

Mackenzie Thorpe Centre

Beech Grove, South Bank, Middlesbrough TS6 6SU

Inspection date

13 December 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

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)(f), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- Leaders have carefully considered the curriculum requirements to meet the needs of children in early years. They understand the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage and have made sure that the wider curriculum opportunities are a good fit with those required for the proposed youngest children. Proposed plans for the education and care of four-year-olds are suitable, should the material change be approved.
- The curriculum is appropriately focused on developing children's speech and social skills and on providing emotional support for them. Adults are aware of children's starting points and plan to meet their needs appropriately.
- Leaders have looked carefully at their provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They recognise the need for all staff to be experts in providing appropriately for these children's needs. Children's specific needs are clearly identified, and relevant information is shared with the staff who work with them.
- All of the independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

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

Paragraphs 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders have given careful thought to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders know that being able to form and manage relationships with other children, older pupils and adults is an area with which all pupils will need

significant support. Leaders place significant emphasis on celebrating children's and pupils' successes and building their self-esteem and confidence.

- Leaders have planned to provide a wide range of activities to enrich children's learning and to support their personal development.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7(a), 7(b)

- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy in place. It reflects current statutory guidance. Leaders' arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and pupils are thorough. The school carries out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff to work with children.
- Leaders ensure that staff undertake appropriate safeguarding training. Staff know how to spot the signs of abuse. Staff understand the importance of reporting any concerns about a younger child's welfare. These include low-level concerns and how younger children may present with these. Staff are well trained. The school's fastidious safeguarding team supports them well.
- Pupils who currently attend the school say that they feel safe at the school. The site is secure. Staff create pupil-specific risk assessments and individual plans to support pupils to manage their behaviour. Staff are aware of the additional requirements needed for children in early years. All entrances and exits are appropriately secured, and levels of supervision are high.

Paragraphs 11, 12

- Leaders have put suitable policies in place for health and safety, managing fire risk, ensuring compliance with fire safety regulations, and first aid. Leaders ensure that the necessary health and safety checks are consistently carried out. External professionals complete some of these checks to ensure that there are no issues. Leaders carry out their health and safety responsibilities effectively. As a result, younger children will be kept safe.
- The school's buildings and the outside spaces are well maintained. Leaders have made significant improvements to the accommodation to make sure that it is suitable for future growth in the number of pupils on roll.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders make sure that staffing levels allow for the appropriate supervision of children in early years and pupils throughout the school. This includes both during the school day and for any off-site visits. The school is suitably staffed. Staff have been carefully selected and are well trained.

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

- The risk assessment policy includes information about a range of different risk assessments. These include risk assessments for using different aspects of the school site, for off-site visits, and for individual pupils and children. The policy outlines clearly

for staff how to assess and evaluate risk, who is responsible for these processes and how often risk assessments should be reviewed.

- Individual risk assessments for pupils are highly detailed. Leaders make sure that these accurately reflect pupils' individual circumstances. Leaders can demonstrate how they will complete these documents for children in early years.
- All the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

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

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c), 21(6)

- Leaders and those involved in the appointment of staff have received recent training in the recruitment of staff. The single central record of pre-employment checks on staff contains the required information.
- Leaders seek suitable references and carry out online searches as part of the recruitment process. All checks required are completed before a new staff member takes up their position.
- The school does not intend to use the services of supply staff. However, leaders know what information they need in order to confirm that a supply member of staff is suitable to work with children.
- These standards were met at the time of the last inspection and continue to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 23(2)

- There are sufficient, appropriate toilets and showering facilities in the school. These are suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers and proposed change in the age of children being admitted. There are suitable facilities for the use of pupils with disabilities.

Paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- Leaders have ensured that a high-quality, dedicated medical room is available to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils. This includes washing facilities and is near a toilet. The school does not currently cater for pupils with complex medical needs.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- The classrooms are light and bright. They are well ventilated, and both lighting and acoustics are suitable. Classrooms and facilities are appropriate for the requirements of the proposed youngest children. Leaders have paid attention to children's enjoyment, welfare and safety in the new area they have created in the school.

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

- Drinking water is clearly labelled and is available throughout the building and near the new classrooms. Washing facilities are also available close to the learning areas. The temperature of the hot water does not pose a risk of scalding.

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

- There is sufficient and varied outside space for pupils and children to play and explore safely. External and internal play space is large enough for children to develop their physical skills. Leaders have appropriate risk assessments in place to ensure the safety of pupils and children in early years.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- The school has published its safeguarding policy on its website. The proprietor body has ensured that this policy is updated at least annually to reflect the most recent statutory guidance.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- Leaders have a good understanding of the standards. The proprietor has ensured that senior leaders are equipped with the necessary knowledge and expertise to meet the needs of pupils, should the material changes be approved.
- The proprietor body has already developed the school site and educational provision to accommodate its proposed changes. At the time of the material change inspection, there were 30 pupils on roll. Leaders propose to increase this number gradually to 45 pupils. There is sufficient space and staff to accommodate the proposed changes while ensuring the welfare and safety of pupils.
- Leaders are ambitious for the school. The proprietor maintains close oversight. Leaders are committed to providing good-quality education and care for pupils. They are determined that this will continue to be the case should the material changes be implemented.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is 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	147914
DfE registration number	807/6002
Inspection number	10310930

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	Independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	North East Autism Society
Chair	Rakesh Choppra
Headteacher	Mark Ellison
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,558 to £134,121
Telephone number	01642 810730
Website	www.ne-as.org.uk/mackenzie-thorpe-centre
Email address	info@ne-as.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	9 to 11 November 2021

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 19	4 to 19	4 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	30	45	45

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	30	45
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	30	45
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	30	45
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	30	45

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	8	9
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	43	61

Information about this school

- The school was registered with the Department for Education (DfE) in August 2020. The school's first standard inspection was conducted in November 2021, when it was judged to be good. The school met all of the independent school standards at this time.
- The Mackenzie Thorpe Centre is an independent special school based in South Bank, Middlesbrough within Redcar and Cleveland local authority. It provides for learners aged five to 19 years.
- The school is part of the North East Autism Society.
- The school's mission is 'working together to inspire, support and equip people with autism and neurodiversity to fulfil their potential in life'.

- The school caters for the needs of pupils with a diagnosis of autism. Some pupils have additional needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs, and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE to consider the school's request for a material change. The proprietor body would like to increase the maximum permitted number of pupils on the school roll from 30 to 45 pupils. Additionally, it would like to change its current permitted age range of five to 19 years to an age range of four to 19 years.
- The purpose of the inspection was to establish whether the school is likely to meet the relevant standards if the registration authority were to grant the requested material changes.
- The inspection was conducted with two working days' notice.
- The inspector scrutinised the information and policies that are published on the school's website.
- The inspector met with the principal, a vice-principal, some staff and pupils, and a director of education for the proprietor.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review the school's arrangements for safeguarding. The inspector looked at the school's single central record of the checks that leaders carry out before staff are employed to work at the school.
- The inspector reviewed additional documentation, including the school's health and safety policy, risk assessments and fire safety checks.
- The inspector toured the school site with senior leaders.

Inspection team

Marcus Newby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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