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The whole school site, including the recently acquired premises under the new leasing arrangement, has been assessed and fully evaluated to meet requirements. For example, emergency exit routes are clearly signed and illuminated to ensure swift and safe evacuation.
- Leaders ensure that fire detection and alarm systems are maintained. Extinguishers are kept around the site and checked to make sure these are always serviceable.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders understand the complex needs of the pupils. As a result, appropriate staff-to-pupil ratios are clearly established and firmly adhered to, as part of each pupil's EHC plan. Every pupil has an identified key worker as part of their pastoral support plan.
- The directors and headteacher have recruited the additional teachers, tutors and education support workers needed from September 2020. This provides assurance that each pupil is likely to have their personal, social, emotional and academic needs met if the material change request is approved.

Paragraph 16–16(b)

- Leaders have detailed risk assessments in place to control risks during school activities. These identify potential hazards for pupils, with specific actions to mitigate these, including, for example, risks associated with off-site visits, travel and medicine. Consequently, pupils are likely to be kept safe from harm but still able to undertake activities necessary for their social and emotional development.
- Risk assessments consider measures necessary to protect staff, pupils, visitors and contractors while on the school site.
- Leaders maintain an ongoing risk assessment for every pupil. The headteacher describes these as 'live documents'. Staff comments and annotations show how

diligently risk assessments are checked and adjusted to meet the complex needs of the pupils.

- The proprietors have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

Paragraph 18(2)–18(3), 19(2)–19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c)

- The proprietor ensures that all the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out as required by the statutory guidance and the independent school standards.

Paragraph 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- The single central register is well maintained and legible, being in an electronic format. All aspects relating to individual checks are appropriately maintained and recorded. Leaders ensure it is checked and updated regularly to reflect accurately the school's staffing arrangements.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22–31

- Following the acquisition of the premises in December 2019, the proprietors have worked effectively to make all the necessary adjustments to ensure that the accommodation and facilities are likely to meet the full range of pupils' needs should the material change in the maximum number of pupils on roll be implemented.
- The school has separate toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils. These can be found on both floors of the accommodation and are readily accessible.
- Changing and showering facilities, for pupils aged 11 years or over, are provided. These have been 'inherited' from the site's previous use as a commercial gymnasium. As such, these facilities are completed to a high standard.
- The school has separate quarantine and medical rooms for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. The accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils includes washing facilities. These are also near to toilets. Leaders ensure that the immediate medical care for those who may need it has been given due attention in line with the independent school standards.
- Leaders have taken swift action, since acquiring the lease of the new premises, to make the accommodation suitable for the purposes of educating and caring for pupils with an EHC plan. This means that they have the extra space needed to accommodate the expansion of the school's maximum number on roll to 60.
- The school is well equipped to promote its aims and vision for the pupils. Rooms are bright and well presented. All electrical work and plumbing are neatly boxed and finished. The grounds have designated rooms and spaces for different activities, including a technology room and hair and beauty salon. These enable some pupils to undertake further qualifications and experiences.

- There are no health and safety concerns. The premises and accommodation are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. For example, all windows are fitted with restrictors to prevent pupils from getting out of these, including on the first floor.
- Leaders have identified a single point of entry and exit, so that pupils' and visitors' arrival can be fully checked and verified. This helps to ensure pupils' safety.
- The acoustic conditions and sound insulation are appropriate for the activities in each room, including in the newly acquired premises.
- Teaching and communal rooms, corridors and the school hall are all well lit and ventilated. Rooms allow much natural light through the many large windows, which are a standard feature of the build. This is enhanced further by modern light fittings set into the ceiling, a feature consistently seen throughout the school.
- The premises also benefit from ample external lighting. This includes lighting for external evacuation routes and congregation points, in case of an emergency. The car park and school perimeter are suitably illuminated. This is further supplemented by street lamps, so that people can safely leave and enter the school.
- The school provides drinking water through a dispenser located in the food technology room. Pupils are also encouraged to use water bottles or beakers from home, which can be replenished on site.
- There is an adequate supply of hot and cold water on site. Cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked. Pupils are directed towards the dispenser for this purpose.
- Where hot water is provided, such as in toilets, the temperature does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- Basic amenities, including toilets and drinking water, are readily available to pupils throughout the day. The drinking water dispenser is located in a separate room and away from any toileting facilities.
- The site has an outdoor space that is fully secured within the school's perimeter. Though small, the space provides enough room for pupils to relax, play and enjoy some recreation time. Leaders intend to develop this further to gain even more benefit for pupils, including cover for winter months.
- The outdoor space and the dance hall and commercial gym equipment in the newly acquired premises provide opportunities for the school to deliver its physical education programme, as part of the school's curriculum.
- The proprietors have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Leaders, including the headteacher and directors, have a clear moral imperative that shapes their work. The school's ethos and vision are reflected in the way that every

