

Longdon Hall School

Longdon Green, Nr Lichfield, Staffordshire WS15 4PT

Inspection date

22 April 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(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy is suitable, reflects the most recent statutory guidance and is available on request. It is published on the school's website.
- All staff have completed appropriate safeguarding training. Leaders are aware of their duties and the importance of establishing and maintaining a strong safeguarding culture. All staff understand the needs and challenges pupils are likely to present. The intention is for the designated safeguarding leads to be based on both sites at all times.
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy is available on the website, and it is also available on request in written form. It outlines the course of action to take when there are concerns about a pupil.
- The central team within Acorn Care and Education Ltd shows an excellent understanding of health and safety legislation and what is required to ensure school buildings and properties are safe, well maintained and suited to the needs of the pupils using them.
- There are a range of comprehensive systems and consistent procedures in place that ensure all staff and leaders understand their health and safety responsibilities and to whom they are accountable. The health and safety policy is implemented effectively to ensure that the school complies with all relevant health and safety laws. This policy and practice are likely to ensure that pupils are kept safe in both the current and the additional building.
- The school has ensured that high levels of supervision are consistently in place. They have made suitable arrangements to increase the number of staff employed as the number of pupils rises.
- The school has a system for recording and reporting any concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. There is a clear schedule set out for regular monitoring and review of safeguarding information and cases.

- The school meets the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Stringent measures are in place to manage the risk of fire.
- Leaders have given due consideration as to how current fire safety practice will be extended to the site of Fern House. The school has appropriate certification to demonstrate that regular fire safety checks are carried out by the relevant authority. Leaders carry out regular fire evacuation practices and checks on all fire equipment.
- The school has clear procedures, based upon the company's policies and protocol, for ensuring that pupils know how to raise a concern during their travel times. This also applies to transport drivers and escorts.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely 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), 19(2) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b) and 21(6)

- The single central record contains the full range of pre-employment checks. It is stored centrally in an electronic format. The school has appropriate recruitment procedures in place. Leaders are fully aware and compliant with the checks to be made when supply staff are employed through an agency.
- All staff are trained in safeguarding, including the proprietor. Staff are also trained in how to raise and record any concerns on the school's electronic system.
- These standards are likely to be met if the material change application 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 27(b), 28(1) to 29(1)(b)

- The proposed new school building was originally a children's home. It has recently been completely refurbished and repurposed to a very high standard and, if approved, will comfortably accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- Classrooms at Longdon Hall site offer excellent resources for learning, providing specialist equipment for technical and vocational education opportunities. They are bright and airy, with good ventilation. Acoustic conditions are good. There is sufficient space for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- Longdon Hall site will be enhanced further through Fern House provision where rooms are deliberately small and cosy to support the proposed pupils overcoming significant anxiety. There is good ventilation, lighting and acoustics. Outdoor lighting is in place. The rooms have been carefully considered to provide safe spaces for both learning and socialising to take place. Resources are of a high quality.
- There is a suitable medical room on both sites. They are available for sole use when necessary and can be suitably supervised.
- There are sufficient and appropriate toilet and shower facilities for the proposed number of pupils.

- The design of both sites provides adequate space and provision for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. There are extensive grounds, gardens and wooded areas on both sites where pupils can play or socialise.
- Access to both school sites is well considered with clear plans identified for where and how pupils enter and leave the taxis. Leaders have given sufficient thought to the narrow entrance at Fern House and plan to have a drop-off point by the gate with pupils escorted to and from the house door.
- Hot meals are served to pupils at Longdon Hall. At Fern House, a large kitchen space is proposed to be used by pupils, supervised by staff, to prepare their meals. All food safety and hygiene standards requirements are in place.
- These standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)

- The school has an appropriate complaints policy. This sets out how different stages of the complaint are managed to help try and reach an early resolution. Leaders keep records of complaints and subsequent actions. These will be available on request.
- These standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor body has extensive experience in running special schools across the country. It has 30 open schools. Of the 26 that have been inspected by Ofsted, 24 are rated good and two are rated outstanding.
- The proprietor body has made sure that school leaders demonstrate the knowledge and skills to ascertain that the standards are met consistently.
- The proprietor body and school leaders have identified a significant need for the additional provision proposed, across the five local authority areas that they currently serve. They are clear that if this proposal is approved, it will enable them to put a bespoke provision in place suitable for pupils who show significant anxiety and find coping with a larger school building difficult. The proprietor body has been proactive in looking to the future to plan for recruitment in terms of staff numbers, but also for the quality, experience and skills required as they increase pupil numbers over time.
- The school promotes the well-being of pupils through the lesson content within the curriculum, the personal, social and health education programme and its safeguarding procedures. There is a high staff-to-pupil ratio in place; this would meet the needs of the proposed increase in numbers.
- These standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school makes appropriate arrangements to meet the statutory requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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	137098
DfE registration number	860/6037
Inspection number	10333301

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 school
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Peter Hawksworth
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,680 to £82,770
Telephone number	01543 491051
Website	www.longdonhallschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@longdonhallschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	8 to 10 November 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	68	84	84

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	68	84
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	68	84
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	68	84
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	68	84

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	18	20
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	37	45

Information about this school

- Longdon Hall School provides education for up to 76 boys and girls aged seven to 18 years, all of whom have an education, health and care plan. Some pupils also have a diagnosis of autism with associated learning difficulties. The school offers provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in November 2022, when it was judged to be good overall.
- If the material change is approved, the proprietor body is planning to incorporate an additional site at Fern House into the provision at Longdon Hall School. Fern House was originally a children's home and has been refurbished to provide education for up to eight pupils. The address is Fern House, Brereton Hill Lane, Brereton Cross, Rugeley, WS15 1PY. It is sited just under two miles from Longdon Hall School.
- The school does not make use of alternative provisions.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.

Information about this inspection

- The material change inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether the school is likely to meet the relevant standards if the proposed material change is approved.
- The inspector met with the proprietor's representative, the executive headteacher, the head of school and the chair of the governing body. The inspector met with representatives of the health and safety team.
- The inspector also spoke to teachers and pupils and visited classrooms in the existing premises.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents and considered the school's compliance with safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector visited the proposed premises to check on health and safety, fire safety and the suitability of the building against the relevant standards.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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