

The Shires at Oakham

3 Uppingham Road, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6JB

Inspection date

5 October 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), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- Leaders prioritise pupils' safety. They know the pupils well. They are sensitive to how pupils' additional needs may make them vulnerable. Leaders ensure that pupils receive support to help them keep safe, including support from external agencies.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know that keeping pupils safe is everyone's responsibility. Staff are aware of the signs that may indicate a concern about pupils' welfare. They know to report any such concerns to safeguarding leaders. Staff know that they themselves can refer concerns to external agencies.
- Daily morning meetings enable staff to receive updates regarding pupils' welfare, including any issues that may have arisen the previous evening. This helps staff to plan how best to support the pupils during the day.
- Staff review pupils' behaviours and welfare at daily end-of-day meetings. Senior leaders use this information to plan any further support that pupils may require.
- Senior leaders work closely with members of the school's clinical team to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. This helps leaders to make sure that the support teaching staff provide is in line with any therapy that pupils are receiving.
- Senior leaders maintain regular contact with parents and carers, as well as staff in the children's homes in which pupils may reside. This allows leaders to maintain a comprehensive oversight of pupils' welfare and share any concerns with parents quickly.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They say that they have adults they can speak to if they have a worry. They are confident that staff will listen to them and support them.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn about healthy relationships, for example, and about how to stay safe when online.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school website. It reflects the latest national guidance.

Paragraphs 11, 12

- Comprehensive health and safety and fire safety policies are in place.
- Leaders ensure that professionals external to the school regularly check the school's health and safety and fire safety arrangements. Leaders are quick to resolve any concerns that these checks may identify.
- Leaders regularly undertake their own fire safety checks. They hold regular fire drills. Leaders ensure that all pupils know what to do in the event of a real fire.

Paragraph 14

- There is a sufficient number of staff to provide appropriate supervision of pupils.
- Leaders have plans to recruit more staff to ensure sufficient levels of supervision for the proposed increase in the number of pupils on roll.
- Leaders have recently recruited an additional senior leader to provide further capacity to manage the day-to-day running of the school.

Paragraph 16

- A comprehensive risk assessment policy is in place. It provides clear guidance as to what constitutes risk and how to calculate the likelihood and severity of any risk. The policy informs staff how they can mitigate any identified risk.
- Every pupil has an individual risk assessment. These detailed documents identify any risky behaviours that pupils may present with, as well as appropriate actions that staff should take to manage and reduce these risks.
- Leaders regularly review pupils' individual risk assessments, including whenever pupils demonstrate new, risky behaviours. This ensures that leaders are able to inform staff, in a timely manner, of any new strategies they should adopt to support pupils to help keep them safe.
- There are appropriate risk assessments in place in relation to the school site, including the outdoor equipment which is available for pupils to use.
- There is a rigorous procedure in place to assess risk when taking pupils out of school, including for educational visits. Staff risk-assess the place they intend to visit as well as the journey that the pupils will undertake. Staff also take into account pupils' individual risk assessments and their behaviour support plans, both when planning and undertaking the trip. Senior leaders closely monitor this process, to assure themselves that pupils are kept safe and that staff fully consider pupils' additional needs when taking them off the school site.
- The school is likely to continue to meet the independent school standards checked in this part if the school receives approval for 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), 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)

- Senior leaders understand the recruitment checks that they must undertake before any new member of staff begins to work at the school.
- All checks are completed before any new member of staff takes up their post.
- Senior leaders record all the checks on the single central record.
- The school is likely to continue to meet the independent school standards in this part if the school receives approval for the implementation of the material change.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 28(1), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(d)

- There are appropriate toilets and washing facilities available for the sole use of pupils.
- There is a suitable shower facility for pupils to use, should they so wish.
- The water supply to the shower and toilet facilities is suitable. The hot water does not pose a scalding risk to pupils.

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

- There is a suitable medical room available in the main building. The room, which is used solely for the purposes of providing medical care, is located near a toilet.

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

- The classrooms are suitable for the teaching of pupils in groups of four.
- The acoustics and lighting in each room are suitable.
- The premises are in an appropriate state of repair.
- The external lighting is appropriate.

Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- There is drinking water available to pupils, which is accessible at all times. The drinking water is marked as such. There are also signs to indicate taps that are not suitable as sources of drinking water.

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

- There are suitable outdoor facilities that pupils can use during social time and for physical education. The outdoor area has a range of equipment that pupils can use for the purposes of relaxation, self-regulation and exercise.
- The school is likely to continue to meet the independent school standards in this part if the school receives approval for 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), 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has ensured that senior leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the independent school standards.
- Leaders have acted to ensure that the school is likely to continue to meet the standards that were checked during this inspection if the material change is approved.
- The proprietor understands their statutory duties in relation to keeping pupils safe. They undertake regular checks to ensure that leaders are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities. The school's procedures to keep pupils safe are robust. Leaders have ensured that all staff know their safeguarding responsibilities, including understanding what to do if they have a concern about pupils' welfare.
- The school is likely to continue to meet the independent school standards in this part if the school receives approval for the implementation of the material change.

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	142635
DfE registration number	857/6006
Inspection number	10254120

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	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Charlotte Van Niekerk (Head of service) Jamie Hill (Head of education)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£76,500
Telephone number	01572 720357
Website	theshires.org.uk/shires-oakham
Email address	peter.ramsey@theshires.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	8 to 10 March 2022

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 19	11 to 19	11 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	11	30	30

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	11	30
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	11	30
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	11	30
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	11	30

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	3	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	0

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and severe or moderate learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is registered to provide education for up to 12 pupils. There are currently 11 pupils on roll.
- Pupils who are above compulsory school age pursue a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs, including preparing them for adulthood.

- Some pupils live in accommodation that is provided by the school's proprietor, located off site.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 8 to 10 March 2022.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, to check the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the proposed change to increase to 30 the maximum number of pupils that the school is permitted to have on roll.
- This was the school's first material change inspection for this proposed change.
- The Department for Education commissioned the inspector to inspect the suitability of the school's provision in relation to: policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment; supervision of pupils; recruitment of staff; the suitability of the premises and accommodation; and the quality of leadership and management.
- The inspector met with the head of service, the headteacher, a senior leader and some staff.
- The inspector met with some pupils and with a parent. He undertook a tour of the school site.
- The inspector considered school documentation in relation to safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment. He looked at the school's single central record and the system for undertaking checks on new staff.

Inspection team

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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