

The Grange School

18–21 Church Gate, Thatcham, Berkshire RG19 3PN

Inspection date

5 February 2024

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 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) to 2A(1)(b) and 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2)

- The school's curriculum is ambitiously designed and aligns with the national curriculum. For the material change, subject leaders have thought carefully about the key stage 3 content that pupils will study. It builds on what pupils will have learned in the primary 'nurture' phase. Knowledge is identified and is logically sequenced within subjects and units of work. However, the school can see where further refinements are needed so that all the steps of knowledge are clearly laid out.
- Pupils arrive at the school with varied starting points. Therefore, curriculum thinking spans from early years through to key stage 3. Education, health and care (EHC) plans inform what needs to happen for each pupil. The school breaks targets down into precise goals for pupils to work towards.
- For pupils who are learning to read, there is a systematic phonics programme in place. The school intends making sensible adaptations for secondary-aged pupils who may not yet be able to read fluently. There is a big push on pupils accessing high-quality books so that they mature as confident and well-read young people.
- At key stage 3, pupils will be part of the 'flourish' phase. They will continue to access an academic and enrichment curriculum. Pupils' personal development is a high priority. There will be a personalised careers programme for all pupils. The school places great importance on each pupil's aspirations. The school's therapies team will also support pupils' development and well-being.
- The school has planned its key stage 3 relationships and sex education programme in accordance with government guidelines. The school will involve parents and carers and be mindful of pupils' emotional readiness.

Paragraphs 3 and 4

- When a pupil starts at the school, they experience a well-designed transition phase that provides the foundations to access academic learning. The school's approach to

assessing pupils when they join is comprehensive. The testing of pupils' literacy and numeracy knowledge establishes a baseline on which to shape each pupil's curriculum journey. The child's voice is at the centre of the school's curriculum approach. Staff work very closely with parents through this transition phase to help pupils settle and feel at ease. The school uses all the information it has so that each child can see themselves in their planned learning journey for the academic year ahead.

- The school is committed to small class sizes for its key stage 3 provision. This mirrors what is already in place at key stage 2. Teaching staff comprise both primary- and secondary-phase specialists.
- All of the independent school standards (the standards) in part 1 are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

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

Paragraph 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The school prides itself on celebrating diversity and seeing every pupil as unique. It intends for this to continue with its material change request to expand into key stage 3. This will include pupils developing as global citizens. They will explore fundamental British values, including UK laws and the importance of democracy. A diversity calendar for the school year will expose pupils to life in modern Britain.
- The outdoor learning programme and sustainability will feature prominently in the curriculum. Pupils will have regular opportunities to grow food, learn about sustainable futures and engage with a wider community, such as local businesses and organisations.
- All of the standards in part 2 are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7 to 7(b)

- A strong safeguarding culture exists at the school. Leaders know pupils very well, and there are clear procedures to raise concerns about the welfare of a child.
- There is a comprehensive suite of training so that staff are kept up to date with what they need to know. Helpful 'seven-minute briefings' keep adults thinking about safeguarding. These include topics on social media and the 'Prevent' duty.
- Adults care deeply for pupils, and the proprietor body ensures that it keeps itself informed about pupils' safety and well-being at school.
- The school's safeguarding policy is up to date with statutory guidance and is published on the school's website.

Paragraphs 11, 12 and 14

- A knowledgeable proprietor body oversees health and safety. Leaders demonstrate a thorough approach in wanting an increase in pupil numbers and an additional key stage. There are timely checks on the premises to maintain the excellent standards that currently exist. Fire safety procedures are practised with pupils and staff and all

records are kept meticulously. The proprietor body continues to be compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

- Planned staff-to-pupil ratios are high, and the school is ready to admit more pupils.

