

Buzz Learning Independent Specialist School

8 Esther Court, Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 8AP

Inspection date

15 February 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 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- Leaders and the proprietor have given careful consideration to the proposed Year 7 and Year 8 curriculums. In many instances, the newly created curriculum connects precisely with the current curriculum for older pupils. Leaders and the proprietor understand the additional learning needs of pupils attending the school. Consequently, schemes of work and individual lessons are well placed to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Prospective pupils and parents and carers are able to view detailed curriculum policies and associated documentation published on the school's website. The documentation is easily located and suitable for younger pupils to read and understand.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have raised the profile of reading in the school. The library is a welcoming environment and includes a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. More recently, leaders have trained staff to teach phonics to pupils who continue to be at the early stages of learning to read. Pupils have access to reading books that match their stage of reading.
- At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to introduce more trips to places of interest linked to the topics they cover in the curriculum. Since then, the extracurricular programme of activities and curriculum beyond the school has been strengthened. Pupils have the opportunity to go sailing and to visit local places of worship and outdoor spaces, such as Hirst Park in Ashington and the nearby 'Growing Zone.' Here, pupils participate in den-building activities, research and learn about the trees, wildlife and ecosystems, as well as growing their own fruit and vegetables.
- All pupils receive independent careers advice and guidance. Additionally, via pupil review meetings or taster sessions, pupils complete work experience or meet with an

employability and job coach to discuss their next steps in education, employment and training.

- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

Paragraph 5

- Schemes of work, policies and curriculum documentation that relate to the possible admission of younger pupils are age appropriate and do not conflict with fundamental British values. Pupils will have varied opportunities to engage in debate associated with difference, respect, tolerance and the rule of law. For example, the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum includes themes such as 'The World I Live In', 'Prejudice', 'Diversity' and 'Healthy Relationships'.
- Staff take every opportunity to involve pupils in discussions relating to 'hot topics'. For example, during the material change inspection, staff and pupils spoke at length about the use of social media, free speech and the possible censorship of social media or political views in other countries. This helps pupils to understand the difference between laws in England and elsewhere.
- Leaders and the proprietor seek opportunities to broaden pupils' understanding of different faiths or traditions. In addition to visits to various places of worship, the proprietor recently set up a virtual meeting between pupils and a nurse of Islamic faith working in India. This helped to develop pupils' appreciation and understanding of technology, as well as an awareness of how people in various cultures live and work.
- Schemes of work and policies and plans to teach PSHE education and to develop younger pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally are in place and are appropriate.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- Leaders and the proprietor have ensured that there are appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies in place. The policies take into account the increased vulnerabilities of the pupils attending the school, all of whom have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The arrangements for the safer recruitment of staff are strong. Leaders are trained appropriately. They ensure that all of the relevant checks are made prior to a new member of staff taking up post. The proprietor intends to appoint one additional teacher should the material change request be accepted.

- Leaders and the proprietor have considered the steps they should take to ensure that younger pupils are safe at the school. There is a small, outdoor play area to the side of the school. While it is large enough for 25 pupils to play and socialise safely, leaders have made an application to extend this space in the knowledge that younger pupils often participate in running or chasing games when outside.
- The safeguarding curriculum is interspersed across PSHE education lessons and 'hot-topic' discussions. Should an emerging risk in the school or local area present itself, leaders and staff are swift to bring this to the attention of pupils. In this way, pupils are well equipped to mitigate risk and stay safe.
- The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable. She understands her role well and is swift to involve wider agencies or professionals to support pupils' needs when required. A review of pupils' case files demonstrates that leaders and staff are vigilant, proactive and swift to take action to safeguard pupils' welfare when they have a nagging doubt or concern about a pupil. Parents and carers are contacted or consulted often, ensuring a multifaceted approach to supporting pupils' needs.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- Leaders and the proprietor work effectively with the local authority to ensure that pupils placed at the school can thrive. Careful consideration and preparation have gone into the material change request, highlighting leaders' clarity of thought and determination to meet the needs of younger pupils in Ashington and beyond.
- The proprietor has changed the structure of governance since the previous inspection. The proprietor board is now more involved in quality assurance. Additional appointments have been made to ensure that members of the board have the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding of schools and pupils with SEND. While there is more to do to ensure that the effectiveness of the curriculum is known in full, the headteacher and proprietor are starting to consider how others can check the quality and effectiveness of their work.
- The proprietor and headteacher have the necessary skills to ensure that younger pupils are supported effectively. There is capacity for further expansion in respect of pupil numbers and/or the age range of pupils.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue 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	145184
DfE registration number	929/6004
Inspection number	10275610

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	Therese Timlin
Chair	Mark Fox
Headteacher	Gemma McCutcheon
Annual fees (day pupils)	£23,598
Telephone number	01670 852244
Website	www.buzzlearning.co.uk
Email address	info@buzzlearning.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	11 to 13 February 2020

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	13 to 16	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	25	25	25

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	25	25
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	25	25
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	25	25
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	25	25

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	2	3
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	N/A	N/A

Information about this school

- A new headteacher took up post in September 2021.
- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been disbanded. The proprietary board conducts the functions of governance and accountability.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- All pupils attending the school have an EHC plan.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the Department for Education after the school applied to lower the age range of the pupils at the school from age 13 to 16 years to 11 to 16 years.
- 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 is implemented.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the proprietor and a group of pupils.
- The inspector considered the written policies for safeguarding and health and safety. He reviewed and discussed curriculum plans and policies with leaders. He also reviewed the school's single central record and toured the school site.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector

Senior His Majesty's Inspector

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