

Abbot's Way School

St Mary's Road, Meare, Somerset BA6 9SR

Inspection date

26 August 2021

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely 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

Paragraph 7

- Leaders' arrangements to safeguard pupils are suitable. They take the necessary steps to identify, manage and support pupils. Leaders use an electronic method of recording concerns about pupils' welfare. They track concerns closely and take appropriate action, engaging with external agencies when needed.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are suitably inducted into their roles. Leaders and staff are adequately trained to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The school's safeguarding policy pays due regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 11

- Leaders have not yet completed health and safety checks on the proposed additional premises. These include asbestos, legionella and fire safety checks. Plans to carry out regular checks on the premises are not in place.
- The standard in this paragraph is not likely to be met.

Paragraph 12

- Leaders have not completed a fire risk assessment on the additional premises. As a result, fire safety arrangements are lacking. Fire extinguishing equipment has not been serviced or checked for many years.
- The standard in this paragraph is not likely to be met.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders have made appropriate arrangements to ensure that pupils are supervised adequately before, during and after the school day. They acknowledge the increased

importance of vigilant supervision arrangements outside, as only a small gate separates the additional premises from a busy main road.

- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 16

- Leaders have carried out a risk assessment for the additional premises. They have identified risks accurately and identified actions to minimise the chance of occurrence. The inspector identified that actions to ensure safe access to and from the additional premises required greater detail. Leaders made adequate improvements to the risk assessment during the inspection.

- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are not likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 18

- Leaders have completed the required recruitment checks on newly appointed members of staff to ensure they are suitable for their role and safe to work with children.
- Leaders have carried out DBS checks on staff before or as soon after appointment as possible.
- Leaders do not use supply staff.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 20

- All the appropriate checks on the proprietor body are complete.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 21

- The single central record is complete for all staff and members of the proprietor body. Leaders ensure that up-to-date checks are in place for newly recruited staff.
- Leaders store and maintain the single central register electronically. A representative from the advisory governing body carries out checks on the single central register to ensure that it continues to comply with the independent school standards.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23

- There are adequate toilet and washing facilities available at the additional premises. These facilities are intended for use by one pupil at a time and can be secured from the inside.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 24

- At the time of the inspection, the proprietor body's plans for pupils to access a medical room were insufficient. Their plans to travel over one mile from the main site to administer first aid would put pupils at risk. During the inspection, the proprietor identified a room at the additional premises which may be suitable. However, this room does not have access to washing facilities or appropriate furnishing.
- The standard in this paragraph is not likely to be met.

Paragraph 25

- Leaders have not carried out the required health and safety checks at the additional premises. As a result, they cannot ensure that the premises are safe for pupils to use.
- The standard in this paragraph is not likely to be met.

Paragraph 26

- The acoustic conditions and sound insulation of the additional premises are suitable for the nature of activities that will take place there.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 27

- The additional premises are adequately lit, both inside and out. Staff manually turn on external lights to ensure pupils can enter and leave the site safely.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 28

- Toilets have an adequate supply of cold water so that they can be flushed. Washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water which does not pose a scalding risk to users. However, leaders have not yet ensured that pupils have access to drinking water facilities at the proposed new premises.
- The standard in this paragraph is not likely to be met.

Paragraph 29

- The additional premises give pupils adequate space to play outside. Together with the main premises, there is ample space for pupils to complete the school's physical education curriculum.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are not likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The proprietor body has not ensured the independent school standards are likely to be met in relation to the material change. The additional premises are not fit for purpose in their current state.
- Leaders have acted quickly to accommodate additional pupils who have been placed at the school. However, leaders' actions have lacked strategic direction and planning. The advisory body has not been able to check leaders' actions sufficiently to ensure that the additional premises are compliant with the independent school standards.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely 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, as set out in the annex of this report.

School details

Unique reference number	148006
DfE registration number	933/6015
Inspection number	10205395

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	Special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Abbot's Way Ltd
Chair	David Pugh
Headteacher	Hellen Lush and Gareth Wright
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,981 to £23,379
Telephone number	01458 397 497
Website	www.abbotswayschool.co.uk
Email address	office@abbotsway.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	7 to 14	7 to 14	7 to 14
Number of pupils on the school roll	17	40	15

The additional premises that leaders have acquired to accommodate more pupils are not suitable in their current state. Health and safety, and fire arrangements are incomplete. Leaders have not ensured that pupils have access to suitable drinking water and a medical room.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	13	40
Number of part-time pupils	4	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	17	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	14	TBC
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	13	TBC

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	4.5
Number of part-time teaching staff	5	5
Number of staff in the welfare provision	4	4

Information about this school

- Abbot's Way School provides education for 17 pupils aged seven to 14. The school site sits approximately four miles outside of the town of Glastonbury in Somerset. The existing premises were formerly a boarding house and part of the estates of the Shapwick School that closed in March 2020.
- There are current building restrictions to the premises. The number of pupils on the school site cannot exceed 15 at any one time. Leaders want to take on additional premises to temporarily increase the number of pupils on the school's roll to 23. In the

long term, pending planning approval from the relevant agencies, leaders hope to have 40 pupils on the school's roll.

- Pupils are either placed by local authorities or privately funded.
- The proprietor is Abbot's Way School Ltd. There are currently two directors of the company, both of whom act as joint headteachers of the school. The proprietor does not run any other school. There is an advisory governing body in place.
- The school provides education for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. The school does not have any religious character.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the Secretary of State for Education. It was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic of 2020–21. The inspector completed activity on site.
- This was the school's first material change inspection to increase the number of pupils on the school's roll.
- The inspector visited the proposed additional premises. The inspector also reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding, health and safety and the suitability of staff.
- The inspector met with the two directors who form the proprietor body, and who are also the headteachers. The inspector also discussed the proposed material change with a representative of the school's advisory governing board.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 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; and
 - 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.
- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 28(1)(a) suitable drinking water facilities are provided; and
 - 28(1)(c) cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such.
- 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; and
 - 28(2)(b) they are in a separate area from the toilet facilities.

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; and

- 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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