

The Amicus School

The Coach House, Arundel Road, Fontwell, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 0SX

Inspection date

7 September 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 7–7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- Attention to pupils' safety and welfare lies at the heart of the school's work. Leaders take pupils' safety very seriously. They respond quickly and appropriately wherever a concern about a pupil's well-being arises.
- Leaders work constructively with parents and agencies, such as children's services and the local authority designated officer, to ensure pupils' safety. They meet regularly with staff and agencies to discuss individual pupils' needs.
- Leaders provide a range of safeguarding training for all staff. This is supplemented by regular discussions about specific aspects of safeguarding to check and deepen staff's knowledge.
- Safeguarding records provide detailed information about concerns raised and follow-up actions taken. The designated safeguarding lead and the safeguarding team monitor records carefully, identifying any patterns of concern and taking carefully considered action wherever necessary.
- Leaders have completed safer recruitment training. They make sure that appropriate procedures are followed when appointing new members of staff. Staff's induction training includes a strong focus on safeguarding and consideration of pupils' individual needs.
- The proprietor has updated the school's safeguarding policy in line with the current statutory guidance. The policy is published on the school's website.
- The proprietor makes sure that the site is well maintained. Regular checks of the school's site ensure that it is safe. Clear and well-supervised routines ensure pupils' safety at the start and end of the school day.

Paragraphs 11, 14, 16–16(b)

- Leaders pay close attention to staff's and pupils' safety and well-being. The school's health and safety policy provides a secure framework for the workplace.

- Leaders complete suitable risk assessments to support the school's work, including fire safety, arrangements for the start and end of the school day and use of the school's woodland area. Comprehensive and detailed risk assessments are also used to support individual pupils.
- Increased staffing levels over the past year will ensure that appropriate staffing ratios will be maintained if the proposed increase in capacity is agreed.

Paragraph 12

- Leaders take fire safety very seriously. The proprietor commissions an annual external audit of fire safety arrangements to make sure that everything is in order. Any aspects requiring attention are quickly addressed. All fire equipment is serviced and maintained properly. Fire arrangements are clearly identified and fire equipment is suitably located throughout the school.
- The school is likely to meet the requirements in this part of the independent school standards (the standards) if the material change is agreed.

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

Paragraphs 17–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19–19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and about the requirements of part 4. They have made sure that safeguarding policies and procedures comply with statutory guidance.
- Leaders are well qualified in safer recruitment practices. They follow robust recruitment procedures when appointing new staff. Records are well maintained and stored securely.
- The single central record complies fully with statutory requirements. The school does not use supply staff.
- The school is likely to meet the requirements in this part of the standards if the material change is agreed.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The proprietor has acquired additional premises to facilitate the proposed increase in the school's capacity. The new premises are located next door to the current premises. They have been adapted, refurbished and finished to a high standard, and will provide suitable accommodation for an increase in pupils, should the school's proposal be approved.
- The recently acquired premises provide a range of additional rooms which will be used for activities such as therapy sessions and meetings, as well as office space and a community meeting room.
- The school's new dining hall is bright and airy, with a commercial kitchen installed to provide meals for staff and pupils. A water fountain has been installed to provide drinking water during lunchtimes. Pupils also have their own water bottles, which are refilled as required.

- Outdoor areas provide pupils with plenty of space to relax, play and socialise in a peaceful and quiet setting. The school's attractive gardens are divided into different areas for a range of purposes, including mature gardens, a hard-surfaced area for games, a large sand pit and communal spaces. Areas are well maintained.
- All outside areas are securely fenced and gated. The main school drive leads onto a busy road. The proprietor has installed a substantial gate which prevents anyone from entering or leaving the premises without staff's supervision.
- The school's medical room is suitably equipped, including a bed, a locked fridge for medication and first-aid kits. A toilet and sink are located next door.
- The school is likely to meet the requirements in this part of the standards if the material change is agreed.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(2)

- Leaders are very knowledgeable about educating pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have considered the proposed material change carefully and thoughtfully. Pupils' needs have been central to their considerations.
- The school's advisory board provides a range of skills and expertise, including in education. Members of the board provide support and challenge for school leaders. They ask pertinent questions about the school's work to monitor its effectiveness. Safeguarding considerations are always central to these discussions.
- The school is likely to meet the requirements in this part of the standards if the material change is agreed.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor is committed to ensuring that all pupils have access to a high-quality education. The school's accessibility plan reflects leaders' consideration of pupils' needs and the reasonable adaptations made to accommodate these.

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	131504
DfE registration number	938/6265
Inspection number	10249666

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	Rebecca Newton
Headteacher	Leeha Watney
Annual fees (day pupils)	£101,400
Telephone number	01243 544 107
Website	www.theamicuscommunity.com
Email address	info@theamicuscommunity.com
Date of previous standard inspection	8 to 10 May 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 16	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	18	28	28

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	18	28

Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	18	28
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	18	28
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	18	28

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	16	16
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this school

- The Amicus School is an independent special school. It caters for pupils who have complex social, emotional and/or mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. They have suffered significant trauma in their early family life. Pupils are referred to the school by local authorities.
- The school has an advisory board which fulfils a governance role. The proprietor is the strategic and clinical director of The Amicus Community, an independent children's therapeutic community accredited by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. The core aim of the proprietor is to provide an education programme that is integrated with a 24-hour therapeutic care plan.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to the school's request to increase the number of pupils on roll from 18 to 28 pupils. This was the first material change inspection in respect of this proposed material change.
- During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, the proprietor and a member of the advisory board, as well as other members of staff. I also reviewed the school's website, toured the school site and considered a range of documentation.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022