

# Medway Green School

School Lane, Wouldham, Rochester, Kent ME1 3TS

**Inspection date**

6 July 2023

**Overall outcome**

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

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraph 2(1)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h)–2(a)(2)*

- The proprietor has applied to increase the number and age range of pupils at the school. This will mean adding a key stage 4 curriculum for pupils aged 15 and 16. Leaders have planned well for this growth, which will cater mostly for pupils currently at the school. The additional numbers in the application will give capacity across all phases of the school. Leaders do not intend to simply add 24 new pupils to Years 10 and 11.
- Staff have designed a new curriculum that is specifically tailored to meet the needs of pupils at this school. They know that adding a key stage 4 curriculum to the school's current programme of learning will not be enough. Because of this, a review of the key stage 3 curriculum has also taken place. Pupils currently in key stage 3 will now follow two different pathways in preparation for their transition to Years 10 and 11.
- The revised curriculum has adequate breadth. Assuming the material changes are approved, leaders propose a curriculum that offers current pupils more options to study a wider range of subjects. This will be partly realised by employing additional suitably qualified teaching staff.
- The curriculum will offer appropriate accredited qualifications. Current plans include access to GCSE and a range of other accredited awards such as BTEC National Diplomas and/or sports leadership, outdoor education, life skills and such.
- The proposed curriculum is supported by a revised curriculum policy, schemes of work and plans. It takes into account pupils' age, aptitudes and individual needs. It promotes fundamental British values. It provides for age-appropriate relationships and sex education. Leaders have well-developed plans to extend the school's offer for careers education and guidance should the material changes be approved.

*Paragraphs 3–4*

- Leaders have started the process to recruit the additional teaching staff needed to implement the proposed changes. These new members of staff will join a well-

established team who are particularly experienced in providing for pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

- Leaders have ensured that current staff have ongoing access to professional development opportunities to support them in delivering the proposed curriculum effectively. New staff will access similar training while bringing additional expertise in their different curriculum areas.
- Leaders already have suitably effective processes in place to ensure that the quality of education pupils receive is at least good. The school is resourced well to help deliver the curriculum leaders intend. This includes a new therapy suite run by suitably qualified specialist staff as part of the new accommodation at the school.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the relevant independent school standards (the standards) in part 1 are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

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

### *Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)*

- The school's revised curriculum provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. This includes for the extended age range the school is proposing as part of this material change.
- The school has a bespoke personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. This is delivered as part of the school's core curriculum and across all phases of the school. Leaders have ensured that the PSHE programme has the flexibility to respond to the specific needs of cohorts, groups or individual pupils. This will continue to be the case if the proposed changes are approved.
- The PSHE programme is supplemented by a range of external visits or visitors to the school. Additionally, weekly sessions promoting skills for life and social, emotional and mental health help develop pupils' sense of self-esteem and confidence.
- The personal development of pupils was judged to be outstanding at the last standard inspection. Following this visit to the school, the lead inspector has no reason to doubt that this aspect of the school's work continues to be strong.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the standards in part 2 are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

## Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The culture to safeguard pupils continues to be strong here. Leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND. Leaders are particularly aware of the challenges older pupils might bring to their work to keep all pupils safe.
- The school's routines and systems to keep pupils and staff safe are well developed. Staff know what to do if they have concerns. Safeguarding training is up to date and ongoing. Staff are well versed in the localised contextual risks faced by pupils who attend the school. The oversight of those in positions of governance is sound.
- The school's policies linked to keeping pupils safe are appropriate. These include the

safeguarding policy which meets current guidelines and is published on the website.

*Paragraphs 11, 12, 14, 16–16(b)*

- The school meets the requirements of part 3 well. This is particularly the case with the standards linked to health and safety, including risk assessments. The proprietor has good strategic oversight of these aspects, enabling local leaders to call on expert advice and support when required.
- The school's facilities manager is knowledgeable and manages day-to-day health and safety diligently in collaboration with other leaders. Aspects such as fire risk assessments or testing for legionella are covered well. Fire alarm tests, emergency lighting and fire extinguisher checks are carried out in a timely manner.
- Policies for first aid, fire, risk assessments and health and safety are all in place. Staff have undertaken a range of training to help ensure that the school is a safe place to be. This includes appropriate first-aid and fire marshal training for key staff.
- Ratios of staff to pupils are high. Leaders understand the importance of ensuring that staff have the capacity to support pupils when needed. Routines are well established for the start and finish of the school day. Breaktimes are similarly well organised. A tour of classrooms and communal areas during this inspection showed suitable levels of supervision and the school to be a calm yet purposeful place to learn.
- Leaders have planned carefully regarding levels of supervision and oversight of pupils should the material changes be approved. This includes how the existing and new buildings will be utilised. Sensible adaptations to the way older pupils move around the school are proposed. Leaders have thought very clearly about the impact the changes will have on pupils presently at the school.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the standards checked in part 3 are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

