

Rivacre Brook

31 Main Street, Halton, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2AN

Inspection date

12 September 2024

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 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding systems and procedures reflect the current statutory guidance. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. This policy is reviewed regularly. Leaders make regular checks on the culture of safeguarding to ensure that the school keeps pupils safe from harm.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and the deputy headteacher is trained to the same level. The safeguarding team works closely together to promote and maintain a strong culture of safeguarding across the two existing sites. Staff who are new to the school receive a suite of training that prepares them well to identify and report any safeguarding concerns. This training has a significant focus on the specific needs of pupils who attend the school.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 16, 16(a)–16(b)

- There is a health and safety policy in place that contains the relevant detail to maintain safe learning environments on each site. Leaders carry out regular checks of these environments, including fire-safety checks. There are established systems for reporting any defects and these are rectified in a timely manner. Leaders make use of external experts to service the fire-fighting equipment, in addition to checking emergency lighting and means of escape. The proprietor ensures that the school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place. Leaders have the appropriate risk assessments in place for all aspects of school life. This includes individual pupil risk assessments and those for buildings and activities. Risks are carefully considered and regularly reviewed.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils are supervised by a suitable number of staff across the two existing sites. Staff are deployed to support pupils' needs and limit risks, while promoting independence.

Leaders' plans to increase staffing levels when pupil numbers increase are well thought out.

- All the independent school standards ('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

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i)–18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i)–19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b)–19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i)–20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)–21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders make the required recruitment checks when staff join the school. These checks are recorded with accuracy on the single central record. Leaders regularly check the single central record to ensure that it contains all of the essential information.
- The single central record includes all relevant checks made on the proprietor. All the suitability checks, including those relating to the leadership and management of the school, have also been carried out.
- Safer recruitment training has been completed by leaders to support the appointment of suitable staff. There is a package of safeguarding training in place for new staff to ensure that they develop a secure understanding of protecting pupils from harm.
- There are well-understood procedures in place for checking the suitability of agency staff. In addition, the single central record contains spaces to record the checks made on any staff who have spent time overseas.
- All the standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- The proposed new premises are a three-storey building that has been refurbished to a high standard both inside and outside. The accommodation is clean and well maintained. There are several teaching spaces, a medical room, office spaces, a meeting room and secure outdoor areas. There is enough space at the new site to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a)–(c), 28(1), 28(1)(a)–(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a)–(b)

- There are suitable toilet and washing facilities at each site. Toilet cubicles can be locked from the inside for privacy. Drinking water is available throughout the school day and is clearly labelled. Signs are in place to warn pupils and staff where there is hot water. Hot water is set at a safe temperature so that it does not pose a scald risk for children.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a)–(c)

- At each site, there is a medical room that is located near to a toilet. These rooms contain an appropriate sink, bed, pillow and blanket as well as a first-aid kit. There is suitable storage for medication available in or next to the room.

Paragraphs 26, 27, 27(a)–(b)

- At each site, the lighting and acoustics in the classrooms are appropriate. The external lighting is sufficient to ensure that staff, pupils and visitors can enter and leave the premises safely in the hours of darkness.

Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a)–(b)

- There are secure outdoor areas at each of the sites where pupils can play. There is enough space for pupils to engage in physical education lessons.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has the knowledge of the standards that are needed. The proprietor ensures that it regularly monitors the school's compliance with the standards.
- School leaders have the relevant expertise to continue to run the school successfully with an increased number of pupils on roll and an additional school site. There are robust plans in place for the ongoing development of the school, while maintaining a high-quality education for all pupils and keeping them safe.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The accessibility plan fully reflects the school's statutory responsibilities.

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	133485
DfE registration number	876/6000
Inspection number	10357064

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 day school
Proprietor	Keys Child Care Limited
Chair	David Manson
Headteacher	Caroline McPoland
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,058 to £97,110
Telephone number	01928 589810
Website	education.keyschildren.co.uk/school/rivacre-school
Email address	caroline.mcpoland@keys-group.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	30 November to 2 December 2022

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 18	7 to 18	7 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	28	42	42

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	28	42
Number of part-time pupils	None	None
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	28	42
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	28	42
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	28	42

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	8	14
Number of part-time teaching staff	None	None
Number of staff in the welfare provision	10	14

Information about this school

- The school's previous inspection took place on 30 November to 2 December 2022. Since this inspection, the school's name has changed from Halton School to Rivacre Brook.
- The school's main site is located at 31 Main Street, Halton, Runcorn, WA7 2AN. The second site is located at Halton Station Road, Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 3EW. The proposed new site is located at Rivacre, Hooton Park Lane, Hooton, Ellesmere Port, CH65 1AN.

- All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities and have an education, health and care plan. All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned this material change inspection to evaluate the school's likely compliance with the relevant standards if the DfE approves the proprietor's request to increase the school's capacity from 28 to 42 and to change its premises to include an additional site.
- This was the first material change inspection in respect of an increase in the school's capacity and a change of premises since the school's standard inspection in November and December 2022.
- The inspector checked those aspects of safeguarding that directly linked to the material change application.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and executive headteacher, and a representative of the proprietor body.
- The inspector had a tour of all three school sites to check the suitability of the premises against the relevant standards.
- The inspector also looked at a range of documentation and policies relevant to the material change request. These included health and safety, fire-safety and risk assessment documentation. The inspector also checked documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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