

Arc Oakbridge School

Buckingham Street, Birmingham B19 3HU

Inspection date

23 October 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(a), 7(b), 32(1)(c)

- There is a safeguarding policy in place that adheres to current government guidance as issued by the Secretary of State. It is published on the school's website. The school provides parents and carers with a copy of the policy on request.
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and is suitably trained and knowledgeable in all safeguarding matters. There are four additional DSL trained staff. Protocols in place for staff recruitment and staff induction are clear.
- School leaders have a strong understanding of how to keep pupils safe. Staff record concerns in a timely manner. Records show that leaders respond swiftly when concerns are raised. They refer to external agencies when appropriate and liaise with them closely to ensure that pupils and their families are given appropriate support.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 14, 16(a), 16(b)

- A health and safety policy is in place. It is suitable and fit for purpose. The school liaises well with external consultants to help them carry out the required checks. Fire risk assessments for the premises have been completed and emerging recommendations acted on.
- The school's written risk assessment policy is implemented well. The school has carried out several risk assessments to ensure that risks to pupils and staff are reduced. For example, there is a detailed risk assessment completed for all pupils attending the school.
- Appropriate supervision of all pupils has been arranged. The current staffing structure ensures that pupils' needs are adequately met. There is additional capacity in the current staffing levels to accommodate the proposed increase.
- The school has ensured that all these standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

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

Paragraph 18(1), to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(1) to 20(6)(c)

- The school completes the required pre-employment checks on all new staff. They make sure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Checks on school leaders, proprietors and governors have been carried out to ensure that they have not been barred from running a school.
- The school completes relevant overseas checks on any staff that have worked or lived outside of the United Kingdom.
- The school has a clear understanding of the documentation required and checks they must complete when they use supply teachers.
- These checks are all completed before an individual begins working at the school.

Paragraph 21(1) to 21(7)(b)

- The school operates an online single central record. The register meets the requirements of the independent school standards. It includes all staff, proprietors and governors and is checked by leaders on a regular basis.
- The school has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE approves the implementation of the material change.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(1)(c), 25, 26, 27(a), 27(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The school operates from two separate buildings on the same premises. There is ample outside space for pupils to play as well as an area for pupils to do physical education.
- The premises are in a good state of repair and provide suitable accommodation for the numbers of pupils the school wishes to admit. One building is used for primary-aged pupils and the other for pupils in key stages 3 and 4.
- The premises have been refurbished to a high standard. This includes suitable classrooms, breakout spaces, a science laboratory, an art room, an information and communication technology suite, cooking facilities and a large hall. All teaching rooms have a good source of natural light and suitable acoustics. There is appropriate external lighting.
- There are individual toilets for boys and girls and suitable washing facilities with running hot and cold water for pupils.
- There is a suitable shower and changing facility in the existing accommodation which will be able to accommodate the proposed new pupils.

Paragraph 24(1), to 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- The school has a dedicated medical room. It has running water and is located near to a toilet facility. It includes a bed and appropriate first-aid equipment.

Paragraph 28(1) to 28(2)(b)

- Pupils have access to drinking water. There are numerous water fountains around the school.
- The toilet facilities are appropriate. There is safe access to hot water which does not pose a risk of scalding.
- The school has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the DfE approves the implementation of the material change.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The premises are in a good state of repair and provide suitable accommodation for the numbers of pupils the school wishes to admit. There are numerous classrooms that are well lit and include specialist lighting to ensure pupils' sensory needs are taken into consideration.
- The proprietor, along with the regional director and headteacher, demonstrate suitable knowledge, skills and expertise as well as high ambitions for every pupil. They are committed to providing a strong quality of education and pastoral care to vulnerable pupils with a range of special needs.
- Leaders have secure knowledge of the independent school standards and how to meet them consistently and continually over time. They have used their skills and knowledge to propose this expansion to increase the number of admitted pupils. Together, they have devised clear plans and policies for this expansion and plan to employ more staff as the school grows.
- Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to actively promote pupils' well-being and welfare as well as their safety.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in scope for this inspection are likely to be met if the DfE approves the implementation of the proposed material change.

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	145859
DfE registration number	330/6041
Inspection number	10365992

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 special school
Proprietor	Kedlestone (OS Education) Limited
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Jilly McCarrick
Annual fees (day pupils)	£69,924
Telephone number	0121 222 5201
Website	www.kedlestongroup.com/arcoakbridge
Email address	arcoakbridge@kedlestongroup.com
Dates of previous standard inspection	17 to 19 January 2023

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 17	7 to 17	7 to 17
Number of pupils on the school roll	67	70	70

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	65	70
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	65	70
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	65	70
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	65	70

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	21	N/A
Number of part-time teaching staff	7	N/A
Number of staff in the welfare provision	12	N/A

Information about this school

- Arc Oakbridge School is an independent special school near the centre of Birmingham. It is part of the Kedleston Group Ltd.
- The school caters for 65 pupils with autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many pupils have additional needs.
- Pupils are referred to the school by local authorities.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was operating outside of its registration agreement because there were 67 pupils on roll. The school has notified the DfE that it is operating beyond its registration agreement.
- The school's last standard inspection was in January 2023, when it was judged to be good.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE to establish whether the school would be likely to meet all of the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material change to increase the number of pupils on roll from 65 to 70 was to be implemented.
- This was the first material change inspection since the school's previous standard inspection.
- The inspection focused on some of the welfare, health and safety standards in part 3; all of the standards in part 4 for the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors; all of the standards in part 5 for premises and accommodation and the standards in part 8 for the quality of leadership in and management of schools.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the company's regional director and the chief operating officer of the proprietor body from Kedlestone Group.
- The inspector toured the school with the headteacher and regional director.
- The inspector scrutinised documents relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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