

Old Farm School

Old Farm School, Stank House Farm, Kilton Lane, Brotton TS12 2TZ

Inspection date

16 June 2023

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 1, 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)

- Leaders have given careful consideration to the proposed primary (five to 11) curriculum. In many instances, the newly created curriculum connects precisely with the current curriculum for older pupils. For instance, while the fundamental skills of English and mathematics are taught discretely, these skills are used in creative and purposeful 'topic-based' units of learning. 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.
- 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. Existing leaders have the skills and knowledge to train 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.
- Leaders seamlessly integrate trips to places of interest linked to the topics that they cover in the curriculum. Pupils have regular, weekly opportunities to partake in adventurous activities and outdoor pursuits. There are ample opportunities in the haven, which is the school's existing site, to discover horticulture, explore the forest school's curriculum and be at one with nature. The school's proposed, additional site also offers this in abundance. Leaders have exciting plans to develop purposeful activity and enterprise from their proposed site. Here, there is space for animal care and land management with larger-scale micro farming.
- All pupils receive independent next-step careers advice and guidance. Carefully considered transition enables pupils' successful move to 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, 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders attach great importance to supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development during their time at school. Pupils access the school's personal, social and health education curriculum, as well as aspects such as citizenship and relationships and sex education as part of their bespoke programmes.
- Most of the learning and personal support offered by the school are delivered in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. This means that staff are able to target individuals' specific needs and personalise this area of provision as required. This includes addressing the daily concerns and real-life aspects of supporting pupils to understand their role in the local community and wider society.
- Respect for, and tolerance of, others, including staff and peers, underpin much of the work of the school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. Staff understand the importance of broadening pupils' experience of equality and diversity. Again, this is often carried out as bespoke and targeted pieces of work.
- Discrimination is not tolerated. Diversity is celebrated. Leaders were able to share a range of examples of recent and ongoing work to support pupils to understand the concept of fundamental British values and the importance of these in modern Britain.
- School leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in part 2 are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- There is an appropriate safeguarding policy in place. It pays due regard to the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. It is published on the school's website.
- The designated safeguarding lead and his deputy designated safeguarding lead have all completed a wide range of safeguarding training. They meet regularly to discuss relevant safeguarding issues.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the contextual safeguarding risks. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep pupils and students safe. There are appropriate systems for reporting and recording any concerns. Leaders respond swiftly when issues are raised. They liaise with the relevant external agencies when required and follow up on concerns to ensure that pupils and students are safe.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 16(a), 16(b)

- There is an appropriate health and safety policy in place. The proprietor ensures that all staff take responsibility to ensure that all the relevant checks are made so the premises are maintained to a high standard.
- There is an appropriate fire risk assessment for the current buildings in place. Fire evacuation drills and fire safety equipment checks take place regularly. Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that the proposed, additional premises are likely to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- An appropriate risk assessment policy is in place. Leaders have carried out a range of

risk assessments. These demonstrate that both staff and leaders understand the potential hazards and the appropriate control measures required.

Paragraph 14

- There is an established staffing structure that ensures a high ratio of staff to pupils and students. Leaders have recruited several additional staff to ensure that this ratio is maintained when the number of pupils and students increases.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to approve the material change.

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

Paragraphs 17, 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(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(6)

- Leaders have a rigorous approach to the recruitment of staff and ensure that all of the appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken. This includes relevant checks on staff who have worked in other countries and those who are in management positions.
- Leaders do not use supply staff but are aware of the appropriate checks that should be made if they did.
- The single central record details all of the required information for staff and regular visitors and is stored securely.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 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 current school buildings and the proposed, additional site are extensive and provide suitable accommodation for the proposed number of pupils and students. There are sufficient, well-designed, light and airy classrooms designed to accommodate small groups of pupils or students per room. In addition to this, there are specialist teaching spaces, such as a well-equipped and inspiring science lab, art and design studio, sports hall and a hub for students to cook in. The proposed, additional premises will mirror these facilities.
- There are several separate toilet facilities for male and female pupils and students. There are also separate toilet facilities for staff and visitors. All toilets have suitable washing facilities, and the temperature of the water does not pose a risk of scalding. The proposed, additional site also complies with these requirements.
- There is a suitable medical room located at the 'old farm' building. It has a bed and washing facilities within the room. It is located close to toilet facilities. Plans show that this will be mirrored at the proprietor's proposed, additional site.

- In all classrooms, there is suitable natural daylight, as well as adequate artificial lighting. The acoustics in all rooms are suitable.
- Cold drinking-water is clearly labelled which is available throughout the day. The cold water supplies are in separate areas from the toilet facilities.
- There are suitable spaces outside comprising a hard-surfaced space and large grassed areas. These spaces are suitable for playing outside. Currently, some physical education takes place off site. Pupils are transported to suitable venues and use the changing and shower facilities at these venues.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's internet website.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

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 a clear rationale for why it wants to expand the numbers and age range at the school. It has invested significant resources in preparing for an increase in numbers and ensuring that the standards are met.
- The proprietor body has a range of systems in place to quality assure the work of leaders at the school. This includes the use of external quality assurance.
- The proprietor body has a secure understanding of the standards. It has extensive experience of running an independent special school.
- Leaders have the relevant experience to ensure that the needs of an increased number of pupils and students would continue to be met.
- The proprietor body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

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	143429
DfE registration number	807/6001
Inspection number	10297010

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 specials school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	William Ashton
Headteacher	Steve Graham
Annual fees (day pupils)	£46,527
Telephone number	01287 677178
Website	halcyon-ne.com
Email address	office@farmschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	28 to 30 June 2022

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 19	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	30	70	70

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	30	70

Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	30	70
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Up to 30	Up to 70
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Up to 30	Up to 70

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	9	22
Number of part-time teaching staff	5	6
Number of staff in the welfare provision	3	9

Information about this school

- The school last received a standard inspection in June 2022.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school caters for the needs of pupils with a diagnosis of social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils who attend have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is currently operating within its Get Information about Schools description.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to establish if the school would be likely to meet all of the relevant standards if the proposed material changes are implemented. These being, to increase the number of pupils in the school to 70, extend the age range of pupils to five to 19 and make use of newly refurbished premises.
- The inspection focused on parts 1 and 2 of the standards which attend to the quality of education provided and the social, moral and cultural development of pupils. The inspection also focused on some of the welfare, health and safety standards in part 3, including the supervision of pupils and appropriate deployment of staff; all of the standards in part 4 about the suitability of staff; all of the standards in part 5, premises and accommodation; and the standards in part 8, quality of leadership and management of schools.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy and assistant headteachers, the designated safeguarding lead and his deputy and the proprietor and chair of the school.
- The lead inspector toured both existing and proposed accommodation with the headteacher and proprietors.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- An inspector reviewed safeguarding documents and the single central record.

Inspection team

Marcus Newby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michael Wardle

His Majesty's Inspector

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