

Pierview Academy

42-44 Harmer Street, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2AX

Inspection dates

15 July 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 to 7(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- Leaders' work to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff at the school is sound. Safeguarding has a high priority here. Staff understand the additional barriers pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) face both in and out of school.
- Basic aspects such as statutory and ongoing safeguarding training and procedures to follow when staff have concerns are well established. Safeguarding records are appropriately detailed. The school's work to safeguard pupils never stops, including during holiday periods or at weekends. Leaders' work with other agencies is key in ensuring that pupils and their families receive the timely support required.
- Procedures to recruit staff are sound. The oversight of the proprietor in ensuring that safeguarding has the highest priority is effective. This includes ensuring that pupils access an appropriately designed curriculum that supports their own understanding of the potential hazards linked to the local context and life outside of their school.
- The school's policies linked to keeping pupils safe are appropriate. These include the safeguarding policy which meets current guidelines and is published on the website.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 14 and 16 to 16(b)

- The proprietor has effective systems in place to ensure that the requirements of part 3 are met. Statutory polices are in place, understood and applied. Staff with specific responsibilities linked to health and safety are experienced and understand their roles. This includes site staff at the school and the proprietor's managing director who has oversight of health and safety.
- Routine checks on aspects such as fire alarms and emergency lighting are fully in place. Health and safety audits are carried out annually by external specialist consultants. Key staff are knowledgeable about requirements such as the management of legionella and asbestos risks.

- Risk assessments, including fire risk assessments, are in place. The fire risk assessment is updated annually by an external specialist company.
- Leaders have considered carefully how additional pupils will impact on those already at the school. Ratios of staff to pupils are high. Well-established routines and policies to ensure that pupils are adequately supervised are in place. The proprietor has ensured that there are enough teaching and support staff available to provide a safe environment should the material change be approved.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards (the standards) checked in part 3 are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

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

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b) and 21(6)

- The school's single central record is fit for purpose. It contains all of the checks required on staff and members of the proprietor board. The school does not use supply agency staff.
- Pre-employment procedures are sound. Key staff have attended appropriate training to help them understand the statutory requirements and potential pitfalls linked to the recruitment of staff.
- Though the proprietor employs specialist staff centrally to advise leaders around human resource issues, school leaders themselves carry out much of the work linked to ensuring that staff are suitable to work at the school. This includes induction training and probationary periods to confirm the ongoing suitability of all staff for work at the school.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the relevant standards in part 4 are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(1)(c), 24(1) to 24(1)(b), 24(2), 25 to 29(1)(b)

- The school is situated in the centre of Gravesend. The accommodation is suitable for its intended purpose. The proprietor has recently acquired new premises adjacent to the original footprint of the school. This has created capacity for additional pupils should the material change be approved.
- Notwithstanding the new accommodation now available, the number of classrooms, communal areas, break-out spaces and other facilities already available are large enough for the intended increase in pupils and staff.
- Toilet facilities are available throughout the buildings, with separate toilet facilities for staff and for pupils. Toilet facilities have appropriate hot and cold running water.
- The school is maintained to a suitable standard. Drinking water is available across the school site. Lighting and acoustics are appropriately controlled, including in the science facility and in the school's newly refurbished teaching kitchen.
- A dedicated medical room is available. The school provides adequate spaces for pupils to take breaks. Physical education and sport are held off site.

- Leaders have ensured that all of the relevant standards in part 5 are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- School leaders and representatives of the proprietor have a good understanding of the standards. They are knowledgeable and experienced in running schools for pupils with SEND.
- The proprietor has appropriate systems in place to maintain a strategic overview of the school. Aspects such as oversight and monitoring of safeguarding and the quality of education the school provides are covered adequately and consistently over time.
- The rationale for the material change has been well thought through. Leaders have carefully considered the impact any increase in pupil numbers will have on current pupils. Additional teaching and support staff will enable the curriculum offer to expand. Pupils' personal and social development will likely be better served by a measured increase in pupil numbers.
- Pupils themselves are positive about the prospect of additional numbers. They readily acknowledge how they believe that their 'great' school supports their complex needs well. Discussions with pupils also confirmed their positive views about their own social and emotional development and how this will be enhanced by the potential increase in numbers on the school roll.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the standards in part 8 are likely to continue to be met if the material change 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	138408
DfE registration number	886/6139
Inspection number	10343590

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	ALP Education Group Ltd
Chair	Gemma Gosden
Headteacher	Debbie Pardey
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,160 to £78,390
Telephone number	02031 373 628
Website	www.pierviewacademy.co.uk
Email address	pierview@alpschools.org
Date of previous standard inspection	12 to 14 July 2022

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 25	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	30	40	40

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	30	40
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	30	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	30	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	30	40

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	11	13
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	2

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder or social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan and are placed by local authorities.
- The school's last standard inspection took place on 12 to 14 July 2022 when the overall effectiveness was judged to be good and all relevant standards were met.
- At the time of this inspection, information published on the government's website 'Get Information about Schools' regarding the proprietor was incorrect. The proprietor is ALP Education Group Ltd, not Gemma Gosden, who is the chair of the board of directors. The Department for Education was informed of this change on 5 July 2024.
- The school currently uses three unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the proprietor has applied to make a change to the school's registration. The proprietor wishes to increase the number of pupils on roll. This was the first inspection regarding this particular material change.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, headteacher and other leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. The inspector met with the school's site manager and the proprietor's managing director. He also held an online meeting with the chair of the proprietor's board of directors.
- The inspector toured the school, visiting classrooms and communal areas, talking to pupils and staff. He also held a formal meeting with a representative group of pupils.
- The inspector considered a wide range of policies, records, and documentation in relation to the specific independent school standards that were checked at this inspection.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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