pupil is treated. Leaders have high expectations and rightly put pupils first in their decision-making.

- Leaders have established strong systems of accountability for checking and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work. Directors undertake routine visits to see how the school is operating, for example to evaluate the school's safeguarding policies. The headteacher completes half-termly reports for directors. In turn, the headteacher completes a cycle of monitoring to evaluate progress against the school's priorities.
- The school benefits from a senior and an extended leadership team. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, such as the special educational needs coordinator and the designated teacher for children looked after. Leaders at different levels contribute to school evaluation and improvement, including through curriculum areas.
- Directors and school leaders have a productive, professional relationship which brings a healthy balance of challenge and support to the school's work.
- Leaders clearly demonstrate a good knowledge of the independent school standards, so that those checked during this inspection are met consistently. This includes those which actively promote the well-being of pupils.
- The proprietors have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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	145181
DfE registration number	878/6071
Inspection number	10155500

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	Day school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	On Track Education Services Limited
Headteacher	Jon Lisle
Annual fees (day pupils)	£49,020–£70,262
Telephone number	01271372269
Website	www.ontrackededucation.com
Email address	jlisle@ontrackededucation.com
Date of previous standard inspection	10–12 July 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 18	7 to 18	7 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	48	60	60

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	48	60
Number of part-time pupils	48	60
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	48	60
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	48	60
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	48	60

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	31	36
Number of part-time teaching staff	3	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	31	36

Information about this school

- On Track Education Barnstaple is part of On Track Education Services. It provides education across three sites in Barnstaple and Northam, Devon.
- The school had its last full section 109 inspection on 10–12 July 2018. Since then, the school successfully increased the number it may admit to 48, as the result of a material change inspection carried out on 20 May 2019.
- The school is an independent day school registered for pupils between the ages of seven and 18 years.

- All pupils have an EHC plan. Most are in relation to social, emotional and mental health difficulties, although the school welcomes pupils with wider diagnoses, too, such as those with autistic spectrum disorder.
- Over a third of the pupils in the school are looked after.
- The majority of pupils placed at the school by Devon local authority. However, other local authorities also use the school, particularly Cornwall and Somerset.
- The school does not have a governing body. The two directors fulfil the role of governors.
- The school occasionally uses Petroc College, Barnstaple, as an alternative provision. This is mostly to help students in key stage 5 gain qualifications or skills for further destinations.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 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. Documents for Parts 3 of the independent school standards were checked remotely. In addition, the inspector checked the school's single central register at home. However, information relating to Part 5, as well as paragraphs 11, 12, 14 and 16, were completed on site. The amount of remote work undertaken significantly reduced the time needed on site.
- The inspector evaluated a range of evidence. This included policies and documentation relating mostly to parts 3 and 5. The inspector also completed a video conference on 28 July 2020, with the director responsible for the recruitment and the SCR.
- School-based discussions with leaders included meetings with one of the company directors, the headteacher and the designated health and safety leader. The inspector completed a full check of part 5 during an on-site tour.
- This was a material change inspection commissioned by the DfE. The school is applying for its maximum capacity to be increased to 60, using new premises for this purpose.
- This was the school's second material change inspection. The first material change inspection was completed on 20 May 2019, which resulted in the school's maximum number on roll rising to 48.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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