

Hopespring Sunderland

10 Sea View Road West, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 9HA

Inspection date

30 November 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

Paragraph 7, 7(a)–7(b)

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. This is, in part, due to the well-considered actions of leaders and staff. All adults in the school know pupils extremely well. In this way, pupils receive the care, support and guidance they require to do well and to stay safe.
- Leaders have created, and review regularly, appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies. The policies highlight leaders' strong understanding of how to keep pupils safe and the increased vulnerabilities of the pupils attending the school.
- Leaders have ensured that the new premises, situated at Bell Street SR4 6JR, are fit for purpose. A significant amount of work has been completed to repurpose the premises from a nursery school that was in a significant state of disrepair to a new school site that is free from debris and damage. Pupils' safety and welfare continue to be a high priority for leaders and the proprietor.
- All staff complete safeguarding training to the same level as the designated safeguarding lead in the school. Leaders ensure that there are enough staff with appropriate training working at each site.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are reinforced significantly by pupils' involvement in therapeutic support and guidance. Leaders and staff understand pupils' needs and concerns in detail. Pupils feel able to speak freely. As a consequence, and when appropriate, leaders initiate bespoke interventions or call on expert medical professionals to ensure that pupils at risk are supported effectively.
- The proprietor intends to make additional staffing appointments should the material change be implemented. New staff will receive carefully planned induction and shadow more experienced colleagues to ensure that they understand the school's safeguarding arrangements in full.

Paragraph 11

- Leaders have in place an appropriate health and safety policy that is reviewed on an annual basis. The policy covers all statutory requirements and is implemented effectively.

Paragraph 12

- Leaders and the proprietor have considered in detail their responsibilities with regard to fire safety at the new site. Leaders have sought advice from staff at the fire service to ensure that the new site is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. There is a wide range of measures to reduce the risk and spread of fire on the premises. Fire escapes and fire doors are in place and work as they should. Machinery and hazardous substances are stored appropriately to minimise the risk of fire.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders have thought carefully about how to keep a watchful eye over pupils at the new site. There are enough staff currently to ensure that all pupils are supervised appropriately in lessons and during social times. Appropriate consideration has been given to ensure that staff have the skills and understanding to be able to supervise and support the pupils attending the school. Significant consideration has been given to the steps leaders and staff would take should a pupil abscond from the school.

Paragraph 16, 16(a)–(b)

- The school has a written risk assessment policy. This is supplemented by risk assessments for each pupil, highlighting their particular vulnerabilities. The policies and procedures relating to risk highlight that leaders and staff understand the local area well. Indeed, the executive headteacher has spoken with headteachers from schools near to the new site to understand better the specific risks that pupils may face should they leave the school site for lunch or other activities.
- All risk assessments are shared regularly with staff and reviewed often by leaders to ensure that the assigned actions to mitigate risks continue to do so.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

Paragraph 18(2)–18(3)

- Leaders complete thorough pre-employment checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work at the school. This includes an in-depth review of previous employment. On occasion, and when necessary, leaders speak to previous employers to ensure that staff who want to work at the school have the necessary skills and understanding of safeguarding to work with vulnerable pupils. The established procedures will continue to be used should the material change be implemented, and additional staff be appointed.

Paragraph 19(2)–19(3)

- Pupils attending Hopespring Sunderland benefit from stable staffing and support from adults they know and trust. Consequently, leaders do not employ supply staff. However, in discussion, leaders demonstrated a strong understanding of the checks required should temporary staff be required in the future.

Paragraph 20(6)–20(6)(c)

- Checks to ensure the suitability of members and trustees belonging to the proprietor body have been completed. There are no plans to appoint additional members to the proprietor body should the material change be implemented.

Paragraph 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- The single central record of recruitment checks is comprehensive. It meets requirements. Those with responsibility for the single central record will continue to maintain the record in an electronic format, ensuring that appropriate staff details are recorded if the material change request is approved.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–24(2)

- The new building has suitable toilet and washing facilities for pupils and staff to use. This includes toilets for all genders. While there are a number of wash basins that are low to the ground, a remnant of the building's former status as a nursery, the proprietor has installed additional facilities that are dispersed around the building.
- The building has a room designated as a medical room. In the room, there is a bed and equipment designed to support pupils in need of first aid. A wide range of first-aid equipment is at hand should pupils and staff require it.

Paragraph 25–29(1)(b)

- The building is situated on a housing estate, near to the local hospital and university student halls of residence. There is a car park that is overlooked by closed-circuit television cameras. The main entrance is well signposted. In the building, wide corridors, large windows and suitable lighting ensure that the building has a welcoming feel to it. Additionally, classrooms and therapy spaces have appropriate acoustics and comfortable seating to allow one-to-one discussions or small-group work to take place.
- There is enough space to accommodate the number of additional pupils as outlined in the material change request, as amended.
- There are large external grounds that include a covered space, which is designated as a joinery area for students to learn practical woodworking skills. The grounds and the school building are well maintained.
- There is suitable drinking water for students.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c) and 34(2)

- Leaders continue to demonstrate high standards and a firm appetite to support the most vulnerable pupils in the area and beyond. They have a strong understanding of the independent school standards. There is capacity in the leadership of the school that mean the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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	147648
DfE registration number	394/6005
Inspection number	10261172

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 school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Hopespring
Chair	Lois Gott
Headteacher	Mr Jacob Vart
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,426 to £26,796
Telephone number	0191 542 0338
Website	www.hopespringeducation.org.uk
Email address	jacob.vart@hopespringeducation.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	28 to 30 September 2021

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	16	30	30

Reason for inspector's recommendations

During the material change inspection, the proprietor requested an amendment to its original material change request, as submitted to the Department for Education (DfE).

The proprietor requested that a further four pupils be added to the material change request. The inspector considered a request to increase the maximum number of pupils on roll to up to 30 pupils, as opposed to the original request, which requested an

increase of eight pupils up to a maximum of 26. The inspector recommends that the increase be accepted. Currently, there are 16 pupils on the school's roll.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	16	30
Number of part-time pupils	1	1
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10	Up to 30
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	9	Up to 30
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	9	Up to 30

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	10	14
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	0

Information about this school

- This material change inspection was the first inspection since the school's standard inspection in September 2021.

- The school is part of the Hopespring charity and aims to meet the needs of a small number of pupils aged 11 to 16 years, most of whom have social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Most pupils are at risk of permanent exclusion or have been permanently excluded from their mainstream schools.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of therapeutic support from teaching staff who are trained as therapists.
- The school is located on the outskirts of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear.
- The school admits pupils from a range of local schools referred via the Sunderland local authority vulnerable pupils panel.
- The school is located in a former residential care home.
- Ten pupils are dual registered and spend one day each week under the care of the referring school.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- Pupils join the school at different times of the year. Currently, pupils on roll are in key stages 3 and 4.
- The school is currently registered to admit 18 pupils. At the time of the inspection, there were 16 boys and girls on roll.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the DfE after the school had applied to increase the number of pupils at the school from 18 to 26. At the start of the inspection, the proprietor sought to increase this number by four to a maximum of 30 pupils. The inspector informed the DfE via email and considered the material change request against the new proposal.
- The inspection was conducted with two days' notice and was the school's first material change inspection.
- The focus of the inspection was to consider whether the school would continue to meet the independent school standards if the requested change were to be implemented.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of centre, the leader with responsibility for safeguarding, the proprietor and one pupil.
- The inspector considered the written policies for safeguarding and health and safety. He reviewed and discussed a range of risk assessments with leaders. He also reviewed the school's single central record and arrangement for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector

Senior His Majesty's Inspector

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