

Oaklands School

Norgate House, Tealgate, Charnham Park, Hungerford RG17 0YT

Inspection date

17 September 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)

- The school ensures that keeping pupils safe is the core focus of its work. Safeguarding was judged to be effective at the school's first standard inspection in June 2024 and there has been no change in the school's processes. The designated safeguarding team meet weekly to review all open cases. Communication between staff is a strength. Staff assert that leaders act decisively in the best interests of pupils.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on its website and follows the most recent government guidance.
- Leaders clearly demonstrate their close working with different local authorities. They refer promptly and attend all required multi-agency meetings. Record-keeping is clear and concise with all the necessary information.
- Staff are trained regularly in knowing what signs to look out for in vulnerable pupils. The school makes helpful use of the local authority for safeguarding expertise and training.
- The personal development curriculum was judged outstanding at the recent standard inspection. Road safety is prioritised so that pupils know how to move about safely beyond the school site.

Paragraphs 11, 12 and 14

- The proprietor body's oversight of health and safety continues to meet the independent school standards (the standards). There are effective policies and practices in action. Leaders are diligent in knowing what to check in the school building. This includes water testing, electrical safety and site security. The school has a health and safety agreement with the local authority.
- There is a well-constructed fire plan in place. The school fully abides by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This includes fire extinguishers and muster points. Pupils regularly rehearse fire evacuation drills. Key staff are trained as fire marshals.

- With a proposed increase in pupil numbers, the proprietor body has planned carefully for staffing numbers. This will ensure class sizes remain small with an appropriate number of adults to support pupils. The school is well resourced.

Paragraphs 16 to 16(b)

- There is a suitable risk assessment policy. The school reviews all angles in identifying possible risks and mitigating these. This also includes individual risk assessments for pupils where necessary.
- The premises are well maintained, with everyone taking pride in looking after the school's environment.
- 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), 21(5) to 21(6)

- The single central record is well organised and enables the school to quickly see that newly appointed staff have all of the required pre-employment checks. This includes leadership or governance roles under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The proprietor body ensures that staff only start in post once all vetting is completed.
- Leaders have a strong understanding of safer recruitment practices. Prospective candidates tour the school during the working day to see it fully operational. Furthermore, at interview, leaders carefully probe candidates' motives for wanting to work with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The proprietor body actively prioritises the induction of appointed staff with a strong focus on safeguarding. Most teaching staff have qualified teacher status. The school is committed to staff professional development. This includes unqualified teachers enrolled on accredited teacher training routes.
- Where the school makes use of supply staff, it uses known professional agencies and ensures all suitability checks are carried out. The school does not currently use volunteers.
- 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), 25 to 29(1)(b)

- The existing school premises can already accommodate the proposed increase to 60 pupils. There are several classrooms that have not yet come into use. The school spans three floors and the proprietor body has earmarked two possible additional classes that could be made. The current premises are of high quality and have been refurbished to a high standard.

- Lighting and acoustics are appropriate, with suitable sources of natural light. External lighting is installed to support safe entry and exit when it may be dark. There are enough single-sex toilets and washing facilities to accommodate more pupils on site.
- In addition to the school's outdoor grounds, the school also makes use of a private members' leisure centre opposite the school. There, pupils can use the gym hall and a large playground for social times.
- The school has an extensive car park that has the capacity to meet pupils' school transport needs safely.
- 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

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

- The most recent inspection stated that pupils thrive at Oaklands. The proprietor body continues to be ambitious and strives to make a difference for pupils in its highly nurturing environment.
- The proprietor body has a clear strategic plan focused on measured growth. Commissioning local authorities wish to place more pupils at the school. There is a need for additional school places for pupils with an identified need. This material change request seeks to expand on the good offer the school currently provides for pupils with SEND.
- Developing leaders at all levels is a continued focus. For example, staff access national professional qualification courses.
- Governance is delivered through the local advisory board. The proprietor body has wisely utilised government publications about effective strategic and financial planning, including schemes of delegation. This has helped it remain sharp and focused and provide value for money. The proprietor body recognises where it wants to strengthen its skillset and is seeking to appoint further governors.
- There has been much to celebrate in the school's first operational year. The proprietor body is in a strong position to continue to drive forward its ambitious plans. It knows that it wants to gradually admit more pupils and not rush the process. Leaders have carefully considered the school's culture and the needs of all its current pupils.
- 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	150269
DfE registration number	869/6025
Inspection number	10364597

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	P5E Limited
Chair	Dr Julie Smith
Headteacher	Georgios Chatzakis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000 to £79,210
Telephone number	01488 757 367
Website	www.oaklands-school.co.uk
Email address	info@oaklands-school.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	4 to 6 June 2024

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 16	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	37	60	60

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	37	60
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	37	60
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	37	60
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	37	60

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	10	13
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this school

- Oaklands School is an independent special school which opened nearly one year ago. Both its pupil and staff numbers have increased incrementally over this time. Oaklands specialises in providing education for pupils with autism and associated needs. Some pupils have significant communication needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan and are placed by West Berkshire and other neighbouring local authorities.
- This is the school's first material change inspection since its first standard inspection in June 2024.
- 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 standards if the proposed material change of increasing the number of pupils to 60 is implemented.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector considered any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- 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 on premises and accommodation; and all of the standards in part 8 for the quality of leadership and management of schools.
- The school's safeguarding procedures were explored by the inspector. He considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' 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 school's senior leaders. He also met with two representatives of the proprietor body, including the chair.
- 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

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