

Avon Park School

St John's Avenue, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 5HR

Inspection date

5 May 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(a), 7(b) and 32(1)(c)

- The school has a robust safeguarding policy that is implemented effectively. This policy has regard to the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. It is published on the school's website.
- Safeguarding arrangements are strong because leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, and staff have a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe. They understand the potential risks that pupils face. Staff know what actions to take if they identify safeguarding concerns. They record concerns in a timely manner. Leaders are quick to act and follow up on concerns with appropriate external agencies.
- Leaders ensure that all staff are well trained and receive regular updates on safeguarding issues. Training includes areas such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism and e-safety. Induction procedures include safeguarding training and relevant information. Leaders ensure that there are sufficient safeguarding leads in place. They have already trained up an additional safeguarding lead who will be based at the new site. All safeguarding training for staff is up to date.
- The designated safeguarding lead works closely with pastoral staff and the leader responsible for personal, social and health education to ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes when working online and stranger danger.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to approve the implementation of the material change

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

- Leaders have a detailed and fully comprehensive health and safety policy. They work with specialist health and safety advisers from the proprietor body to ensure that all relevant checks are undertaken and that the premises are maintained to a high standard. This policy and practice are likely to ensure that pupils are kept safe and well at the new annexe.

- A detailed fire risk assessment for the proposed additional premises has been carried out. This assessment has taken account of the needs of the pupils. Leaders have drawn up evacuation procedures. A fire safety log book is in place detailing the testing, fire drills and equipment checks that are planned and when these will happen. A detailed site map shows the positions of fire call points, fire exits and assembly points. Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that the proposed school annexe is likely to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place. Leaders shared a range of risk assessments that have already been carried out, such as for transport to and from the school, classrooms and outdoor spaces. Leaders have a clear understanding of hazard identification and the implementation of control measures.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the implementation of the material change.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders have carefully considered the supervision of pupils and have set in place an appropriate staffing structure in readiness for an increase in capacity. They take account of the number of pupils on roll and pupils' individual needs to plan the level of supervision required to keep pupils safe. Staffing ratios are high to ensure that individual pupils should get the support they need.
- Staffing at the new site will include senior leaders, pastoral staff and an administrator, as well as teachers and teaching assistants. Some subject specialists will work across both school sites. The school has the staffing and experience to accept the proposed increase in pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the implementation of the material change.

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(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 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(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c) and 21(6)

- The single central record (SCR) is already in place. Leaders have already undertaken the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and young people on those already appointed. This includes those staff who will be based at the new site, including a deputy headteacher, several teachers and support staff.
- Leaders have carried out section 128 checks on all those in leadership roles, including trustees and governors. These are recorded on the SCR.
- Leaders follow the procedures laid down in their safer recruitment policy when recruiting staff. Leaders have extensive experience in recruiting staff. They

demonstrate a secure understanding of how to do this safely, including checking gaps in employment history and seeking at least two referees for each candidate.

- The school seldom uses supply teachers. However, leaders are aware of the procedures they should follow in the event of employing agency staff.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the implementation of the material change

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 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) and 28(2)(b)

- The school has secured additional premises in a location close to the main school site. The proposed annexe to the school is situated on a small industrial estate. Leaders propose to use this site to provide education for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Extensive remodelling work has taken place to completely transform the unit from a large, single space into rooms suitable for use as a school. There is ample space across the whole site providing various rooms of different sizes. Leaders are clear about how these will be used to meet pupils' needs in the most effective way.
- New classrooms, a science laboratory, an art room, a common room and a gym are being fitted out to a high standard. Accommodation throughout the building meets all the requirements for the health, safety and welfare of pupils. This includes suitable acoustics and lighting. Some rooms are carpeted, while others have hard flooring. All teaching rooms have a good source of natural light. There is ample and effective external and interior lighting.
- The site also includes an office and visitor, staff and pupil toilets. The visitor toilet also serves as an accessible toilet. There is a well-equipped main kitchen where leaders propose pupils will be involved in preparing food for those on site.
- Toilet facilities have running hot and cold hot water. Leaders propose to check the hot water regularly and keep a record of the temperature as they currently do on the main site. Shower facilities are plentiful and situated near the gym and outdoor physical education spaces.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 24(2)

- A room has been designated as a medical room. It will be fully fitted out with a bed and first-aid resources. It has running water, and it is near to a toilet facility. Different therapy rooms have also been created in order to meet the individual needs of pupils.

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

- The new site has sufficient space for pupils to socialise and play outside. A multi-use games area has been created, and there is a suitable grassed area for games and physical education activities.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the implementation of the material change.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- Leaders have given very careful thought to the proposed increase in capacity. The headteacher and proprietor demonstrate a measured approach to making these changes if agreed by the DfE. They have ensured that the independent school standards in scope for this inspection remain met. They are committed to providing high-quality education for each pupil and propose to increase capacity slowly over time. They are mindful that any increase in capacity does not have an adverse impact on the quality of education currently offered in the school.
- The school has the capacity to support the proposed change to numbers on roll.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.
- All of the independent school standards checked are likely to be met if the proposed material change is implemented.

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	140354
DfE registration number	937/6008
Inspection number	10218335

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	Witherslack Group Ltd
Chair	Jayne Carter
Headteacher	Mr Robert James
Annual fees (day pupils)	£63,375 to £90,030
Telephone number	01788 524448
Website	https://witherslackgroup.co.uk/avon-park-school/
Email address	avon-park@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	14 to 16 January 2020

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	71	110	110

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	71	110
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	71	110
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	71	110
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	71	110

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	18	25
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	5	7

Information about this school

- Avon Park School is an independent school that is part of the Witherslack Group.
- The school is registered to admit up to 70 pupils between the ages of 6 and 16. At the time of the inspection, there were 71 pupils on roll. This exemption was previously agreed with the Department for Education.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of complex learning difficulties, communication difficulties and challenging behaviours. A significant number of pupils have been diagnosed as having autism spectrum disorders. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The school was first registered in October 2013 and registered its first pupils in November 2013.

- The school's last standard inspection was in January 2020.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the DfE because the school requested to increase the total number of pupils it can admit from 70 to 110. This is the school's first material change inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and a representative from the proprietor body. She met with the school business manager and the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector toured the main school site and spoke to staff and pupils in classrooms.
- The inspector toured the proposed new annexe and met with the site manager and premises development officer from the proprietor group.
- The inspector scrutinised documents relating to welfare, health and safety.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding documents and the single central record of appointments to the school.
- At the time of the inspection, the proprietor group was carrying out an internal review as part of their usual quality assurance process.
- The inspector held a telephone call with a parent who had queried the presence of an Ofsted inspector and who had contacted the Ofsted helpdesk.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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