

Heather Field School

New Burton House, Burton Bank Lane, Stafford ST17 9JW

Inspection date

10 March 2021

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

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 32(1)(c) [Part 6 Provision of information]

- Leaders have ensured that there is a suitable safeguarding policy in place. They have carefully considered the additional safeguarding challenges that might occur as a result of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The policy reflects up-to-date government guidelines and is available on the school's website.
- The school has two designated safeguarding leaders who are based at the school. In addition, several other leaders have completed the designated lead training. All staff complete child protection training when they join the school, and leaders provide regular updates throughout the year.
- Staff know how to report any concerns they have about a pupil's welfare or safety. Records show that leaders respond to these concerns quickly to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- Health and safety arrangements are fit for purpose. The written policy complies with all relevant laws. Leaders have ensured that all staff know what they should do to keep themselves and others safe.
- The proprietor has ensured compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Records show that an audit was carried out by an external consultant and that leaders have responded to all recommendations. Identified staff have received fire warden training and all staff completed fire safety training. Fire drills are carried out regularly.
- Pupils are supervised well during the day. This is because leaders have ensured that there are enough staff to support pupils in all activities, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. There are firm plans in place to appoint more staff should the material change be approved.
- A broad range of risk assessments are in place. Leaders have carefully considered the possible risks for on-site locations and external activities, including horse riding,

shopping and trips to the cinema. Each risk assessment details appropriate control measures and suggests suitable contingency plans. Each risk assessment details the minimum expectation regarding the supervision of pupils.

- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

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

Paragraphs 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), 19(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)

- Leaders have a robust approach to the recruitment of staff. All interview panels include a member who has completed safer recruitment training. No one can start work at the school before pre-employment checks have been completed and two satisfactory written references have been received.
- The single central register contains the required information on appointed staff. This includes checks relevant to members of staff who will hold a management position, to ensure the suitability of staff.
- The proprietor has ensured that confidential information about staff is stored securely.
- The school is likely to meet all of the standards in this part if the material change is implemented.

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), 24(1)(c), 24(2)

- There are separate individual toilets and suitable washing facilities for pupils. This includes new toilets installed to meet the needs of the additional pupils that will be admitted if the material change is agreed. There are also two designated accessible toilets. The proprietor has ensured that existing shower and changing facilities will be suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- There are two well-equipped medical rooms. Both have easy access to a toilet and washing facilities. The medical rooms contain a bed, seating and first-aid kits.

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

- The proprietor has ensured that the provision for current pupils is very well decorated and furnished. Classrooms benefit from natural light through the large windows. In order to accommodate more pupils, the proprietor has refurbished existing, unused rooms at the school. These rooms have been decorated to an equally high standard and mirror the design of existing teaching spaces. It is clear that pupils' welfare, health and safety will be maintained if the material change is agreed.
- There are a range of well-resourced, specialist teaching spaces, including a music room, a hobby-craft room and a room for cooking where pupils can acquire independent living skills. The proprietor has ensured that lighting, heating and

acoustics are suitable for all of the activities that take place in these rooms and in all spaces throughout the school.

- External lighting is placed appropriately around the school. This includes outside the newly refurbished building so that pupils and staff can move safely between the existing and new part of the school.

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

- Leaders have ensured that pupils have plenty of access to drinking water. There are water fountains located in the main corridors and pupils access drinking water from taps in each classroom. The water in hot taps gets warm, but there is no risk of scalding.

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

- The outdoor areas are very well maintained. This includes a large playground suitable for physical education and for pupils to play together at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils have access to a climbing frame and slide, which is positioned on a soft surface area. Additional outdoor spaces are attached to the majority of classrooms and there is a dedicated gardening area.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

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 board and the senior leaders at the school demonstrate a thorough understanding of the independent school standards. They regularly monitor compliance with the standards to ensure that they are consistently met.
- The proprietor has ensured that all policies and procedures are developed in line with statutory requirements. School leaders are held to account by the board of 'critical friends' who review all aspects of the school's work, including achievement, safeguarding, behaviour and the curriculum.
- Leaders have placed pupils' well-being at the heart of everything they do. They have ensured that the environment is well matched to the needs of the pupils who attend the school. In addition, leaders have appointed staff who have the skills and experience needed to provide a good-quality education for pupils with SEND.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	146981
DfE registration number	860/6050
Inspection number	10180642

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	Independent special school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Heather Field School Limited
Chair	Mrs S Deaville
Headteacher	Miss Alison Prosser
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,500 to £73,500 depending on level of need
Telephone number	01785 550940
Website	www.heatherfieldschool.co.uk
Email address	aprosser@heatherfieldschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 19	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	47	100	100

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	47	100
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	47	100
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	47	100
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	47	100

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	6 qualified teachers 1 unqualified teacher	12 qualified teachers
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2 higher-level teaching assistants 13 teaching assistants	4 higher-level teaching assistants 22 teaching assistants

Information about this school

- The school opened in August 2019. A standard inspection has not yet taken place.
- Heather Field School caters for pupils with SEND. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is situated in a residential area near to Stafford. This proprietor body runs three other independent SEND schools in the Stafford area.
- When the school opened it was registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to admit 50 pupils aged five to 19. The school's current request is for permission to admit up to 100 pupils.

- A part of the school that was previously unused has been refurbished. This has provided seven extra classrooms, extra toilets and washing facilities, an extra medical room, with its own toilet, and a room for meetings or small group interventions.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE to establish if the school would be likely to meet all the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material change, to increase the number of pupils in the school to 100, is implemented.
- The inspection focused on some of the welfare, health and safety standards in Part 3, all the standards in Part 4 about the suitability of staff and all of the standards in Part 5, premises and accommodation.
- This was the school's first material change inspection.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, the director of operations and the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector spoke to the chair of the proprietor board on the telephone.
- A tour of the site was conducted with the executive headteacher and the director of operations.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including the school's safeguarding policy and documents and policies relating to fire safety, supervision, health and safety and risk assessments.
- The inspector examined the school's record of safeguarding checks made on staff and pupil safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Jo Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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