

Ripplevale School

Chapel Lane, Ripple, Deal, Kent CT14 8JG

Inspection date

19 July 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 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7(a)–(b), 11, 12, 14 and 16

- Leaders pay acute attention to pupils' safety and welfare. They have established a comprehensive range of health and safety policies in Ripplevale School, all of which are published on the school's website. A suite of carefully considered policies and detailed risk assessments have been adapted or developed specifically for use at the new Ripplevale primary site in Broadstairs.
- The school actively promotes pupils' welfare. The school aims to provide 'a caring learning environment where students make meaningful progress...and become confident, independent and aspiring young people'. A team of staff, including counsellors and therapists, with responsibility for pupils' well-being play a key role in the school's work. Leaders intend to apply the same approach at the proposed primary site.
- Health, safety and well-being issues are currently taught effectively as an integral part of Ripplevale School's curriculum. Pupils' views are valued. For example, leaders survey pupils about their experiences regularly and make changes to policies and practice as a result. Examples of this include responses to pupils' views about bullying and the bespoke design of outdoor spaces. Leaders intend to use a similar approach in both schools if the proposed material changes are agreed.
- A range of therapies, including counselling, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy, are currently provided at Ripplevale. Leaders intend to provide a similar range of therapies for primary-aged pupils at the Broadstairs site. Welcoming spaces and resources are ready.
- Leaders ensure that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures and are vigilant about pupils' well-being. Robust procedures are in place to record and monitor any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs are highly knowledgeable and qualified in safeguarding matters. The safeguarding policy meets statutory requirements and is published on the school's website. Training records

demonstrate extensive staff training in relation to child protection and wider aspects of safeguarding.

- The school's health and safety policy is fit for purpose and provides a secure framework for staff. Both school sites are maintained to a high standard so that pupils can learn, play and socialise safely. Extensive improvements have been made to the proposed primary site to ensure pupils' safety. Examples include the removal of single glazed panels, the boxing in of hot pipes and the installation of door finger guards.
- Leaders give fire safety a high priority and a new fire detection system has been fitted at the primary site. Fire extinguishers (at both sites) have been checked and serviced properly. They are positioned in key locations throughout the building. Fire signage provides clear indication of procedures and exits. The school's induction programme for new staff includes fire safety training.
- Current staffing arrangements, including high staff-to-pupil ratios, are likely to ensure that pupils are supervised properly should the material changes be agreed.
- The school's written risk assessment policy provides clear guidance for leaders and staff. Potential risks are identified, managed and mitigated effectively. The current comprehensive suite of risk assessments, including for individual pupils, for classrooms, playgrounds, ball games and taxi drop-offs and pick-ups, support the school's work well. This is also likely to be the case if the proposed material changes are agreed.
- The school is likely to meet the part of the independent school standards if the proposed material changes are agreed.

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

Paragraphs 17–18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3)(b), 21(6)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders, including those who work in school and members of the proprietor body, are knowledgeable about requirements for the completion of suitability checks on staff and those responsible for governance. Leaders are well-qualified in safe recruitment procedures and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the requirements of Part 4 of the independent school standards.
- Staff recruitment and suitability checks are completed in a timely manner and rigorous systems exist for obtaining and recording receipt of references. The single central record complied fully with statutory requirements at the time of the inspection.
- The school is likely to meet the part of the independent school standards if the proposed material changes are agreed.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- Ripplevale School is an established and successful school. It occupies an extensive and attractive site, located in a rural part of Kent. The school comprises a large period building, as well as a number of other buildings containing classrooms, science laboratories, food technology, construction and physical education facilities.
- The proposed Ripplevale Primary School site is situated approximately 16 miles away in the coastal town of Broadstairs. The Broadstairs site was formerly an independent

primary school and nursery. It has been renovated to bring it to its current state of readiness. Both schools provide suitable accommodation for girls, as well as boys.

- The Broadstairs site has been refurbished to a high standard. There is plentiful space both indoors and outside. Classrooms and teaching areas are inviting, light, airy and well ventilated. A number of classrooms are currently designated for special use, such as art, music and therapies. Outside there is ample play space, including shelters, playground markings for games, an astro-turf area and a nature, gardening and forest school area. There is ample room to accommodate the proposed increase in the number of pupils.
- Toilets, changing and shower facilities for girls and boys are appropriate at both sites. The hot water temperature is regulated so as not to pose a scalding risk. Drinking water is labelled and is freely available for pupils.
- Medical rooms at both sites are suitable for purpose. They include handwashing facilities with toilets located nearby.
- The school is likely to meet the part of the independent school standards if the proposed material changes are agreed.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(2)

- Leaders have a strong track record in special education leadership. Ripplevale School is a successful school, providing effective provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders intend to bring the same high-quality provision to Ripplevale Broadstairs Primary School.
- The proprietor body has established robust procedures to check and monitor the quality of Ripplevale School's work and to hold school leaders to account. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the independent school standards. They review their own compliance regularly. In addition, leaders are aspirational for Ripplevale School to continue improving, they intend to provide an outstanding quality of education and care to pupils. This ambition is consistently reflected in leaders' assertions and is evidenced by school improvement planning and evaluation documentation.
- The school is likely to meet the part of the independent school standards if the proposed material changes are agreed.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have an equality policy and a helpful accessibility plan. Both meet the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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	118995
DfE registration number	886/6047
Inspection number	10237772

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	Cavendish Education
Chair	Simon Coles
Headteacher	Jane Norris
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,350 to £52,793
Telephone number	01304 373866
Website	www.ripplevaleschool.co.uk
Email address	info@ripplevaleschool.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	11 to 13 February 2020

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	135	200	200

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	135	200
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	135	200
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	135	200
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	134	200

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	27.2	36
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	47.5	63

Information about this school

- Ripplevale School is for pupils who have an autism spectrum disorder. Some pupils also have other special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Almost all pupils are funded by their local authorities.
- Since the last full inspection, there has been a change of proprietor. The school was purchased by Cavendish Education in January 2021. Ripplevale is one of eleven schools owned by Cavendish Education.
- The last standard inspection took place in February 2020, when the school was graded good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited the existing school site in Ripple and subsequently the proposed primary site in Broadstairs.
- The relevant standards relating to an increase in pupil numbers were checked, initially at the expansive Ripplevale site. Should the Broadstairs primary site not have been completed, the school would have amended their material change request for a change in pupil numbers at the Ripplevale School site in Ripple, Deal. The inspector concluded that the school would have been likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes were implemented at the Ripplevale School (Ripple, Deal). However, the refurbishments at the Broadstairs site were completed and so the material change request was considered in the light of the addition of this facility.
- Meetings were held in person with the headteacher and members of the school leadership team. A meeting was held with a representative of Cavendish Education via Teams and a further conversation was held by phone.
- The school's website and a wide range of documentary evidence were scrutinised, including the school's safeguarding policy, health and safety policies and risk assessments. The school's single central record was checked and the school's systems for recruitment reviewed.

Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, HMI, lead inspector

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