

The Chalfonts Independent Grammar School

19 London Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 11BJ

Inspection date

20 October 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)–4

- Leaders have updated the curriculum policy to include information about the proposed curriculum for pupils aged three to 11. The school has planned a broad curriculum which links closely to the early years foundation stage (EYFS) and the national curriculum. There are appropriate long-term, medium-term and some short-term plans in place for pupils' learning. These show that the school intends for pupils to build their knowledge across a range of subjects, over time, so that they are ready to undertake the 'middle years programme' of learning in the school's secondary phase, or key stage 3 learning if they choose to go to another school at age 11.
- The curriculum aims to give pupils experience of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. The proprietor intends for all pupils to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils will be taught phonics from the age of four, using a structured phonics programme. Leaders intend for pupils to practise phonics using books that match the sounds they know. There will be specialist teachers for some subjects such as music and French. Class teachers will teach other subjects. Primarily, foundation subjects will be taught through topics.
- Personal, social, health, citizenship and economic (PSHCE) education forms a core part of the curriculum. Pupils will learn about the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. The school promotes fundamental British values as part of the curriculum and ethos of the school. Pupils learn about different religions through religious education (RE). Impartial careers advice is provided primarily to pupils of secondary age. Pupils at primary age will be introduced to careers through visiting speakers and assemblies.
- The PSHCE curriculum includes plans for age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE). This is supported by an RSE policy. Leaders intend to consult parents on the content of this curriculum before it is taught.

- The school employs qualified teachers to teach pupils. Leaders intend that the teachers in the EYFS and primary phases, known as 'pre-prep' and 'prep', will have experience of teaching pupils aged three to 11. Teachers will be encouraged to plan learning using a range of good-quality resources. Leaders have purchased published schemes to provide a basis for the planned curriculum. These schemes include assessment models that leaders intend to use to check how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum.
- A qualified special educational needs coordinator will ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early. She will support teachers in making sure that pupils' additional needs are met, including that teachers adapt learning to allow pupils to achieve.
- The proprietor intends that the head of the primary phase will monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the primary phase. Support and training will be provided for teachers to make sure that they have the knowledge they need to teach the curriculum. Staff meetings will be used to allow staff to share ideas about how best to teach.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in this part if the material changes are implemented.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- The school's intentions to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are included as part of the curriculum policy. The school's ambition is to equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and confidence that will prepare them for life in an ever-changing world. The PSHCE curriculum and associated assemblies and other activities will support this ambition and prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders intend that pupils' moral understanding and their knowledge of democracy will be developed through the school's behaviour policy and by activities such as voting for school leaders, including 'house captains'.
- Pupils will learn about the rule of law through following the school rules. The PSHCE curriculum includes teaching about the rules that adults follow in life.
- The RE curriculum will promote mutual respect and tolerance, as well as developing pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding through learning about the different beliefs and religious customs of people around the world and in Britain.
- There is no indication that leaders intend to undermine fundamental British values.
- Leaders intend that pupils' social skills, self-esteem, self-knowledge and confidence will be promoted through extra-curricular trips and activities. They intend for pupils to go skiing, attend the theatre and visit local places of interest.
- The PSHE curriculum and assemblies will help pupils to learn about public institutions and the people who help us.

- Leaders have plans to check the intended content of information shared by visiting speakers, and to step in to stop assemblies should partisan political views be promoted. Any political issues will be discussed in a balanced way.
- It is likely that the standard in this part will be met if the material changes are implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The safeguarding policy is compliant with current statutory guidance and is published on the school's websites. Staff understand the importance of keeping children safe. They undertake training in safeguarding at induction and at subsequent annual update sessions. More regular discussions about safeguarding are intended as part of staff meetings.
- The headteacher of the main school is the lead designated safeguarding lead. He is supported by some deputy designated safeguarding leads. These have been trained to the appropriate level via an online course. The safeguarding leads displayed appropriate knowledge of how to report concerns to external agencies.
- The current system for recording concerns in the primary phase is not well established. The proprietor intends to train adults working in the primary phase to use the electronic systems already in place in the secondary phase. The use of these systems in the secondary phase is well established and effective.
- Leaders have considered the potential safeguarding issues for the school if they admit younger pupils. By having the oldest and youngest pupils on separate sites, pupils of vastly different ages will rarely come into contact with each other. Adults have been trained in recognising safeguarding concerns in children who may not be able to communicate their needs and worries.

Paragraph 9–10

- There is a written behaviour policy which focuses on positive behaviour and rewards. It sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour. Leaders intend for records of pupils' misbehaviour to be kept using an electronic system. They intend that this system will be used to spot and respond to any patterns of concern.
- There is an anti-bullying policy and a clear anti-bullying strategy. Leaders intend that being kind to others of different faiths, backgrounds and cultures will be an embedded part of the school's ethos and will be taught explicitly through the PSHCE programme.

Paragraph 11–15

- There is a health and safety policy in place, supported by appropriate plans, risk assessments and building checks. For example, all the buildings have been checked for gas, water, electrical, asbestos and legionella safety, and the relevant certification is in place. There is a health and safety risk assessment in place which is understood by the proprietor.
- All three sites have been checked for fire safety in line with the regulations. Each site has appropriate precautions in place, including extinguishers, fire doors and alarms.

One area is awaiting emergency lighting. This is well lit and additional flashlights are in place to act as a temporary measure until the emergency lighting is fitted. Evacuation procedures are in place and have been tested.

- Leaders intend to increase the staffing levels as they take on more pupils. Their intention is to adhere to the recommended ratios for children in the early years, with a maximum class size of 20 for pupils in the primary phase. Pupils will be well supervised during lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Staff have been trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid. Leaders keep first-aid equipment, appropriately stored, on each site. First-aid packs accompany pupils on trips and visits.
- Leaders intend to keep records of admissions and attendance in the same way as they do in the current secondary school. Leaders keep multiple contact details for families so that they can quickly check the whereabouts of any absent pupils.

