

Smallbrook School

Units 1 – 4, Sleaf Industrial Estate, Sleaf, Nr. Wem, Shropshire SY4 3HE

Inspection date

29 November 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(a), 7(b)

- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance. The policy is reviewed regularly and is published on the school's website.
- All staff receive regular training to ensure that their knowledge is up to date. Regular briefings and updates help keep safeguarding at the forefront of everybody's mind. Staff are well trained to recognise the potential signs of abuse and act promptly when they have concerns.

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

- Leaders have a detailed health and safety policy. They ensure that all relevant checks are undertaken and that the premises is maintained to a high standard.
- A thorough fire risk assessment for the premises has been carried out. Leaders have detailed evacuation procedures. A fire safety logbook is in place and leaders ensure they carry out the appropriate checks and tests. The school carries out regular fire drills.
- The school has comprehensive risk assessments in place. All are bespoke and illustrate that leaders have a clear understanding of identifying and mitigating risks and hazards.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders have carefully considered the supervision of pupils and have put in place an appropriate staffing structure in readiness for an increase in pupil numbers, should the material change be granted.
- Leaders have ensured that these independent school standards (the 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 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)(c) 21(6)

- The single central record contains the full range of pre-employment checks. The school has appropriate recruitment procedures in place. This includes carrying out prohibition checks for anyone in regulated activity and carrying out a medical check prior to appointment. They ensure that they complete all recruitment checks before any new staff take up their post at the school.
- Leaders are aware of the checks that need to be made on supply staff.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 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), 29(1), 29(1)(a) 29(1)(b)

- Leaders propose to increase the number of pupils attending the school. In readiness for this, leaders have had an extensive redevelopment of the school's buildings and grounds to accommodate the planned increase in pupil numbers.
- The school premises are clean, well maintained and welcoming for pupils. The school is tidy and decorated appropriately.
- All of the rooms in the new buildings are well lit and have good acoustics. There are six new classrooms and extensive therapy rooms, including an immersive room in the main building. These are well equipped to accommodate groups of up to four pupils with appropriate adult supervision.
- The school has a well-presented cafeteria area and a food technology room, with industry standard equipment. There is also a well-equipped gym, used for both recreation and classes.
- The building has appropriate toilets and washing facilities available for the sole use of pupils. Cold drinking-water is clearly labelled and is available throughout the day. The cold water supplies are in separate areas from the toilet facilities.
- The existing outdoor provision will easily accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers should the material change request be approved. There is an outdoor area with space for pupils to play. There is also an extensive woodland area for outdoor learning opportunities and a key stage 2 trim-trail.
- 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

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) 34(1)(c)

- Leaders are vigilant in promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- The proprietor and school leaders demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards. Leaders and the proprietor have clear procedures for assuring themselves that the independent standards are consistently met, including those relating to the safety and welfare of pupils.
- Leaders have developed the school site and educational provision to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers. At the time of the material change inspection, there were places for 80 full-time pupils on roll. Leaders propose to increase this number to 95 full-time pupils. Leaders have demonstrated their commitment to maintaining the quality of education for all pupils while increasing the number of pupils on roll.
- All of the independent school standards checked are likely to be met if the proposed material change is implemented.

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	134000
DfE registration number	893/6026
Inspection number	10309670

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	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Andrew Huxley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£73,736 to £86,909
Telephone number	01939 233042
Website	www.smallbrookschoo.org.uk
Email address	deborah.dalton@smallbrookschoo.org.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	21 to 23 September 2021

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 19	7 to 19	7 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	63	95	95

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	63	95
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	63	95
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	63	95
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	63	95

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	39	39
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	22	41

Information about this school

- Smallbrook School is an independent day special school for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE to establish if the school would be likely to meet all of the relevant standards if the proposed material change, to increase the number of pupils in the school to 90, is implemented. This is the school's third material change inspection.
- The inspection 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 proprietor's midlands regional director, who is also the chair of the governing body, the school business manager, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, and the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector toured the accommodation with the headteacher and the regional director.
- The inspector scrutinised documents relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding documents, including the single central record.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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