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

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

- The school's single central record meets current requirements. It contains all the information required by part 4. Leaders have a clear understanding of the purpose of checks that need to be made on adults at the school.
- Procedures to recruit staff are well established. Part of this work is carried out by a specialist human resource team provided by the proprietor company. However, local leaders at the school have close oversight of the recruitment process and are responsible for ensuring that all aspects are carried out with complete fidelity.
- Leaders and those in positions of governance have undertaken appropriate training regarding the recruitment of staff. Appropriate checks are in place to ensure that the proprietor has close oversight of the process.
- The school does not use supply agency staff.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the relevant standards in part 4 will continue to be met if the material changes are approved.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraphs 22–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)*

- The school had its first standard inspection in December 2021 when all relevant aspects of part 5 were found to be met. The proprietor has continued to maintain the original premises to a high standard. The accommodation is fit for purpose. It provides well for the pupils, staff and visitors.
- A dedicated medical room is available. Toilet facilities meet requirements. Aspects such as lighting, acoustics and areas for pupils to play or follow the school's physical education programme continue to be well provided for.
- Since the last standard inspection, the proprietor has added capacity to the teaching and communal spaces available at the school. A new building is complete and provides modern, spacious accommodation. It contains three full-size classrooms, other teaching spaces and a therapy suite which includes office space and a sensory immersion room.
- Leaders have plans to repurpose part of the established school accommodation should the material change be granted. This will allow older pupils to follow a school day more akin to traditional secondary education, including moving between classrooms and teaching spaces throughout the day.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the relevant standards in part 5 are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

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

### *Paragraph 34(1)–34(2)*

- Leaders have a clear rationale for the material changes applied for. The extension to the age range will allow for pupils currently at the school to continue their studies without having to move to another provision.
- Additional pupil numbers will enable the school to grow at a manageable rate while providing more capacity to improve the breadth of the curriculum offer. While leaders do not rule out some pupils joining the school during Years 10 or 11, they clearly understand that careful consideration would be needed if this were to be the case.
- Leaders at the school demonstrate a good understanding of the requirements of the standards. The proprietor company has appropriate systems in place to maintain a strategic overview of the school. Aspects such as monitoring of safeguarding and the quality of education the school provides are covered adequately and consistently over time.
- Governance of the school continues to be provided by an officer employed by the proprietor acting as chair and headteachers from other schools owned by the proprietor. Independent external scrutiny is now provided by a consultant employed as a school improvement partner. Leaders see this as an important step in their work to improve the school further.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the standards in part 8 are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

## **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	147207
DfE registration number	886/6157
Inspection number	10299928

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 school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Ben Price
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,670 to £84,865
Telephone number	01634 968 420
Website	<a href="http://www.medwaygreenschool.co.uk">www.medwaygreenschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:mgs-office@medwaygreenschool.co.uk">mgs-office@medwaygreenschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	7 to 9 December 2021

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 14	5 to 16	5 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	50	Up to 80	Up to 80

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Up to 56	Up to 80
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Up to 56	Up to 80
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Up to 56	Up to 80
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Up to 56	Up to 80

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	12	19
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

## Information about this school

- Medway Green School opened in October 2019. A material change inspection to consider the proprietor's request to increase the age range and number of pupils on roll took place in May 2021. The school's first standard inspection took place in December 2021 when the overall effectiveness was judged to be good and all the standards were found to be met.
- The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs and associated conditions. All pupils have education, health and care plans and are placed by their local authorities.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the proprietor has applied to make changes to the school's registration. The proprietor wishes to increase the number and age range of pupils on roll. This was the first inspection regarding these particular material changes.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding and the school's curriculum. He also met with the proprietor's regional director, who is also the chair of the governing board.
- The inspector toured the school, visiting classrooms and talking to staff and pupils. He also assessed the suitability of the new accommodation recently built on the school site.
- The inspector checked a wide range of policies, records and documentation in relation to the specific standards that were checked at this inspection.

## Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector



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