

Preston Bridge School

1 Lower Polsham Road, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2AF

Inspection date

13 June 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 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7-7 (b)

- The proprietor ensures safeguarding arrangements are effective. The school has a detailed, up to date safeguarding policy. This is published on the school's website. The policy covers all elements of the latest statutory guidance, including 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023'. The policy has comprehensive information about what is expected of staff in terms of protecting pupils. It also clearly details the signs of abuse and how staff should share and record concerns.
- The school has established an effective model for the leadership of safeguarding. Appropriate consideration has been made for the split site school. The designated safeguarding lead, who is appropriately skilled and knowledgeable about safeguarding, oversees the safeguarding leadership team. This allows her to hold strategic oversight, while the headteacher and deputy headteacher who act as deputy designated leads share operational oversight of the two sites. All members of this leadership team have level three training delivered through local area services. This helps ensure strong contextual understanding, while allowing the school to utilise strong relationships with the commissioning local areas.
- The proprietor has considered carefully the impact of increasing pupil numbers on safeguarding arrangements. Current arrangements are already robust. This includes effective systems and processes to record and share key information across both sites. Robust plans are in place to increase the capacity of the safeguarding team in readiness for any further growth. For example, the school business manager and relational support leads are currently undertaking level three training.

Paragraph 11 and 12

- The Spaghetti Bridge group has an established, shared health and safety policy. School leaders utilise this to ensure they have effective oversight of all elements of health and safety. Staff work collaboratively and diligently to ensure the policy is implemented in full. This includes undertaking regular and ongoing checks relating to health and safety. For example, there are regular audits and checks on the school

sites, matters relating to fire safety, asbestos, legionella, the condition of the buildings and so on.

- The school buildings comply fully with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Fire signs, exits and extinguishers are clearly indicated and suitably located throughout the school's buildings. Regular, appropriate checks are made on fire safety equipment by qualified and experienced staff or specialists. Refurbishments to the recently acquired floors in the Harbourside Building have new fire safety equipment. Leaders have already considered the implications on fire evacuation procedures should the school grow. Policy and procedures are well placed to be upscaled should the material change be granted.

Paragraph 14

- The school ensures that pupils are appropriately supervised. This includes in lessons and at less formal times of the school day. The school benefits from communal areas where pupils like to meet and socialise. There is also well presented outside area at the Harbourside site. The school has considered carefully how they will increase support for pupils to ensure that they remain appropriately supervised if the material change is granted. This includes maintaining standard staff ratios as part of the school offer should numbers rise.

Paragraphs 16-16(b)

- The school's risk assessment policy is effective. It outlines clearly the expectations for staff to evaluate risk and mitigate potential hazards. Site risk assessments are in place and reviewed regularly. Ongoing risk assessments are undertaken in relation to the school's curriculum, trips, visits and any changes in the school's offer. Staff regularly and routinely complete reviews of risk assessments to ensure pupils' safety. For example, there are detailed risk assessments within pupils' relational plans that ensure pupils' needs are met effectively.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in Part 3 checked on this inspection are likely to be met if the material change is agreed.

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

Paragraph 18(2)-18(2)(e), 18(3)-19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3)-21(3)(b), 20(6)-20(6)(c), 21(1)-(4), 21(5)-21(6), 21(7)(a)-21(7)(b)

- The proprietor ensures that safer recruitment processes are robust. When new staff are appointed, the school undertakes the appropriate checks to ensure they are safe to work with pupils. Similar checks are made for those in governance positions or undertaking specific regulated activity, but who are not employed by the school, for example peripatetic music teachers, caterers and cleaners. All checks are recorded diligently on a single central register. The register is regularly checked by senior leaders and leaders within the Spaghetti Bridge group. These established processes mean the school is well placed to maintain safe staffing if the school grows. The proprietor has ensured that Part 4 of the independent school standards are likely to remain met if the material change is granted.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 22, 23(1)(a)-23(2), 24(1)-24(3), 25, 26, 27(a)-27(b), 28(1)-28(2)(b), 29(1)-29(2), 31(a)-31(c)

- The proprietor has sufficient plans to ensure that all elements of Part 5 of the independent school standards are likely to remain met if the material change is granted. The newly acquired, refurbished floors in the Harbourside site have suitable toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils. These are varied between single sex toilets on the ground floor and individual cubicle toilets in various spaces on different floors. All cubicles can be secured from the inside and have individual sinks. A purpose-built medical room, already within the used part of the building, sits near the main entrance of the school. The medical room has a sink, lockable medical cabinet and is near a toilet in the reception area.
- The site will benefit from a useful mix of 'base rooms', purpose-built classrooms and breakout spaces, which will supplement and add to the already established, effective curriculum. Classrooms are light, airy and have appropriate acoustic conditions for learning. They are well designed and appropriate for their intended use, including a purpose-built science laboratory. Refurbishments have been completed to a very high standard. Currently used classrooms are similarly maintained well.
- There is an enclosed outdoor area, which benefits from external lighting and emergency lighting. This is appropriate for recreational use. Pupils attend a local leisure centre for their physical education, which includes single-sex changing rooms and showers. The standards in Part 5 are likely to remain met should the material change be granted.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The proprietor has ensured that the leadership of Preston Bridge School is effective. This is demonstrated in leaders' plans for the material change, which are thorough, systematic and detailed. Adaptions to the newly acquired floors of the Harbourside building make very good use of the available spaces. Standard furnishings and considered planning ensure that these adaptions are in line with the school's current, effective curriculum offer. This means staff can implement the current approach for more pupils with ease. Furthermore, the approach means any growth will have minimal impact on pupils already placed at the school.
- Leaders put pupils' welfare and interests first. Policies and processes are established around the identification and meeting of pupils' needs. This includes eliciting pupils' views about their education and aspirations. The curriculum is designed effectively in order to meet pupils' needs. Leaders' plans to extend provision by utilising the bespoke classrooms that have arisen from the acquisition of extra space are well conceived. As a result, there is compelling evidence that the proprietor will ensure that Part 8 of the independent school standards will remain met if the material change is 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	148621
DfE registration number	880/6008
Inspection number	10326033

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	Spaghetti Bridge Ltd
Chair	Steven Bradshaw
Headteacher	Luke McKinley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,950
Telephone number	01803 926 555
Website	www.prestonbridgeschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@prestonbridgeschool.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	28 to 30 June 2022

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	6 to 19	6 to 19	6 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	50	115	115

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	49	115
Number of part-time pupils	1	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	50	115
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	50	115
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	50	115

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	16	30
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	20	37

Information about this school

- Preston Bridge School was registered by the Department for Education on 26 July 2021. It is an independent special school in Paignton. The school functions across two sites, within short driving distance of each other.
- The school's first standard inspection took place in June 2022, when it was judged to be good, with all independent school standards met.
- The school is a specialist provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have education, health and care plans. Pupils are placed at the school by their representative local authorities.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to the proprietor's request to increase the capacity from providing for up to 75 to up to 115. This was the second material change to the school's registration.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the regional operations lead, the designated safeguarding lead and other senior leaders.
- The inspector toured the harbourside site with leaders to check the suitability and safety of the newly acquired floors to the accommodation that would facilitate an increase in pupil numbers.
- The inspector reviewed and evaluated documents provided by the school, including risk assessments, policies, the single central record and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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