

Bluebell School Ltd

Gloucester Road, Kidsgrove, Stoke on Trent ST7 1EH

Unique reference number (URN): 143932

Material change inspection report:

26 February 2026

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), which is the registration authority for independent schools. The school has applied to the DfE to make a material change to its registration. The school proposes to use an additional building on the same site and change the maximum number of pupils attending.

The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

When we carry out material change inspections of independent schools, we report on the school's likely compliance with part 8 of the independent school standards first. Under part 8, the proprietor is required to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards consistently. The standard in part 8 is intended to ensure that the quality of leadership and management at the school is sufficient for that purpose.

The proprietor has ensured that those responsible for the leadership and management of the school have the skills, knowledge and support they need so that the independent school standards are likely to be met consistently over time. The proprietor has ensured that the work on the proposed additional school building has been completed with appropriate rigour. The new building improves facilities for the provision of pupils' education and welfare. It accommodates the increase in pupil numbers proposed by the school. In meeting the standards over

time, leaders are supported by well-established systems and processes. These systems and processes include those relating to health and safety, fire safety and safeguarding. The proprietor also ensures rigorous oversight of the school's provision.

The proprietor has ensured that the standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Safeguarding

The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website. The policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance. Well-trained designated safeguarding leads take appropriate actions to keep pupils safe. For example, visitors undertake a short induction in safeguarding before they enter the school. This training includes specific information about how particular pupils in the school might communicate any safeguarding concerns they have.

Staff receive accredited safeguarding training. The school has undertaken a recent safeguarding review to assess and refine its safeguarding procedures. The proprietor has established clear systems for the oversight of safeguarding. The school takes part in monthly safeguarding strategy meetings with other schools managed by the proprietor. These meetings further support school leaders' knowledge and awareness of safeguarding issues and practices. They also provide the proprietor with regular oversight of the school's safeguarding strategy.

Supervision of pupils

The school's plans to supervise pupils are appropriate. The plans include how pupils will arrive and leave the school.

Health and safety, risk assessment and fire

The school has appropriate risk assessment and health and safety, including fire safety, policies in place. Alongside these policies, there is a well-established risk management system. The risk assessments in place cover the full range of physical hazards in the school. They also cover each specific activity that takes place in the school and off the school site. The school's risk assessment and health and safety policies are already being implemented well by the school.

A risk assessment of the new school building has been completed by an appropriate and competent external organisation. In response to the findings of this risk assessment, the proprietor has completed all immediate actions required.

Regular maintenance checks have been integrated into a safety plan for the new building. This includes fire safety.

The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

The recruitment checks made on staff, supply staff and the proprietor

All of the relevant checks on staff and members of the proprietor body have been completed.

There is a robust and detailed safer-recruitment process in place. The staff who manage this process understand it well. The school completes pre-employment checks on all staff, supply staff and members of the proprietor body with appropriate rigour. For example, there is a simple pro-forma outlining what someone taking a telephone reference needs to ask and consider.

The single central record of these recruitment checks

The school keeps a single central record of pre-employment checks. Leaders and members of the proprietor's executive team regularly check the single central record to ensure that it is maintained appropriately

The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Toilet and washing facilities, water supply, changing accommodation and showers

In addition to well-established and appropriate facilities in the school's current building, the school's new building contains separate toilet facilities for boys and girls. These facilities have hot and cold running water and are well maintained.

There are also shower and changing facilities and clearly marked drinking water stations in the new building.

Medical room and accommodation for pupils' therapy needs

There is a medical room in the school's current building. It is easily accessible from the new school building, which is on the same site. The medical room has hot and cold running water and there is a toilet for pupils nearby.

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils

The new building has been appropriately renovated and is well maintained so that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are promoted.

Lighting and acoustic conditions

Each room in the new building has been renovated to a very high standard. Classrooms are carpeted and furnished appropriately. Lighting and acoustics are suitable. Regulation spaces have individual lighting so lighting can be adjusted to meet pupils' sensory needs. All other parts of the school have similarly appropriate acoustics and lighting.

Outdoor space

The school's outdoor spaces for pupils are suitable for pupils to play in. They are attractive, clean, interesting and safe. The outdoor spaces are big enough to accommodate the extra pupils the school proposes to admit.

The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

The school's accessibility plan

The school has an accessibility plan which meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's accessibility plan and policy include provision for regular review as pupils with specific needs join the school.

The proprietor has ensured that Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 is likely to be met.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. Inspectors checked the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Inspectors checked the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspector spoke with representatives of the proprietor body and executive leaders, school leaders and other staff during the inspection.

The inspector confirmed the following information about the school:

- ☑ The school caters for pupils with complex needs and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- ☑ The school uses no providers of alternative provision.
- ☑ The school operates from premises at Gloucester Road, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 1EH.
- ☑ The school is registered to admit 140 pupils.

Lead inspector

Dan Owen

His Majesty's Inspector

About this school

Proprietor	Hopedale Children and Family Services Ltd Chair: Sarah Deaville
Headteacher	Mrs Kay Banks
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
Capacity	140
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	140
Number of part-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	0
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Annual fees for day pupils	£51,183 to £107,032
Email address	office@bluebellschool.co.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people

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 2026