

# Peak Education

The Old School House, Watling Street, Gailey, Cannock, Staffordshire ST19 5PR

## Inspection dates

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 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraphs 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)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) and 2(2)(h)(i)*

- The proprietor and leaders are deeply committed to providing young pupils with the support they need emotionally so that they are ready to learn. They offer this successfully at one of the other schools in the company and so are well placed to duplicate a similar offer at this school.
- Leaders have developed the school curriculum to include information about the proposed curriculum for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. The curriculum is closely linked to the national curriculum. Leaders place speech and language and communication at the centre of the curriculum. They ensure that phonics and reading are given a high priority. Mathematics is taught through a mastery approach with lots of opportunities for practical work using apparatus. Curriculum plans and timetables indicate that younger pupils will have the same opportunities to experience off-site adventurous activities as older pupils.
- Appropriate long-term and medium-term plans are in place. The plans show the knowledge and skills that pupils will learn in a wide range of subjects across the curriculum. The plans sequence the learning over time so that pupils build on prior learning. Each pupil currently in the school follows a bespoke curriculum matched to their individual needs. Leaders intend to adapt and modify the planned curriculum in a similar way for younger pupils once their needs are identified.
- The school actively promotes fundamental British values. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum helps pupils develop an understanding of respect and tolerance as well as how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils are helped to understand what qualifications they may need for future training or employment. Leaders intend to use the curriculum to raise the aspirations of the younger pupils so that they are confident and ready to move on to high school.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

*Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j) and 4*

- Leaders demonstrate the necessary knowledge of and expertise in how to support younger pupils to flourish and be successful. They are developing a staff team that understands how to work with younger pupils. The school already has two teachers working in the school who have extensive primary-phase experience. An ongoing programme of professional development is provided for all staff. It includes specific curriculum training, such as mastery in mathematics. Leaders provide clear direction on how lessons should be planned and how pupils receive feedback on their work. They intend to create a nurturing family-like atmosphere, underpinned by high expectations and clear systems appropriate to pupils' ages and aptitudes.
- Leaders have a framework in place to assess pupils' needs. Assessment begins before pupils start at the school. Checks on pupils' social, emotional, and mental health difficulties, any behavioural difficulties and their academic attainment are made. The framework includes a comprehensive phonics check for younger pupils. Information is used to develop a bespoke transition programme for each individual pupil. Leaders anticipate using even smaller steps so that younger pupils have a successful start.
- Teachers use a comprehensive assessment system to track pupils' progress. It checks pupils' knowledge against expectations in the national curriculum. It enables teachers to assess pupils who may be working well below their chronological age. Leaders are confident that it will help teachers working with the youngest pupils to identify gaps in what pupils know and can do. Leaders are in the process of ensuring that appropriate resources are in place to support the academic and personal development of younger pupils. For example, appropriate reading books and mathematics equipment are already in place.
- There is an appropriate monitoring programme across the company and in this school to enable the proprietor and school leaders to check the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders complete lesson visits, book scrutinise and learning walks. Feedback is provided to staff and professional development needs acted on to further improve the quality of teaching.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

### Part 3. Welfare, health, and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b) [and 32(1)(c)]*

- A strong safeguarding culture exists in the school led by an extensive team of experienced designated safeguarding leads. Leaders and staff are alert for any signs of concern. There is a comprehensive safeguarding policy in place underpinned by clear procedures. The policy takes account of the most recent government guidance and is available on the school's website.
- Leaders ensure that all staff complete safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. The training programme helps staff to keep up to date with issues in the local community such as gang and knife crime. Leaders have considered the additional training they will need to provide for staff when dealing with younger pupils. Leaders have also discussed the implications for the

potential physical restraint of younger pupils and the strategies that are most suitable. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is the first item on all staff meeting agendas.

- Leaders carry out all the relevant pre-employment checks on all staff. The induction process ensures that new staff are trained and understand the school's safeguarding procedures before they start.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

*Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c) and 10*

- Leaders put nurture at the heart of their approach to managing behaviour. They support pupils to develop skills and strategies to form positive relationships and manage their own behaviour. Leaders have considered how to revise the behaviour policy and school rules to help younger pupils self-regulate their behaviour and make the right choices. For example, simple rules such as kind hands and kind feet will be used. Rewards are given for good work, conduct and attendance. Leaders have considered the types of rewards that would be suitable for younger pupils, for example more immediate and visual rewards such as stickers.
- A system for recording any behaviour incident is already well established in the school. Leaders review and monitor incidents to look for any patterns of behaviour. They work with pupils to address the causes of any unacceptable behaviour. The school's work to deal with any bullying incident is similarly strong and effective. An appropriate anti-bullying policy is in place. Curriculum plans make provision for pupils to learn about bullying, including online material.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

*Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- The school has an appropriate health and safety policy and a first aid policy. Risk assessments are in place for school activities to help keep pupils safe. Leaders have begun to consider additional risk assessments related to younger pupils, such as the use of different toys and resources. These are in the process of being personalised to this school site.
- A fire risk assessment has been carried out. Regular checks on firefighting equipment and fire evacuation exercises are recorded in the fire safety logbook. Leaders make sure that staff are trained in basic fire safety and understand their responsibilities when evacuating the school.
- The staff-to-pupil ratio suggests that pupils are suitably supervised throughout the school day. Leaders have considered the additional supervision that will be required for younger pupils on site. They have considered the nature of the school building and outside areas as well as supervision required when pupils are on outdoor adventurous activities.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

## 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(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) and 29(1)(b)*

- The school premises offer a range of different sized classrooms as well as a specific nurture and sensory room. Rooms are well lit and have suitable acoustics. A library area provides a quiet space for pupils to relax with a book. The school kitchen, used to support pupils' personal development as well as the curriculum, is clean and carefully organised. Leaders stated that the school is due to be redecorated during the Easter holidays. All areas are maintained to an appropriate standard.
- There are separate boys' and girls' toilets with hot and cold running water. They are individual cubicles, which can be locked from the inside. Hot running water is set at an appropriate temperature. There is a separate toilet for staff, which is in a different part of the school building from the pupils' toilets. Drinking water is available from the kitchen, where it is marked as such.
- A room is available for use as a medical room. It has a bed and appropriate first aid equipment and is situated near to a toilet. There is a sink in the room providing washing facilities. Although the room is used for additional activities on occasions, these are not timetabled. Leaders stated that the room is readily available to accommodate any medical need.
- Pupils spend at least one day a week off site at an outdoor adventurous activity centre. Showers are available at the centre as are changing rooms. This centre is part of the company which runs the school.
- Leaders have enhanced the safety and security of the school site by erecting new fencing to the main entrance and boundary with a main road. The outdoor space has been divided to provide an area for more active physical play and a quieter zone where pupils can sit to reflect or engage in gardening activities. Leaders plan to timetable the outside space so that younger pupils can access it without the older pupils being present.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor has a clear vision and rationale for extending the age range of the school to include younger pupils. Careful thought has been given to the adjustments that will be needed to the curriculum and behaviour policy and the way in which younger pupils are inducted into the school. The proprietor and senior leaders demonstrate a good understanding of how best to support the social and emotional needs of primary-aged pupils while ensuring that they make progress academically.
- The proprietor meets regularly with senior leaders to check what is happening at the school and to hold them to account. The executive headteacher visits the school and

meets with senior staff. He carries out quality assurance activities, such as visiting lessons and scrutinising pupils' work.

- The proprietor and senior leaders work together to ensure that the independent school standards are met. They put pupils' welfare, health and safety first and demonstrate a strong commitment to helping pupils achieve as well as possible academically. They have a good record of managing this in the other schools in the group. This is likely to be the case in this school.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an accessibility plan in place. It takes account of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. It identifies actions to ensure that the school's physical environment, curriculum and written information continue to be as accessible as possible. It is reviewed and updated regularly.
- Leaders have continued to ensure that this requirement is 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	137956
DfE registration number	860/6039
Inspection number	10179453

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	Mr Paul Ball
Headteacher	Sharon Cliff
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,050
Telephone number	01902 790385
Website	<a href="http://www.peakeducation.co.uk">www.peakeducation.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:sharon.cliff@peak.co.uk">sharon.cliff@peak.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	10–12 December 2019

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18	8 to 18	8 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	7	26	26

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	26	26
Number of part-time pupils	0	10
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	7	26
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health, and care plan	7	26
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	7	26

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	1	3
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	10	20

## Information about this school

- Peak Education is a small independent special school situated in Gailey, close to Cannock in Staffordshire. It provides full-time and part-time education for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years who have social, emotional, and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is part of Peak Activity Services, a company which specialises in outdoor education and alternative provision for pupils at risk of exclusion.
- The school proposes to extend the age range to offer full- and part-time education for pupils aged eight to 18.



- An individual proprietor owns the school. An executive headteacher oversees the work of the headteacher, who is responsible for the day-to-day running and organisation of the school.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The last full standard inspection was in December 2019 when the school was judged to be good.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE because the school has requested to admit pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, headteacher and school manager. Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, she met with the proprietor virtually.
- During the inspection, the inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including that associated with the curriculum, behaviour, fire risk assessment and health and safety. The inspector took account of arrangements for pupils' welfare and safeguarding. The single central register was checked, and the inspector also reviewed the school's website. She visited the school and toured the premises including the outside areas.

## Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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