

# Queenswood School

Callow Hills Farm, Hereford Road, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2PZ

**Inspection date**

8 June 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), 32(1)(c)*

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding training is a central pillar of the induction process for new staff. Leaders ensure that staff have regular safeguarding training and they share any updates with them. Staff know and understand their critical role in keeping pupils safe. They take this responsibility seriously. Staff are vigilant and know the importance of reporting any concern about a pupil immediately, no matter how trivial it may seem. At the end of each day, staff come together to share any relevant information that has come to light during the school day. This helps the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputy DSL to bring together information on each pupil.
- Leaders have ensured that the DSL and deputy DSL are trained appropriately. They know that should the material change be granted, the safeguarding workload would likely increase. In response, leaders have already booked other staff on relevant training to increase safeguarding capacity across both school sites.
- Leaders have systems in place for staff to report any concerns. Staff can record these via a paper-based or online system. Leaders react quickly when a concern is raised, involving external agencies when needed. They know that, should the number of pupils attending the school increase, some record-keeping processes will need to be developed further. This will ensure that comprehensive summaries of concerns, actions and communications are always readily available to all members of the safeguarding team.
- The written policy to safeguard and protect pupils is published on the school website. It is updated annually and has due regard for the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- The proprietor body and school leaders have ensured that these independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

*Paragraph 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- The proprietor body discharges its responsibilities for health and safety diligently. Leaders have put an appropriate health and safety policy in place. This is strengthened by other relevant policies that help keep pupils and staff safe. For instance, leaders have considered how any hazardous substances will be stored safely in the proposed school building.
- A detailed health and safety audit has been carried out on the proposed school building. Leaders have commissioned external companies to complete additional checks. For instance, assessments have been completed to ensure that there is no risk from asbestos and that water systems pose no legionella risk. Leaders could demonstrate that, where these assessments have flagged up the need for remedial work, the work has either been completed or arrangements are in place to do so.
- Leaders have completed a fire-risk assessment of the proposed school building. The inspector saw evidence of leaders acting on the issues that this raised. For instance, leaders have added smoke detection systems to the proposed sensory room and ensured that all fire doors are fit for purpose.
- The site is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Systems for fire detection have been updated and are subject to regular checks. Staff keep an up-to-date folder that logs these checks on the existing site, and a similar folder is already in place for the proposed new building. This includes records of fire drills, the feedback shared with staff following a drill and the names of the trained fire marshals on site.
- Leaders have clear policies and procedures to ensure that current pupils are well supervised. They plan to meet pupils as they arrive in the morning and then to escort them to their transport at the end of the day. During the school day, leaders have an 'eyes-on' policy. This means that if pupils access the extensive grounds around the proposed new building, staff will always keep them in sight. Leaders have thought about the staffing implications should the material change be granted. They are clear that the addition of more pupils joining the school is dependent on having sufficient trained staff in place.
- Leaders have ensured that the welfare and safety of pupils are protected by the effective implementation of a risk assessment policy. They review and update all risk assessments annually and take action to minimise risks in the existing school. The risk assessments are detailed, organised and easily accessible to staff. In addition, leaders draw up individual risk assessments to help staff meet pupils' individual needs.
- The proprietor body and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

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

*Paragraph 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), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 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(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c), 21(6)*

- The proprietor body and leaders make the required appointment checks on new staff before these staff commence employment at the school. They record these accurately on an electronic single central record. Staff who manage the single central record do so diligently. The proprietor body has ensured that it has the expertise to do this well. Leaders audit the single central record regularly to ensure that it is complete, correct and up to date.
- Leaders do not use supply or agency staff on a regular basis. However, when they do, they undertake the relevant checks and safeguards required. This includes receiving written confirmation from the agency of the checks that have been carried out and confirming the identity of agency staff when they arrive on site.
- The proprietor body has drawn up a detailed recruitment policy. This sets out the recruitment process comprehensively, from job advert to new staff induction. Leaders secure written references for applicants and make verbal checks on these to ensure their validity. They have also given due regard to changes to statutory guidance. For instance, leaders now complete media checks on applicants.
- The proprietor body and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

