

# Meadowcroft School

24 Bar Lane, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 4AD

**Inspection date**

26 January 2023

**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)*

- Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding policy takes account of the most recent government guidance and is implemented effectively. The safeguarding policy is updated on the school's website.
- Staff complete appropriate training to help them to recognise and identify risks to pupils' safety. Safeguarding is regularly discussed in meetings between staff. Leaders provide staff with regular briefing notes about pertinent safeguarding issues. For example, leaders have responded well to concerns raised recently about harmful online content.
- Staff and leaders make detailed records of concerns raised and subsequent actions. Leaders work with external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Systems and policies for managing allegations about staff are clear. Staff are confident to report concerns about the conduct of members of staff when they arise. Leaders act on these reports appropriately, involving the local authority designated officer when necessary. Leaders know how to follow up incidents with appropriate bodies if there are concerns about the conduct of an adult.
- These standards are likely to be met.

#### *Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c)*

- A written behaviour policy is published on the school's website. There are appropriate policies in place for primary-age and secondary-age pupils. Staff have received training to help them to understand and implement these policies.
- clear systems are in place to manage any use of physical interventions. Staff are well trained and make thorough records when a member of staff uses this type of intervention to keep pupils safe. Leaders analyse the use of physical intervention carefully. The number of incidents of physical intervention is reducing. The proprietor monitors the use of physical intervention closely.

- These standards are likely to be met.

*Paragraphs 11, 12, 13*

- Leaders have published a health and safety policy on the school's website. Records indicate that leaders ensure that regular health and safety checks are completed, including checks of the fire alarm, window restrictors and the temperature of hot water.
- The school complies with the fire safety regulations. Fire safety checks of current sites are undertaken regularly. The proposed new site is not yet complete. A fire alarm system is installed and fire extinguishers are present on site. However, a full fire risk assessment for the proposed new site start has not been completed because building work is not yet complete. However, evidence indicates that leaders understand their responsibilities under the fire safety reform act 2005. Leaders have made arrangements for an external company to undertake a fire risk assessment of the proposed new site prior to pupils being educated there.
- A first-aid policy is published on the school's website. Appropriate training for staff is in place to ensure that first aid is provided in a timely manner by a competent person. Some staff who work with the youngest pupils in the school have paediatric first-aid training.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

*Paragraph 14*

- Appropriate consideration has been given to the supervision of pupils. Staff-to-pupil ratios are appropriate. A rota is in place to ensure that staff are available to supervise pupils at breaktimes. Procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are well supervised when arriving at and leaving the school. Leaders have considered how they will supervise arrivals and departures of pupils at the proposed new site.
- This standard is likely to be met.

*Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- The school's risk assessment policy and procedure are detailed. Risk assessments are in place for aspects of site safety, including for the proposed new site where it has been possible to complete these. Risks are carefully considered and mitigation put in place when necessary. Leaders have plans to complete specific fire and legionella risk assessments for the new site once construction work is completed. These risk assessments are in place for existing sites.
- Individual pupil risk assessments are in place for each pupil. These detail the risks pupils might present to themselves and others. Steps that staff should take to mitigate these risks are clearly identified.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

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

- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are completed before adults start working at the school. These checks include all necessary checks outlined in 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'.
- The school maintains a comprehensive single central record of the checks it undertakes on the suitability of adults working at the school. This includes appropriate checks of staff, supply staff, governors and members of the proprietor body. Appropriate checks have been conducted under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 for leaders of the school.
- The school does use supply staff occasionally. Appropriate checks of these staff are carried out and recorded on the single central record.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 23(1)–28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(b)*

- The school is tidy and well maintained. It is welcoming for pupils.
- Currently, pupils from Year 1 to Year 9 are educated at The Gallery site. Leaders have procured a new site, known as The Lodge. Leaders propose that this will be used to educate pupils from Year 1 to Year 7. The building, previously a primary school, is currently being redeveloped to meet the requirements of the independent school standards. The opening of the new site will enable more key stage 3 pupils to be educated on the existing Gallery site.
- The proposed new site has seven classrooms, each of which is an appropriate size, with adequate lighting. This site has access to drinking water. In addition, the proposed new premises has a sports hall, a computer suite, library and kitchen for pupils to learn life skills in.
- Modifications to ensure that the proposed new site is safe are being carried out. For example, an internal wall has been erected at the top of a staircase to reduce the risk of pupils falling over the existing banister. External lighting is provided to illuminate the outside space when it is dark.
- The proposed new site, The Lodge, does not have changing rooms or shower facilities for pupils aged over 11 who will participate in physical education (PE). Leaders intend for those pupils who are in Year 7 who will be educated on the new site to be transported for PE lessons to another of the school's sites, The Hub, which does have appropriate changing and shower facilities. Through the course of the inspection, leaders indicated that they will install showers and changing rooms on the proposed new site so that Year 7 pupils can have PE lessons without moving to another site.
- The proposed new site has appropriate outdoor space for pupils to play and exercise. Leaders are in the process of erecting a secondary fence to make this space even safer.

- An appropriate medical room is situated on the new proposed site. This room contains a bed, first-aid equipment and a shower and is adjacent to a toilet with handwashing facilities.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 32(1)–34(1)(c)*

- Leaders have suitable plans in place to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- Leaders demonstrate good knowledge and ensure that the independent school standards are met. The proprietor has systems in place to check on the effectiveness of the school and ensure that the well-being of pupils is promoted.
- Leaders have systems in place to promote the welfare of pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

## **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	135216
DfE registration number	384/6348
Inspection number	10270326

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 Limited
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Noreen Cheema
Annual fees (day pupils)	£46,305 to £62,856
Telephone number	01924 366242
Website	<a href="http://www.meadowcroftschoo.com">www.meadowcroftschoo.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@meadowcroftschoo.com">info@meadowcroftschoo.com</a>
Dates of previous standard inspection	29 June to 1 July 2021

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 19	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	104	146	146

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	101	146
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	101	146
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	101	146
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	101	146

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	21	23
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	9	12

## Information about this school

- Meadowcroft school is an independent special school that is registered to provide education for boys and girls with special educational needs. The school currently operates on three sites in the city of Wakefield.
- The school is owned by Acorn Care and Education limited, part of the Outcomes First Group.
- All pupils that attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- All pupils are placed at the school by their respective local authorities.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to carry out this inspection because the proprietor applied to make a material change to the school's registration. The proprietor requested an increase in the maximum pupil capacity from 104 to 146.
- Work at the proposed new site is not yet complete. It was possible to view the accommodation. However, some aspects, such as a full fire risk assessment, have not yet been completed for the proposed new site. The inspector evaluated how the school assesses fire risk at its existing sites as part of the inspection.
- It was not possible to check the temperature of the hot water at the proposed new site because the hot water was not turned on at the time of the inspection. The temperature of the hot water at the existing Gallery site was acceptable. Leaders shared records to indicate that they frequently check the temperature of hot water at the school's existing sites.
- The inspector met with the head of service for the school and the headteacher, other senior leaders and a regional director for the Outcomes First Group. The inspector also spoke with a member of the proprietor body on the telephone.
- The inspector undertook a tour of existing premises and the proposed new premises to evaluate the school's suitability to increase pupil numbers.
- The inspector analysed a range of documents and school records, including those relating to health and safety and behaviour.
- The inspector spoke with the school's designated leader for safeguarding, reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding and the school's single central record.

## Inspection team

Tim Scargill-Knight, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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