

# The Nook School

c/o Hexagon Care Services, Unit 1, Tustin Court, Port Way, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston PR2 2YQ

## Inspection dates

2 February 2021

## 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 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(f), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)*

- Leaders have planned an effective curriculum for students in key stage 5. It will include appropriate progression routes from the key stages 3 and 4 curriculums taught to current pupils in these key stages. Leaders have planned four different pathways from which pupils can choose to study. These include academic, vocational, work experience and volunteering options.
- Leaders have prepared suitable schemes of work for key stage 5. All post-16 students will study for qualifications in English and mathematics alongside their chosen options from one of the four curriculum pathways. Staff plan to be flexible in adapting the curriculum. This is to meet the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of individual pupils. Where one-to-one support is needed, this will be provided.
- Leaders intend that post-16 students will attend school full time.
- Leaders' plans have a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education. This is to help pupils to overcome trauma that they have experienced. Currently, staff use a therapeutic approach in developing pupils' confidence and skills. Pupils learn how to build positive relationships, choose appropriate behaviours and keep safe. Staff plan to use a similar approach for post-16 students.

*Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j)*

- The proprietor body has appointed qualified teachers. These teachers have previous experience of teaching subjects within the key stage 5 curriculum to 16 to 18-year-old students. Leaders plan that older pupils with SEND will receive support from teaching assistants. Leaders plan to appoint additional staff with different subject specialisms to provide expertise across key stage 5.
- The proprietor body has a robust schedule that sets out how they check on the quality of teaching. They use this information to plan professional development for staff.

Leaders plan to expand the range of training to meet the needs of teachers who will work with post-16 students.

- The proprietor body has purchased resources to support teachers who will teach the new curriculum. Leaders have purchased books and equipment for post-16 students. The headteacher intends to purchase additional resources which will precisely match pupils' individual needs when they have been identified.

*Paragraph 3(g), 4*

- Leaders have a calendar which sets out when formal assessments of pupils will take place. Staff carry out ongoing informal assessments daily so that they can plan appropriate work to meet the needs of individuals. Teachers will carry out similar assessments on the progress of post-16 students.
- Leaders have planned a key stage 5 curriculum that is intended to support pupils to gain employment in the future and to live independently. Leaders and staff will have a focus on post-16 students playing an active part in their local community through volunteering and work experience opportunities.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

*Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)*

- Pupils who attend this school have experienced trauma in their lives. As a result, most pupils have significant gaps in their education. Leaders are committed to maintaining a supportive ethos across the school that nurtures pupils and builds their confidence. Teachers plan the curriculum in a way that builds on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. By increasing the number of pupils on role, leaders intend to support more pupils in need of this nurturing environment.
- Leaders prioritise personal, social and health education, including sex and relationships. Because of pupils' gaps in their learning, leaders anticipate that some pupils who join the school aged 16 to 18 years may need to cover ground in this area that they may have missed. Teachers plan to adapt their plans to meet the individual needs of post-16 students.
- The proprietor body's policies emphasise the need for equal treatment of pupils with different characteristics. The headteacher has ensured that the key stage 5 curriculum will be accessible for all students.
- The proprietor body has an established code of conduct for staff. As part of this, staff are required to be fair and balanced in their approach at school and in any opinions they express while at work.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)*

- The proprietor body has a suitable safeguarding and child protection policy in place. It is up to date and meets all current statutory requirements. Leaders have put in place

all the necessary arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of pupils and post-16 students to promote their welfare in school.

- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). A teacher is the deputy DSL. There is an overall safeguarding leader for Hexagon Care Services who monitors the quality of safeguarding for the company. Leaders and staff are up to date with their safeguarding training at the level appropriate to their areas of responsibility.
- Staff receive regular updates on a range of themes such as sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism, e-safety, whistle-blowing and the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. This means that staff are kept up to date with the latest government guidance.

