

My Choice School Arundel

2 Yeomans Nursery, Warningcamp, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 9QY

Inspection date

1 March 2022

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(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- Leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), are knowledgeable about child protection and safeguarding requirements. They know the pupils exceptionally well and have taken account of their needs to identify potential risks and determine appropriate processes. Leaders have considered local contextual factors well and have included responses to these in their safeguarding processes and documentation.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff understand the specific needs of pupils, especially where pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) might make them more vulnerable. Regular discussions about individual pupils and contextual safeguarding issues help to keep the whole staff team alert to potential risks. Leaders recognise the need to train the new staff who would join the school should the school's application to increase the number of registered pupils be approved by the Department for Education (DfE). They plan for this training to be the same as the current induction training that all staff undertake.
- The safeguarding and child protection policy is published on the school's website. It takes account of national guidance and fulfils requirements. It contains an explanation of processes and links to external partners, including the local authority designated officer. Aspects such as the 'Prevent' duty are included.
- Discussions with staff and examination of the commercial programme that the school uses to record concerns about pupils suggest that staff use their safeguarding training and the policy well. Concerns are logged clearly and quickly, allowing for the DSL and her team to take swift action. A sample of records examined during the inspection indicated that actions are timely, appropriate and effective. Leaders routinely discuss and review these actions. They follow them up rigorously.

Paragraphs 11–12

- The health and safety policy is fit for purpose. It sets out expectations of all staff to act promptly should any concern be discovered. It follows national guidelines and

allows for routine tasks such as water temperature checks to be undertaken and recorded clearly.

- Fire safety processes are matched to requirements. Routine checks and maintenance records indicate that tasks are completed promptly and thoroughly. Routine fire drills are recorded meticulously and the details are scrutinised for improvement points. These drills are designed to ensure that all staff and pupils know what to do in the event of a fire or similar emergency. Leaders have planned how to manage extra pupils and staff in the event of an evacuation.

Paragraph 14

- The proposed staffing arrangements will follow the current approach, in which every pupil is supervised at all times and no member of staff is ever by themselves with a pupil. Staff are trained to keep pupils from harm, including using restrictive physical intervention (RPI), if required. Incidents of RPI are recorded in a bound book. These records indicate that RPI is used rarely and in order to keep pupils from harming themselves or others. Incidents have fallen in recent years.
- Leaders intend to employ additional staff who already have experience with, and understanding of, pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. They will provide a thorough induction and continual training and support for all staff. Leaders have also considered how to grow the pupil population gradually, if the request is permitted. These staffing arrangements are likely to be fit for purpose.

Paragraphs 16–16(b)

- The risk assessment policy is clear and comprehensive. It covers the required aspects and emphasises the need for all staff to know and follow the risk assessment and risk management plans that have been drawn up for each pupil. These plans are monitored regularly and adapted as needed. Examination of a sample of pupils' plans indicates that many actions are successful and, in some cases, can lessen risks over time. However, leaders are not complacent about the risks and keep staff alert to possibilities.
- It is likely that the standards checked in this part will continue to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

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

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(3), 19(2)–19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders use their knowledge from their safer recruitment training to follow the requirements when advertising for and appointing staff. They make the necessary checks and record them on a single central record. Checks on the members of the proprietor body have been carried out and recorded correctly.
- Leaders do not use supply agency staff, but know what checks would be required if they had to do so. They manage staff absence using existing school staff. During the pandemic, they also adapted pupils' timetables to include remote learning. When they have had to do this, they have made sure that a member of staff contacts parents and carers and sees pupils online to check on their safety.