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

*Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 24(2), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)*

- The proposed school building is a two-storey building that sits on the Yarkhill site and is adjacent to two smaller buildings currently in use by the school. It is in a rural location. It was used previously as a residential provision for children. Leaders plan to educate pupils on the ground floor of the building and to use the first floor as office space for staff. A portion of the first floor will remain unused and is locked to pupils. Leaders have undertaken much work to convert the building so that it is a suitable place for pupils to learn. The three classrooms are light, bright and welcoming. There is also a central area where pupils and staff will sit and eat together, as well as a sensory room. All have been decorated and furnished to a good standard by dedicated and committed site staff.
- Pupils will have access to extensive grounds that surround the proposed school building. These are well maintained and give pupils ample space to play. External lighting is in place so that staff and pupils can enter and leave the site safely. However, this is not adequate. Leaders have plans in place to replace the existing exterior lighting so that it is fit for purpose.
- The proposed building has two toilets on the ground floor for pupils. These can be secured from the inside and have a washbasin with hot and cold running water.

Leaders plan to fit soap and hand-towel dispensers, as is the case across the rest of the school. The staff and visitor toilet is located on the first floor of the building.

- There is a suitable shower facility for pupils in the proposed school building.
- Leaders have identified and equipped a medical room in the proposed school building. This will not be used for any other purpose. It contains a washing facility, and a pupil toilet is located close by. The room affords pupils the required degree of privacy should they feel unwell. It contains a facility for the safe storage of medicines.
- The proprietor body and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

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

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

- The proprietor body has considered this material change application. It has weighed up the potential impact on the pupils and staff of the school. With leaders, it has planned the change so that it will be sustainable and the physical and staff resources will be fully in place before any pupils are admitted to the school. It has committed to this change by investing heavily in the proposed new building so that it is a good-quality environment for staff to work and pupils to learn in. This reflects the ambition of the proprietor body, the headteacher, school leaders and the wider school staff. The active promotion of pupils' happiness, well-being and safety forms the bedrock of the work of all at the school.
- The headteacher has the knowledge needed to ensure that the independent school standards will be met consistently, should the material change be approved. He is supported and held to account by governors who know the school well. A range of centralised services, from human resources to health and safety expertise, feeds into the school to increase the accountability of, and support for, leaders.
- The proprietor body and school leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a suitable accessibility plan in place that meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **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	131353
DfE registration number	884/6011
Inspection number	10287421

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 school
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services Ltd
Chair	Claire Imber
Headteacher	Robert Coles
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,163 to £93,951
Telephone number	01531 670632
Website	<a href="http://www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/queenswood-school-herefordshire/">www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/queenswood-school-herefordshire/</a>
Email address	robertcoles@aspriscs.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	8 to 11 February 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	47	58	58

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	47	58
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	47	58
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	47	58
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	47	58

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	12	15
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	7	9

## Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities in the areas of autism spectrum disorder, social, emotional and mental health needs, and sensory impairment. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by a small number of local authorities from across the country.
- The school works with four unregistered alternative provision settings.
- The school's most recent standard inspection was in February 2022, when it was judged to be good.
- The school does not have a religious denomination.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the proprietor has applied to increase the number of pupils on the school roll to 58. To do this, the proprietor wishes to use a building that was previously a residential provision for children located on the current satellite site at Yarkhill, Herefordshire HR1 3SU. This is located approximately six miles from the main school site.
- This was the school's first material change inspection.
- The inspector visited the existing school and toured the proposed new school building with senior leaders. He held discussions with those responsible for governance, including the chief operating officer and the chair of the governing board. The inspector held a series of meetings with leaders and staff. The inspector spoke to pupils during the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation during the inspection, including the single central record and safeguarding information. He also scrutinised health and safety policies and associated records of checks made by staff on the school site. The inspector also examined a sample of the risk assessments drawn up by leaders to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

## Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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