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

- The proprietor body ensures that the health and safety policy is tailored to the needs of the vulnerable pupils who attend this school. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff and indicates the statutory requirements that people must meet. Leaders undertake regular checks to identify any health and safety concerns. They plan to extend these checks to ensure the health and safety of the increased number of students and age range.
- Regular fire safety checks of the premises take place. The proprietor body ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Current pupils are well supervised. There are plans to increase staffing levels if the material change is granted so that the 16 to 18-year-olds will also have the appropriate level of supervision. The number of staff will depend on the individual needs of pupils.
- Risk assessments are in place to ensure the welfare of pupils. There is a written risk assessment policy. Leaders have drawn up risk assessments which reflect this and take account of the increase in student numbers and the age range. Leaders and staff take appropriate action to reduce risks that are identified.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 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), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 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(6)

- The proprietor body will ensure that the required checks on the suitability of new staff to work with students are completed. The record of such checks on current staff is kept as an electronic document and is complete.
- Leaders do not intend to employ supply staff, including through external agencies.
- All leaders involved in appointing staff have completed appropriate training. This ensures that the recruitment process is as safe as possible.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2), 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), 29(1)(b)*

- The proprietor body has ensured that there is plenty of space in the two classrooms for the proposed increase in the number of students. In addition, there is a break-out room, reading area, office and a shower room.
- The toilet facilities for pupils are suitable for the proposed increase in the number of students. There is running hot and cold water. The hot water is set at an appropriate temperature. There are signs next to the taps indicating that the water is hot and not suitable for drinking.
- Leaders have ensured that drinking water is always available for current pupils and the proposed increase in number of students via a water cooler in one of the classrooms. There is a sign indicating that this is drinking water.
- A medical facility is available within the main office. There is a collapsible bed, blanket and pillow. There is a sink with running water and a first-aid kit available in this room. There are toilet facilities next to this facility.
- The accommodation is suitable for teaching an increased number and age range of students. It meets all the requirements for health, safety and welfare of pupils. This includes suitable acoustics, lighting and heating. Teaching rooms have a suitable source of natural light. The lighting is of an appropriate standard indoors. There is an external light for safe entrance and exit of the building in the dark.
- Fire escape signage is displayed around the school indicating exit points, procedures and muster points.
- There are extensive grounds surrounding the school for physical education (PE) and for relaxation. PE is regularly undertaken within the school grounds. Additionally, pupils have the opportunity to go ice skating, horse riding and on country walks. These types of opportunities are planned for post-16 students.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the standards in this part are likely 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 chair of the proprietor body and other leaders have ensured that the independent school standards (ISS) are likely to be met if the material change is implemented. They regularly monitor compliance, quality and effectiveness.
- Leaders demonstrate a high level of experience, knowledge and commitment to providing a good quality of education for pupils with SEND. Leaders have put plans in place to offer appropriate progression from key stage 4 to key stage 5. They actively promote the well-being of pupils.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the standards in this part 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	146030
DfE registration number	888/6115
Inspection number	10172364

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	Hexagon Care Services
Chair	Caroline Ashdown
Headteacher	Jillian Devlin
Annual fees (day pupils)	£36,140
Telephone number	0333 6006600
Website	<a href="http://www.hexagoncare.com">www.hexagoncare.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headoffice@hexagoncare.com">headoffice@hexagoncare.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	14–15 May 2019

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16	11 to 18	11 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	3	12	12

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Girls	Girls
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	3	12
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	3	12
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	1	12
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	3	12

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	1.6	3 minimum but will depend on the needs of the pupils
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	2 minimum but will depend on the needs of the pupils
Number of staff in the welfare provision	1	2 minimum but will depend on the needs of the pupils

## Information about this school

- The Nook is a small independent school for girls aged 11–16 years. The school is one of nine schools owned and operated by Hexagon Care Services.
- This was the school's first material change inspection since the previous inspection in May 2019.

- The school caters for pupils with complex needs including social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils attending the school are vulnerable and in the care of local authorities.
- The school does not have a website but produces a prospectus and makes this and all necessary safeguarding and policy information available on request. The school does not publish direct contact details. Any correspondence or contact with the school is directed through the company's head office.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers.



## Information about this inspection

- This material change inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Aspects of the inspection were conducted remotely. This was due to changes made to inspection activity during this period of the COVID-19 outbreak in order to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus.
- The proprietor body has applied to increase the age range of pupils from 11 to 16, to 11 to 18. In addition, the proprietor has applied to increase the number of pupils on role to 12.
- An inspector held remote discussions with the headteacher, deputy head of education and the chair of the proprietor body. She scrutinised electronic copies of school policies, procedures and other documents. These documents included those concerning safeguarding. An inspector made an on-site visit to the school to check whether the school premises were likely to comply with the relevant ISS. She also considered arrangements for health, safety and risk assessment in the school. In addition, this inspector examined the school's record of pre-employment checks on staff and members of the proprietor body.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Eastwood

Her Majesty's Inspector

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