

# Hillcrest Shifnal School

Lamledge Lane, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8SD

**Inspection date**

21 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)*

- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance and is available on request. This is made available on the school's website.
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is a member of the school's senior leadership team. This leader is well supported by a team of experienced deputy DSLs. Together the members of this team have extensive experience of working to keep pupils as safe as possible.
- Leaders make sure that all staff receive safeguarding training that takes account of the most recent statutory guidance. Leaders make effective use of links with local agencies, such as the police and social services, to develop their understanding of the vulnerabilities that pupils who attend the school have. They provide extensive and bespoke training to all staff to ensure that they know how to mitigate these risks. This includes a daily end-of-day safeguarding briefing.
- Leaders have clear systems to record and report any concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. Leaders also have robust systems to deal with any allegations made about members of staff. When allegations are made, leaders treat these with the utmost importance and care. They make timely referrals to the local authority designated officer and ensure that lessons are learned.
- The proprietor has ensured that a clear system of quality assurance is in place to review constantly the quality of safeguarding at the school.

#### *Paragraph 11*

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a detailed and thorough health and safety policy in place. Leaders make sure that staff have the knowledge needed to implement the policy. The policy, and staff's implementation of the policy, are reviewed regularly by leaders, governors and external auditors.

### *Paragraph 12*

- The fire risk assessment confirms that the school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Leaders have ensured that the new building has an electronic fire alarm system in place that works in sync with the current fire alarm system. There are appropriate measures in place for fire evacuation and clear signage around the building.

### *Paragraph 14*

- Leaders understand the vulnerabilities associated with the pupils who attend the school. They recognise the importance of relationships in these pupils' lives and have made sure that all pupils are well cared for as they move around the school. For example, all pupils eat their dinner alongside their teachers.
- Leaders have thought carefully about the increase in staffing needed to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers. They have already made key appointments and have planned carefully to ensure that they have the appropriate number of staff to support pupils. Leaders have clearly demonstrated that they are able to support the proposed increase in the number of pupils at the school.

### *Paragraph 16*

- Leaders have established a rigorous approach to assessing risk across the school site. Detailed risk assessments have been created for the newly refurbished building. These clearly identify the specific risks associated with all activities that pupils and staff may engage in across the site. The proprietor, working closely with the DSL and external auditors, carefully reviews risk assessments and updates these as required.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

## 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(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6)*

- All safeguarding checks are recorded on the school's single central record. The proprietor intends to ensure that this is well maintained.
- The school has appropriate recruitment procedures in place. Leaders carry out appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff prior to their appointment. This includes obtaining an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, gathering two references and carrying out a medical check.
- When supply staff are used, leaders have equally robust processes in place to ensure the suitability of these staff.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The school is based on extensive grounds in a small town. There are two separate buildings on the school site. These provide ample space for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- Leaders intend to broaden the vocational curriculum on offer at the school. The proprietor has developed an impressive and immersive new space for the delivery of these subjects that includes a fully functioning kitchen, a hairdressing salon that is fully equipped with a nail bar and barber chairs, as well as a large and appropriate space to be used for construction and carpentry. All these spaces are well equipped with high-quality, subject-specific equipment. At present, the space is not in use.
- Additionally, at present, there are several new classrooms not in use across the school site. These are maintained to a good standard, have good acoustics and benefit from ample natural light. These provide sufficient capacity for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- The premises are maintained to a high standard. There is plenty of outdoor space for pupils to play safely. For example, leaders have ensured that pupils have access to appropriate play equipment, such as swings and climbing frames. Leaders have carefully considered the risk associated with each of these.
- The proprietor has made sure that pupils will always have access to drinking water.
- There is a small, purpose-built medical room in the new building. The room has a foldable bed and a portable sink and is situated close to a toilet facility. This room is in addition to the main medical room on the main school site.
- Leaders have given due consideration to the accessibility of the buildings and the wider school site. They have made sure that the site is accessible for all pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

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

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

- Leaders have carefully considered the proposed increase in capacity. The proprietor has invested significant resource into ensuring that the new building is of high quality.
- Leaders have taken time and care to ensure that any increase in capacity is well managed so as not have an adverse impact on the quality of education currently offered in the school. Leaders have, over time, increased the numbers of teachers and pastoral staff to provide scope for the proposed change.
- The school has the capacity to support the proposed change to the numbers on roll.
- All of the independent school standards checked are likely to be met if the proposed material change is implemented.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The accessibility policy sets out how the school site is intended to be fully accessible to all and how the proprietor will cater for a range of disabilities on the site.

## **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	133478
DfE registration number	893/6025
Inspection number	10286510

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	P Bloom Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Martin Winward
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,020 to £84,147
Telephone number	01952 468220
Website	<a href="http://www.hillcrestshifnalschool.co.uk">www.hillcrestshifnalschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:shifnalypadmin@hillcrest-cs.co.uk">shifnalypadmin@hillcrest-cs.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	18 to 20 October 2022

## 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	59	105	105

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	59	105
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	59	105
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	55	105
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	55	105

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	45	69
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2	4

## Information about this school

- This is an independent school for pupils aged 5 to 19. Pupils are often placed in the school following a breakdown of placement in their previous primary or secondary school.
- A significant number of pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The primary need for most pupils relates to their social, emotional and mental health.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to consider the school's request for a material change. The proprietor would like to increase the maximum permitted number of full-time pupils on the school roll from 60 to 105 pupils.
- The purpose of the inspection was to establish whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the registration authority were to grant the requested material change.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, the regional director, the headteacher and other leaders.
- The inspector scrutinised the information and policies provided by the school.
- The inspector met with the DSL to review the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils and staff. The inspector looked at the school's single central record of the checks that leaders carry out before staff are employed to work at the school. The inspector also spoke to pupils.
- The inspector reviewed additional documentation, including the school's health and safety policy, risk assessments and fire safety checks.
- The inspector toured the school site.

## Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector



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