

Austen House

Bridge House, 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury SK6 2SR

Inspection date

15 October 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

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1)(c)

- Staff are careful to protect the welfare and safeguarding of pupils. The proprietor has supplied a detailed policy to help staff. The policy is designed to relate to the care for young people provided by Care 4 Children (C4C), as well as pupils' education. However, some aspects of the policy do not closely reflect the current guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) about safeguarding in schools. For example, the policy does not set out the details of the local safeguarding arrangements between the school and external partners.
- The school does not have its own website. However, the safeguarding policy is available from the school.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b)

- Leaders have a well-established approach to helping pupils engage with learning and improve their behaviour. Staff aim to encourage pupils and reward their good behaviour. Leaders' approach is supported by a clear policy document. This confirms that actions such as the restriction of pupils' liberty and corporal punishment are illegal and must not happen.
- Staff carefully record comprehensive information about pupils' engagement and behaviour, including any significant incidents of poor behaviour. This is used by school staff and other professionals to understand pupils' needs and help them further.
- Pupils say that their attitudes and behaviour improve over their time at the school.

Paragraph 15

- Leaders use a commercially available attendance register in book form. Staff record pupils' attendance using the codes set out by the DfE. Leaders also make an electronic version of this information.
- The admissions register is an electronic document. It contains the required details about pupils.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The risk assessment policy is helpful and supports staff to control the risks that pupils may face. Leaders have developed suitable risk assessments concerning different aspects of school life. These are particularly comprehensive in relation to the steps currently being taken to protect pupils, staff and visitors from COVID-19 (coronavirus).
- Leaders have prepared risk assessments that relate to the needs of individual pupils. For example, they have carefully considered how to reduce the risk of pupils going missing from education.
- Some of the standards in this part, checked in this inspection, are not met.

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

Paragraphs 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(3), 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)

- Leaders ensure that the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils are fully completed and properly recorded. This is part of the process for employing staff provided by the human resources department of C4C.
- New directors and other senior staff of C4C are included in the school's single central register of employment checks.
- The standards in this part, checked in this inspection, are 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), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- The school is housed in two rooms. These have their own entrances. The toilet and medical facilities available to pupils are in the adjacent children's home. Pupils have to leave the school and walk around a building to access these facilities. This means that pupils are not able to get to these facilities as easily as possible should a medical or other urgent need arise.
- Drinking water is also available in the children's home.
- It was not possible to check in detail the toilet and medical facilities available to pupils because access to the children's home was restricted as a result of COVID-19 precautions.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- The school's premises are well maintained and provide a pleasant and quiet environment for learning. There is adequate lighting, including natural light from skylights in the ceiling. Floodlights are installed outside the building so that people can safely access and leave the premises.

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

- Suitable space is available outside for pupils' recreation. Pupils receive physical education at facilities off the school site.

- Some of the standards in this part, checked in this inspection, are not 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 body has not ensured that all the independent school standards checked in this inspection are met.
- Leaders have already identified that they need to provide toilet and medical facilities for pupils within the school premises.
- The new chair of the proprietor body intends to change the way governance is provided for the school. She intends to set up a group of suitably experienced people to allow more discussion of the available information about the performance of the school.
- Some of the standards in this part are not 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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	142333
DfE registration number	888/6062
Inspection number	10168149

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 school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Proprietor	Care 4 Children Residential Services Ltd
Chair	Samantha Millward
Headteacher	Robert Greaves
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,000
Telephone number	0345 521 5155
Website	www.care4children.co.uk
Email address	robert.greaves@care4children.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	5–6 March 2019

Information about this school

- The last standard inspection took place in March 2019.
- A new chair of the proprietor body has very recently been appointed. The proprietor body has contacted the DfE to confirm that this change has happened.
- Currently, the school does not use any alternative provision for pupils. This may change when the restrictions in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are no longer required.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE in order to provide up-to-date information about the school and its compliance with particular independent school standards. The inspection took place at the same time as a separate inspection, also conducted by Ofsted, of the children's home adjacent to the school.
- This inspection was conducted during the interim phase of inspection following the disruption to schools caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The school had 30 minutes' notice of the inspection.
- During this inspection, the inspector had discussions with the school's lead teacher, who acts as headteacher, the proprietor body's regional headteacher and pupils. He spoke by telephone to the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector examined policy documents, including the school's safeguarding policy, the attendance and admissions registers and other written information about the school's work.
- The inspector toured the school premises accompanied by the lead teacher.

Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including-
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 28(1)(a) suitable drinking water facilities are provided.
- 28(2) The facilities provided under sub-paragraph (1)(a) will be suitable only if-
 - 28(2)(a) they are readily accessible at all times when the premises are in use.

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.

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