Paragraph 16 to 16(b)

- All necessary risk assessments are in place. The proprietor body has considered these in the building, around the school grounds and for any off-site activities. There is rigorous oversight and monitoring.
- All of the relevant standards in part 3 are likely to be met if the request for the material change 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) and 21(5) to 21(6)

- Robust recruitment procedures enable all the appropriate pre-employment checks to be carried out on the suitability of staff. The proprietor body ensures that these are verified before an adult is allowed to work in the school.
- The single central record contains all required information outlined by statutory guidance, including for those in management roles. There are regular checks to provide assurances of all suitability checks.
- The school does not use agency staff but is aware of what verification checks would be needed.
- All of the standards in part 4 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) to 23(1)(c), 24(1) to 24(2) and 25 to 29(1)(b)

- The school site comprises separate buildings for primary and secondary phases. The facilities are ready to accommodate key stage 3 provision. There is an additional building that the school plans to renovate so it can expand into key stage 4 in the future.
- There is a clear vision and purpose to the school's learning environment. Throughout the school, standards of cleanliness are very high. Classrooms are inviting spaces for pupils and cater well for any sensory needs. These are well-sized rooms to meet planned pupil numbers. There are specialist rooms to teach science and cooking, as well as therapy rooms to support pupils' individual needs.
- Lighting and acoustics in rooms are appropriate and have been considered very carefully by leaders. There is plenty of natural light throughout the school buildings.
- Single-sex toilets and washing facilities are maintained well. There are additional toilets for disabled use and separate adult facilities.
- The medical room is equipped with what is needed and is situated near to an accessible toilet and handwashing facility.

- There is clear signage throughout the school for drinking and non-drinking water.
- Pupils have ample space outside to play and socialise.
- Pupils over the age of 11 will be able to use changing rooms and showers off site as part of the provision for physical education.
- All of the standards in part 5 are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- Committed and diligent leaders set high aspirations for the school and its pupils. Since opening the school, they have grown pupil numbers steadily. There is a clear and compelling vision for the future and planned material change. So far, the school's admissions process and transition period for pupils have worked well, and parents have been very positive about the school's actions.
- The proprietor body is experienced in running schools, and quality assurance processes are firmly in place. The governance structure enables the proprietor body to hold leaders firmly to account and assure itself on education standards.
- There is a continuous cycle of processes through which the proprietor body can be confident that the school meets the standards consistently.
- There is transparency and open dialogue between school leaders and the proprietor body. The operations director for education and the chief executive regularly visit to check how the school is progressing in its first year of operation.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met should the material change request 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	149637
DfE registration number	869/6022
Inspection number	10317713

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	Special school
School status	Independent day school
Proprietor	Phoenix Learning & Care Limited
Chair	Jonathan Pain
Headteacher	Rebecca Shaw
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,311
Telephone number	0330 135 8204
Website	www.phoenixschools.org.uk/grange
Email address	grange@phoenixschools.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	4 July 2023

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 11	7 to 14	7 to 14
Number of pupils on the school roll	10	35	35

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Not applicable

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	10	35
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10	35
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	10	35
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	10	35

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	9	13
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this school

- The Grange School opened in September 2023. The school caters for pupils with a diagnosis of autism. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is part of Phoenix Learning & Care, which runs five special schools and a further education college across the south of England and Wales. Additionally, it runs a number of children's homes and adult care settings.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine if the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material change of increasing the age range to 14 and the number of pupils to 35 is implemented.
- This is the school's first material change inspection since its initial pre-registration inspection in July 2023.
- The inspection focused on: all the quality of education standards in part 1; all the standards for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in part 2; 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 on premises and accommodation; and the standards in part 8 relating to the quality of leadership and management of schools.
- The school's safeguarding procedures were explored by the lead inspector. He considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first. He also reviewed checks and procedures for the safer recruitment of adults. These requirements of the standards are met.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and operations director for education. He met with the chief executive of the proprietor body. He also spoke to some staff and pupils.
- The inspector toured the school premises. He also looked at a wide range of documents and policies provided by the school or available via the website.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024