

Howard House School

Netherton Colliery, Bedlington, Northumberland NE22 6BB

Inspection date

4 October 2023

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school is implemented

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- There is a safeguarding policy in place. This is made available to parents and carers on the school's website. During the inspection, the policy was updated to reflect the latest government guidance in 'Keeping children safe in education' 2023.
- There is a trained designated safeguarding lead and several trained deputy safeguarding leads in the school. This means that there is always a member of staff on hand to deal with any safeguarding concerns.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They have completed training, including the latest guidance from government. Training is led by the designated safeguarding lead. External companies provide additional contextual safeguarding training to both staff and pupils.
- Pupils spoken with all said that they had a trusted adult to go to and who would ensure they receive help.
- The school has transitioned to a new system for recording safeguarding concerns. All staff have received training. A review of the system shows that staff are reporting their concerns. Appropriate and timely action is taken by the designated safeguarding lead.

Paragraphs 11, 12

- The premises are maintained to a high standard. It is clean and tidy throughout the building.
- Records show that regular checks for health and safety and fire safety are taking place. Pupils are able to explain what happens during the regular fire safety drills. Records are comprehensive. There are site safety checks carried out by staff, and fire safety equipment maintenance is carried out regularly by external contractors.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils are supervised throughout the day, including at social times. In lessons, there are always two adults in the classroom. Pupils who need extra support receive this from the pastoral team. If the material change is granted, the maximum class size will

increase from four to five pupils with two adults.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- There is an appropriate risk assessment policy in place. It sets out the processes for carrying out and implementing risk assessments in the school.
- A number of risk assessments were reviewed and found to be sufficiently detailed to reduce risks to pupils.
- A fire risk assessment is completed on an annual basis. Where actions to improve have been identified, leaders are making good progress on completing the actions.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to continue to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) approves the material change.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18(1), 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(2)(f), 18(3)

- Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff at the school to ensure they are safe to work with children. Personnel files contain evidence of all checks.

Paragraphs 19(1), 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(2)(e), 19(3)

- Leaders are aware of and make the necessary checks on staff who are from supply agencies.

Paragraphs 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 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)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- All relevant checks have been carried out on the proprietor body.
- All checks are recorded on the single central record (SCR). It is in electronic form. Leaders make regular checks on the accuracy of the SCR. The school administrator is very clear about the checks that are made, how they are recorded and why they are important.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the DfE approves the material change.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 23(2), 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)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- All toilets in the school are clearly labelled for use by pupils or staff. Each one is a single locking room. The water temperature is fit for purpose and does not pose a scalding risk. Soap and hand towels are available to use.

- Showers are available should pupils wish to use them.
- The medical room is fitted with a bed and toilet and washing facilities. It is always available for use and contains sufficient first-aid equipment.
- The school and the site are very well maintained. The classrooms are light and have blinds for particularly sunny days. The acoustics are appropriate.
- External lighting is in place to ensure a safe exit from school when it is dark.
- Drinking-water is clearly labelled and readily available to pupils. In the pupils' kitchen area, there is a kettle and a microwave for pupils to use. This happens only with strict staff supervision.

Paragraphs 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- There is a large space outside of the school for pupils to socialise. There are picnic tables and an area available for pupils to play sports if they wish.
- Pupils follow a physical education curriculum. Aspects of this could take place on the school site; however, it currently takes place in off-site facilities.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the DfE approves the material change.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34, 34(a), 34(b), 34(c)

- School leaders have a strong awareness of the standards. This is because there are regular checks that the school complies with them. Through this, challenge and accountability from the head of estates and the director of education ensure that the school meets the required standards.
- Leaders receive regular training and support. There are networks of headteachers and designated safeguarding leads, for example, across the company where problems are solved and good practice is shared.
- Leaders spoken with during the inspection were knowledgeable about the school. They are clear that expanding the number on roll is the next step in their journey. They can articulate plans to maintain the quality of education while increasing in size.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the DfE approves 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	132855
DfE registration number	929/6046
Inspection number	10302568

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	Young Foundations Ltd
Chair	Niall Kelly
Headteacher	Derek Weelands
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,575 to £75,075
Telephone number	01670293160
Website	www.howardhouseschool.com
Email address	letasha.merrin@youngfoundations.com
Date of previous standard inspection	4 to 6 May 2022

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	10 to 18	10 to 18	10 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	27	40	40

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	27	40
Number of part-time pupils	None	None
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	27	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	26	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	27	40

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	11	11
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

Information about this school

- The school's last standard inspection took place from 4 to 6 May 2022. A material change inspection to add additional premises and pupils on roll took place on 30 November 2022.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for pupils or students aged between 10 and 18 years old who have social, emotional or mental health difficulties and/or autism.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan or have applied for one.
- The school is currently using one provider of alternative education provision. This is Northumbria Youth Action and is based in North Shields.

Information about this inspection

- This material change inspection was commissioned by the DfE to consider whether the school should be granted a change to increase the number of pupils on its school roll.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the director of education and the designated safeguarding lead. She also met with pupils.
- The inspector reviewed policies and records for the standards relevant to this material change inspection. She also reviewed safeguarding records, personnel files and the single central record.
- The inspector toured the premises and reviewed health and safety and fire safety documentation.

Inspection team

Debbie Redshaw, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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