- All the requirements of this part are likely to continue to be met if the change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(1)(b), 25–29(1)(b)

- The school is located in a rural setting. There is plenty of space for the proposed number of pupils. The buildings are well maintained and provide plenty of light and space. An extension has been constructed that will provide enough space for the additional five pupils that leaders are applying to admit.
- At the time of the inspection, furniture had been moved to allow pupils to sit examinations. This is temporary, and classrooms are typically furnished so that pupils and staff have the resources and equipment they need.
- Along with the main classrooms, there is an assembly room, a well-being room and a music room. All have been designed well and meet standards. Pupils use appropriate science and technology equipment in their classrooms.
- Adjacent to the school site, there is an old commercial greenhouse that is in a poor state of repair. Leaders have recently received permission from the landowner and local planning authorities to remove this. In the meantime, they have ensured that it is securely fenced off so that pupils cannot reach it. There is a suitable risk management plan in place.
- There are toilet and washing facilities for pupils throughout the school buildings. All are in individual spaces, so providing required privacy. In consultation with pupils, one has recently been designated as being for female pupils only, but others are for all pupils. Staff facilities are also separate and clearly labelled as such.
- There are no changing or showering facilities on the site. Before the pandemic, leaders took pupils to specialist sports centres for sports activities and they would use the showers there. Leaders intend to resume this as soon as possible.
- The medical room is in the administrative block so that staff can keep an eye on any pupil needing to use it. It has running water and is near a toilet. Leaders keep medication securely and ensure that its use is properly logged.
- Water temperature around the site was varied on the day of inspection. Leaders have booked a plumber to rectify this, so that all have hot water when needed. Pupils have free access to drinking water whenever they want it.
- The site is fenced. Pupils could climb these fences if they were determined to do so. There are detailed risk management plans for each pupil. These show who is at risk of trying to leave the site and the actions staff will take in this event. School records show that these incidents are managed according to these plans.
- Outdoor and emergency lighting is installed around the external walls of the buildings. The site and its facilities are well maintained and likely to manage extra numbers of pupils and staff well.
- The requirements of this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The proprietor body and school leaders understand the requirements of the independent school standards. They have planned for the proposed increase in numbers well, with a clear eye on these standards. Proprietors visit the school regularly, picking a different part of the standards to explore each time. In this way, leaders aim to ensure that the standards are met consistently.
- The well-being of pupils is at the heart of the work of the school. Leaders have planned that this work will continue with all pupils. They have considered how to extend this to include any new pupils if the requested change is approved.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has produced an accessibility plan that sets out steps intended to increase access for all to the physical environment, information and the curriculum.

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	135111
DfE registration number	938/6272
Inspection number	10216431

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 special school
Proprietor	My Choice Children's Homes Ltd
Chair	Alex Hyland
Headteacher	Clare Wye
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000
Telephone number	01903 898 060
Website	www.my-choice-homes.com
Email address	a.murphy@my-choice-homes.com
Date of previous standard inspection	19 to 21 November 2019

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	17	25	25

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	17	25
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	17	25
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	17	25
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	17	25

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	10	12
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	0

Information about this school

- My Choice School Arundel is an independent special school for girls and boys with SEND aged between 11 and 16 years of age. All pupils are placed by local authorities and have education, health and care plans related to SEMH needs.
- This is one of two schools belonging to the proprietor (My Choice Children's Homes Ltd). The proprietor runs children's homes in West Sussex, East Sussex and Surrey. The head of education oversees education in the schools.
- The headteacher was appointed in November 2020, having previously been deputy headteacher at the school.
- The school last received a standard inspection in November 2019, when it was judged to require improvement.
- The school uses two alternative providers. One is a registered college group. The other is an unregistered provider. At this unregistered provider, members of staff from

the My Choice group attend with pupils. At both, pupils attend part time, spending the rest of their time at the school.

Information about this inspection

- This material change inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE as the school has applied to increase the number of pupils on roll from 17 to 25. This is the second inspection related to this application. The first inspection took place in September 2020, where it was found that the school was not likely to meet the independent school standards if the application were to be approved.
- Prior to arrival on site, the inspector scrutinised the school's website and documents, along with records sent electronically once the inspection was announced.
- The inspector toured the site with the headteacher and the head of education. She discussed the proposals and actions taken to meet the independent school standards. She also met with a member of the proprietor body, representing the chair of that body. She sampled a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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