Paragraph 16

- The risk assessment policy is part of the health and safety policy. It sets out the circumstances in which risk assessments should be carried out. Risk assessments for the safe use of the school sites are in place. A range of generic risk assessments for trips, visits and activities are in place ready to be adapted for specific use.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are implemented.

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

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)–21(3)(b), 21(5)–21(6)

- The proprietor has ensured that all the required checks are made on staff before they begin working in the school. The single central record records these checks, along with further checks on members of the proprietorial body, contractors, visitors and supply staff. It is well maintained.
- The school is likely to meet all relevant aspects of this part of the independent school standards if the material changes are implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2)–29(1)(b)

- There is ample space across the three sites to accommodate the increase in numbers and age range of pupils. All sites have secure boundaries and systems in place to allow pupils to enter and exit safely. Leaders intend for pupils to be escorted between sites for assemblies, to eat lunch and to use the science facilities. Each site is well maintained and tidy.
- Leaders intend for the original school building to house the youngest children. This site currently has four classes over three floors, each set out and equipped to allow children aged three to seven to learn. An outdoor space is set up for children to play outside. There are separate computing, library and arts spaces where children can

carry out practical activities. Some classrooms on this site are small in size and are unlikely to be comfortable and effective places to learn if more than 15 children are in them at any one time.

- The second site, known as Discovery, is large enough to house the intended age range and numbers of pupils aged eight to 11. There are four large classes, a dinner hall and playground on this site.
- The third site, known as Maple, is set up for pupils aged 11 to 18. There are 12 classrooms with science, art and music rooms. There is a big central space for group learning and several smaller spaces for tutorials and quiet working. Outside areas are well maintained, with tables set out for pupils to use for eating and socialising.
- Each site has suitable toilets and washing facilities in place for the number of pupils intended to be on each site. There is a shower on one site, but leaders intend for pupils to use the changing and washing facilities of a local sports facility when doing physical education. Water is of an acceptable temperature and labelled where very hot. Leaders intend for pupils to use bottles for water, which can be filled up at each site.
- There are two spaces set aside for the short-term use of pupils who are unwell. These spaces contain a fold-out bed and a sink and are close to a toilet.
- It is likely that the standards in this part will be met if the material changes are implemented.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- The proprietor has employed staff with experience of teaching children from the age of three. Staff understand the learning and development requirements of children. They intend to prioritise communication and language through telling stories and repeating rhymes. Children will learn through playing initially, with a focus on early literacy and numeracy.
- Leaders understand the additional safeguarding and welfare requirements for this age group. They have appropriate changing facilities should children need them. Staff have been trained in paediatric first aid. Staff are trained to understand the signs that might indicate a child is at risk.

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	142069
DfE registration number	825/6044
Inspection number	10258958

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	Independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Alpha Schools Ltd
Chair	Ali Khan
Headteacher	David Shandley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,000 to £19,485
Telephone number	01494 875502 and 01494 978000
Website	www.thechalfontsgrammar.co.uk and www.wycombeprep.co.uk
Email address	info@thechalfontsgrammar.co.uk and office@wycombeprep.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	10 to 12 March 2020

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18	3 to 18	3 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	135	380	380

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Not applicable

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	128	380
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	15	30
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	0
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	0

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	17	58
Number of part-time teaching staff	21	21
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this school

- The school is an independent school that is registered to provide education for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years. The proprietorial body has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) for a material change to include boys and girls aged three to 18 years. This material change has already been implemented. Consequently, the school is operating beyond its registration agreement with the DfE because it has admitted pupils below the registered age range.
- The proprietorial body also applied to increase the number of pupils that the school is able to accept to 380. This material change has not been implemented.
- Since Ofsted last inspected the school, the proprietorial body has acquired new school buildings. All buildings are registered as having the same address.
- The original school building, which is the school's registered office, is now intended for pupils aged three to seven.

- The second new building, known as Discovery, was previously a fire station and has been reconfigured to be a school. This is on a separate site to the original school building. It is intended for pupils aged eight to 11 and also houses the lunch facilities for all of the school's pupils.
- The third new building, known as Maple, was previously an office complex and has been reconfigured to be a school. This is on another, separate site. It is intended for pupils aged 11 to 18.
- The proprietor intends for the provision for pupils aged three to 11 to be known locally as 'Wycombe Preparatory School', although it will be part of The Chalfonts Independent Grammar School registration. This provision has a different website, email address and phone number to the registered school's main website, email address and phone number. The contact address is the same for all age ranges.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place on 10 to 12 March 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school does not have sufficient changing and shower facilities on site. It uses the facilities of a local sports club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE after the proprietorial body applied for a material change to increase the age range of pupils at the school from 11 to 18 to three to 18. The proprietorial body also applied to increase the maximum number of pupils from 120 to 380.
- The purpose of the inspection was to check whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the requested material changes are approved.
- At the time of the inspection, there were pupils aged 3 to 11 in the school because the school has already implemented this material change.
- The inspector conducted an on-site visit to meet leaders and staff and to visit the school's education accommodation. The inspector spoke to the chair of the proprietorial body, the head of the primary school, two deputy designated safeguarding leads and some other staff.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including policies and records relating to the welfare, health and safety of students and staff.
- The inspector checked the school's single central record and the school's arrangements to recruit staff.
- The inspector had a tour of the three locations where the school is situated, speaking to pupils informally on each site.
- This was the first material change inspection relating to the particular changes the school has applied to make.

Inspection team

Catherine Old

His Majesty's Inspector

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