

# Farney Close School

Bolney Court, Bolney, Crossways, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 5RD

**Inspection date**

7 July 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

#### *Paragraphs 7–7(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)*

- The safeguarding policy is compliant with current statutory guidance and published on the school's website. This is based on a local authority template but adapted well to suit the school, including clear reference to the additional risks for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Staff understand the importance of keeping children safe. They are well trained through annual training and regular updates. Leaders check their understanding at staff meetings and other times.
- The principal is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). She is supported by deputy designated leads. Several other staff have DSL training, including the school nurse. All have been trained to the appropriate level including taking courses in sexual harm and 'Prevent' duty awareness.
- Safeguarding recording is detailed and well organised using an electronic system. The use of this system has been improved since the previous inspection and is used well by all staff. Leaders liaise well with staff from the residential provision to ensure safe handover of information about pupils' needs and behaviours. This helps keep children safe.

#### *Paragraphs 11–14 and 16*

- There is a thorough health and safety policy in place, supported by appropriate plans, risk assessments and building checks. For example, all buildings have been checked for electrical, fire and legionella safety and the relevant certification is in place. The proprietor body ensures that the health and safety risk assessment is followed. They employ a site manager and team to organise any remedial work needed.
- The site complies with the relevant fire regulations. Last year, a new fire safety system was put in place with panels in each building linking to one alarm. An external company checks fire safety and appropriate certification is in place. Throughout the school, there are the appropriate precautions in place, including fire doors, sounders, emergency lighting, extinguishers, fire blankets and slip mats. There are electrical

power cut-off points in technical areas such as the catering room and motor mechanics room. Evacuation procedures are in place and tested at least six times a year.

- The school employs a school nurse to oversee first-aid procedures. Other staff are also first-aid trained. Medicines are kept in locked cabinets or fridges. First-aid packs are in each specialist classroom and are taken on trips and visits.
- Leaders have increased staffing levels to be able to take on more pupils. This includes teachers, teaching assistants and therapists.
- The risk assessment policy is part of the health and safety policy. It sets out the circumstances in which risk assessments should be carried out, and how to do this. There are a range of risk assessments in place to ensure safe use of the site. These include consideration of the fenced-off electrical station and the lakes on site. A new fence has been put up around the school site since the last inspection. Classrooms all have risk assessments. Activities and trips are risk assessed. Pupils have individual risk assessments which give detail on how to keep individuals safe. These are updated as pupils' needs and behaviours change.
- Leaders have thought carefully about the additional risk to pupils with special educational needs should the number of pupils at the school increase. The site is very large. Pupils are kept in separate key stages and are rarely together as a whole school. Lunchtimes are staggered. This means that pupils are unlikely to be overwhelmed by an increase in numbers in the school.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

*Paragraphs 18(2)–18(3), 19(2)–19(3), 20(6)–21(7)(b)*

- Leaders have ensured that all the required checks are made on staff before they begin working in the school. The single central record shows that these checks are made on staff, members of the proprietor body, governors, contractors, visitors and supply staff. It is well maintained.
- The school is likely to meet the relevant standards in this part of the standards if the material change is implemented.

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

*Paragraphs 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2)–29(1)(b)*

- The school is made up of a number of buildings set in a large area of parkland. There is ample space to accommodate the increase in numbers. The site and grounds are well maintained, with recent renovations having updated some of the older areas. There is plenty of space for children to exercise and play outdoors, using purpose-built equipment. There is outdoor lighting throughout the site.
- There are plenty of classrooms for an increased number of pupils to learn in. These include several general classes and specialist rooms for subjects including music, computing, food technology, science, humanities, design technology, catering, motor vehicle mechanics, construction, physical education and art. Key stage 2 classes are in a separate part of the grounds and fenced off to allow pupils to feel secure and to

have their own play area. They are escorted when they use specialist classrooms. Rooms are set out to house eight pupils per class. They are bright, well organised, well lit and have suitable acoustics.

- The school has a number of other facilities which are all suitable to cope with an increase in numbers. There are large industrial kitchens capable of cooking for the increased numbers, various different therapy rooms and a youth club room with table tennis and snooker tables. The dinner hall will fit at least half the school in at one time, with pupils coming in to eat on a rota.
- There are adequate and suitable toilets and washing facilities throughout the school. There are suitable changing facilities near the sports hall. Water is of an acceptable temperature and labelled appropriately where hot. Water fountains are in place throughout the school for pupils to access, and are labelled as drinking water
- There is a medical facility staffed by a nurse. This contains a bed, toilet, shower and sink and a separate treatment area.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

### *Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor body oversees the running of the school well. The proprietor and other governors meet half termly to hold the principal to account for the school's effectiveness. They are experienced and well qualified. They check that the school meets the standards consistently well over time. The proprietor uses external companies to ensure health and safety, fire safety and safeguarding procedures are followed. Members visit regularly to see the school's work in action.
- Leaders and governors have made sure that the school is ready to take the extra pupils it would like to educate. This includes substantial improvements to the site, as well as making sure that funding is available for the additional staff that would be required.
- The principal and other senior leaders are experienced in leading special schools. Pupils' well-being is at the centre of their thinking. They recognise pupils' need for stability and so intend to initially increase the capacity of key stage 2 so that the school has longer to provide education specifically for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders make sure that provision meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. There is a well-thought-through equality policy and accessibility plan. It is likely that the school will continue to meet the requirements should the material change be granted.

## **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	126139
DfE registration number	938/6217
Inspection number	10286863

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 residential special school
Proprietor	Farney Close Ltd
Chair	Carole Johns
Principal	Sara Hack
Annual fees (day pupils)	£61,157
Annual feeds (residential pupils)	£77,297
Telephone number	01444 881811
Website	<a href="http://www.farneyclose.co.uk">www.farneyclose.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:sara.hack@farneyclose.co.uk">sara.hack@farneyclose.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	4 to 6 October 2022

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	9 to 18	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	72	100	100

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	72	100
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	72	100
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	72	100
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	72	100

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	15	18
Number of part-time teaching staff	6	5

## Information about this school

- Farney Close Limited is an independent residential and day special school in West Sussex.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). The school primarily supports pupils with SEMH needs. It also accepts pupils with social and communication difficulties and/or autism. Some pupils may also have moderate learning needs, dyslexia or speech and language needs.
- Around two thirds of the pupils in the school's secondary phase are accommodated in the school's residential accommodation from Monday to Friday.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.
- The school is approved by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014.
- The school's most recent standard inspection was on 4 to 6 October 2022.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education after the proprietor body applied for a material change to increase the number of pupils from 72 to 100. The additional pupils would be day pupils with an EHC plan for SEMH needs.
- The purpose of the inspection was to check whether the school is likely to meet the relevant standards if the requested material change is approved.
- This is the first material change inspection in respect of this particular change that the school has applied to make.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including policies and records relating to the welfare, health and safety of students and staff.
- The inspector checked the single central record and the school's arrangements to recruit staff.
- The inspector conducted an on-site visit to meet leaders and staff and to visit the school's educational accommodation. The inspector also toured the school site. The inspector met with the principal, other senior leaders, the school nurse and three members of the proprietor body.

## Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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