

Options Trent Acres School

Alrewas Road, Kings Bromley, Burton on Trent, Staffordshire DE13 7HR

Inspection date

4 May 2022

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are 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)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2)

- The proprietor and leaders are deeply committed to providing pupils with the support they need emotionally so that they are ready to learn. They offer this successfully at other schools within the company, so are well placed to offer similar provision at this school.
- Leaders have developed curriculum plans and schemes of work that are likely to meet the needs of pupils in key stage 1. Leaders have also integrated the school's wider curriculum offer into the plans, offering flexibility to meet the specific needs of pupils admitted to the school. There is awareness of the development needs of children in the early years foundation stage and links with the next stage of pupils' education as they enter key stage 2.
- 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. Leaders intend to adapt and modify the planned curriculum to meet the needs of younger pupils.
- 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. Pupils are encouraged to fulfil their potential and make informed choices about careers.
- Classes are given the names of trains, with 'junctions' providing additional support. This is central to the school's values in ensuring a 'smooth journey through their education at the school arriving safely at their next destination'.
- After having consulted with parents, the proprietor ensures that all pupils are provided with age-appropriate relationships and sex education.

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

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

- Well-planned and focused teaching is provided for pupils, based on their carefully assessed individual learning needs. Teachers spend time building positive working relationships with pupils, developing their self-esteem and self-confidence. The school aims to extend this practice to meet the needs of pupils in key stage 1. It ensures that teachers understand pupils', often complex, learning needs so that they can adapt their planning to meet those needs.
- Leaders demonstrate the necessary knowledge and expertise in how to support younger pupils and others who may be admitted to the school. An ongoing programme of professional development is provided for all staff. A skilled clinical team supports staff in providing a nurturing environment, underpinned by high aspirations, appropriate to pupils' ages and abilities.
- The school uses a comprehensive system of assessment, tailored to the needs of individual pupils. It enables teachers to assess pupils who may be working below their chronological age. Leaders are confident that it will help teachers working with additional pupils and with younger pupils to identify gaps in what pupils know, understand and can do.
- Leaders intend to appoint additional teachers and support staff, should the younger pupils be admitted, and the number on roll increases from 60 to 100. They also intend to appoint additional clinical staff to support the work of teachers.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material changes are implemented.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders have ensured that there is a suitable spiritual, moral, social and cultural policy and programme of work in place encouraging pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem, recognising that most pupils have missed periods of schooling and have considerable gaps in their learning.
- Supported by a team of clinicians, leaders monitor pupils' social and emotional development, as well as their academic progress and achievements. They actively encourage pupils to reflect on the impact of their actions on themselves and others. The school recognises that the increase in the number of pupils on roll will provide additional opportunities to socialise and to improve communication skills.
- Pupils, including the youngest, are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to understand how they can contribute to both the school and the wider community. They learn the difference between right and wrong and the curriculum promotes British values.
- The school precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject and while pupils take part in extra-curricular activities. A calendar of events and activities enables pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.

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

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school has a well-informed safeguarding and child protection policy in place. The policy is in line with current statutory guidance. It is published on the school's website and available to parents in hard copy should they request it.
- The proprietor has ensured that leaders are trained in safeguarding. There is a team of seven designated senior leaders, overseen by the deputy headteacher. Curriculum plans show that pupils learn about possible risks to themselves and others, and how to keep themselves safe.
- Records indicate that any safeguarding concerns are dealt with promptly. Leaders work with external agencies when necessary to support pupils and their families. Incidents are recorded securely and acted upon appropriately.

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

- Health and safety in the newly refurbished building has been thoroughly evaluated and safety requirements are fully met. Leaders undertake regular audits of all health and safety matters to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff.
- A full fire risk assessment of the refurbished building was carried out in March 2022, and the premises were identified as low risk. Any necessary actions identified by the assessment have been undertaken. Staff receive regular training in fire safety, with fire wardens identified and regular evacuation drills undertaken. All necessary checks on firefighting equipment, fire doors and emergency lighting are recorded and up to date.
- Information related to the deployment of staff and the supervision of pupils is in place and readily available to all staff. A teacher and teaching assistant are allocated to small groups of pupils, to ensure that learning and development needs are met. Supervision ratios are likely to be maintained at this high level should there be an increase in the number on roll, including pupils in key stage 1.
- There are immediate plans to increase the number of teachers and teaching assistants, with plans to recruit further staff as the capacity of the school grows.
- The school has a suitable risk assessment policy in place. The policy has been extended to include the refurbished building. Risk assessments for the existing school site identify suitable measures that have been put in place to ensure the safety of pupils and staff. Detailed guidance is provided for staff to complete risk assessments, such as those in place for individual pupils, off-site activities and use of the equestrian facilities and animal husbandry. It is likely that leaders will ensure that similar procedures are implemented in the additional building.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material changes are 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(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)(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), 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)

- The school has a thorough and detailed approach to the recruitment of staff to ensure that all appropriate checks are undertaken. All interview panels have a member who has completed safer recruitment training. Detailed pre-employment checks and rigorous checks of written references are undertaken before staff can begin working in the school.
- Because of the complex learning and development needs of pupils, the school rarely engages supply staff. When it does, all the appropriate checks are undertaken, including checks on information gathered and provided by supply staff agencies.
- The single central record contains all the required information about appointed staff. This includes, where necessary, checks relevant to members of staff who may have worked in other countries and those who hold a management position. The inspector confirmed the recorded details related to the proprietor. These are accurate and meet requirements.
- Checks ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and the suitability of staff. The proprietor ensures that all confidential information about staff is stored securely.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material changes are 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)

- The newly refurbished building provides two-storey accommodation in six classroom areas, a dining and kitchen area, sensory room, medical room, office, toilet areas (including an accessible toilet for disabled pupils), appropriate washing facilities and a large outdoor play area, with large play equipment. In addition, younger pupils and others admitted will have access to all the existing facilities of the school.
- There are separate individual toilets and suitable washing facilities for pupils. The number of toilets is likely to meet the needs of younger pupils and additional pupils. The toilet and wash area provided for disabled pupils can also be accessed by other pupils and staff.
- The medical room is well equipped and spacious with easy access to a toilet and washing facilities. It contains a bed, seating and first-aid kits.

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

- The proprietor has ensured that the existing premises are well decorated, furnished and maintained. The refurbished additional building is maintained to a similar standard. All the classrooms benefit from natural light through windows. There is adequate classroom space, to cater for a capacity of 100 pupils, including those in key stage 1. It is evident that pupils' welfare, health and safety are likely to be maintained if the material changes are implemented.

- The proprietor has ensured that lighting, heating and acoustics are suitable for all the activities that are likely to take place in the newly refurbished rooms and all the spaces throughout 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 access to drinking water. Taps, throughout the school, have clear signage to indicate where drinking water is provided. In addition, pupils are provided with bottled water. There are regular checks on the quality and safety of the water supply. There is safe access to warm water for pupils with no risk of scalding.

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

- Existing outdoor areas, including a large outdoor gym, are well maintained. An outdoor area, with a safe soft-landing surface, is provided adjacent to the refurbished building. These areas offer opportunities for physical education and enable pupils to play together during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Pupils also benefit from opportunities for horse-riding, animal husbandry and a relaxing and soothing reptile room for quiet reflection.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material changes are implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The leaders and the proprietor are knowledgeable and committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils admitted to the school. In planning and preparing to accommodate younger pupils, and in seeking to offer more places to pupils with specific and complex learning needs, they have demonstrated strong attention to detail. They have worked closely with other agencies to ensure that needs are met. Leaders ensure that the school consistently meets the independent school standards.
- The school has a clear management structure with well-defined roles which help to support rigorous and robust quality assurance. Leaders work closely with referrers to ensure there is a joint responsibility and detailed focus on meeting the needs of pupils. Leaders' checking of the standards is part of their regular monitoring, evaluation and review cycle, seeking continual improvement.
- The proprietor has a strong record in successfully managing several schools. Leaders put pupils' welfare, health and safety first and demonstrate a strong commitment to helping pupils achieve as well as is possible. This is likely to be the case should younger and additional pupils be admitted.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material changes are implemented.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. For example, inspection evidence shows that leaders have carefully considered how the refurbished building will be made accessible to all pupils.

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	131004
DfE registration number	860/6029
Inspection number	10237591

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	Outcomes First Group
Chair	Graham Norris
Headteacher	Melanie Callaghan-Lewis
Annual fees (day pupils)	Band A: £53,410 Band B: £66,770 Band C: £80,140
Telephone number	01543473772
Website	www.optionsautism.co.uk/school_home/options-trent-acres/
Email address	melanie.callaghan-lewis@optionsautism-ld.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	16 to 18 October 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	8 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	58	100	100

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	58	100
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	58	100
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	58	100
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	58	100

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	17	24
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	20	27

Information about this school

- Options Trent Acres is a special independent day school located in the rural village of Kings Bromley, Staffordshire. It is part of the Outcomes First group of schools.
- The school is housed in refurbished former farm buildings with access through security gates. The premises consist of several buildings with well-appointed classrooms, a science laboratory, an art room, a dance studio, a reptile room, a medical room, an independent living (room) space and toilets. There is an outdoor gym and extensive grounds, including equestrian facilities, gardens and an animal husbandry area.
- The school caters for the specific needs of pupils, including those with autism spectrum disorder, complex needs and learning difficulties. Pupils have had negative

experiences in previous placements, and many have missed considerable time from schooling. Pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities.

- The school does not use alternative provision and does not have a religious character.
- The school's last full inspection was in October 2018 when its overall effectiveness was judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to an application by the school for an increase in the number of pupils the school can admit, from 60 to 86, and a change in the age range, from eight to 18 years to five to 18 years. The inspection focused on whether the school's capacity would be likely to meet some of the welfare, health and safety standards in part 3 and the standards in part 5, premises and accommodation.
- The inspection also focused on whether the school's proposed education for pupils in key stage 1 would be likely to meet the standards in part 1, the quality of education provided, part 2, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, part 3, the welfare, health and safety of pupils, part 4, the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietor and part 5.
- The school has recently refurbished an additional building, in the grounds, to accommodate key stage 1 and primary age pupils. The proposed movement of older primary-age pupils to the refurbished area will free some of the existing accommodation, enabling additional pupils to be admitted. The school is inundated with requests for places, from local authorities, wishing to meet the needs of pupils with complex learning needs. During the inspection, leaders requested that the capacity be increased from that requested to 100. This was considered as part of the inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher (secondary) and assistant headteacher (primary). A tour of the existing site was conducted with the headteacher, and a tour of the newly refurbished primary building was undertaken with the assistant headteacher (primary).
- 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. In addition to existing curriculum plans, the inspector reviewed the school's schemes of work and plans for children to be admitted into key stage 1.
- The inspector examined the school's record of safeguarding checks made on staff and pupils' safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Mike Onyon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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