

The Rowan School

Dark House Baptist Church, Darkhouse Lane, Coseley, Bilston, West Midlands WV14 8XH

Inspection dates

13 December 2017

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely 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

Paragraph 12

- The local authority has commissioned a fire safety check which has taken place and the subsequent report is imminent. Similarly, a refurbishment audit which includes a check for asbestos has also been done and the local authority is waiting for the outcomes. The school will not formalise an agreement until these reports are back and any defects are acted on. This is responsible leadership.
- In the absence of these reports, the proprietors cannot ensure compliance with the fire safety requirements and therefore the school is unlikely to meet this aspect if the material change is approved.

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- School leaders have developed a suitable safeguarding policy. It follows national and local guidance on keeping children safe and includes clear aims and procedures to guide staff and designated leads in dealing with safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding policy is linked to the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies.
- The school's health and safety policy is based on Dudley's local authority policy. The policy includes links to other informative sites dealing with different aspects of health and safety. Consequently, the procedures and templates are well established and consistent with tried and tested methods.
- Staffing levels are high at the current school. The staff to pupil ratio is two adults to every three pupils. This ensures that pupils are properly supervised throughout the day and that behaviour and learning issues are dealt with quickly and effectively; these aspects contribute towards a safer and secure working environment. Qualified teachers are appointed to teach in the core subjects and support other curriculum areas. Higher-level teaching assistants and instructors lead in other areas of the curriculum and are supported further through monitoring and training opportunities.
- The school's risk assessment policy is based on clear principles and is aligned to the local authority's risk assessment policy and procedures. The school policy sets out

what is expected and what must be done in order to reduce risks and promote inclusion. There are two distinct levels of risk in this policy framework. Level one covers internal arrangements and is authorised by the headteacher and level two, where risk is deemed much higher such as in trips and visits, is submitted to the local authority for sign-off. This two-tier system provides a higher level of accountability in managing risk and keeping pupils safe.

- The school is likely to meet these requirements if the material change is approved because the policies and procedures are already established and will transfer to the new premises.
- The school is unlikely to meet all of the standards for this part at present.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(2)(e), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 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)(a), 21(7)(b)

- The single central register demonstrates that all the required checks are carried out.
- Staff files include a checklist of safer recruitment activities, which helps to secure consistency and avoids gaps. The files are maintained in a well-organised manner, which helps leaders' checking and monitoring activities.
- All staff have been recently appointed, and no staff have lived or are living abroad. Through discussions, the proprietors demonstrated that they know what must be checked and where to find the guidance to support them. The proprietors are clear that they will not appoint if there is any doubt over an applicant or if the safer recruitment procedures are not completed prior to starting. In this way, they continue to work towards promoting the well-being of pupils and keeping them safe.
- The proprietors agree that sometimes it is necessary to bring in supply staff, but try to avoid this if they can because the changes can be disturbing to their pupils. However, they use established agencies and ensure that all the necessary checks are made and recorded on the single central register.
- The requirements for this part are likely to be met because the proprietors know what is required, they follow safer recruitment procedures and ensure that all the necessary checks are completed rigorously in order to keep pupils safe.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The school does not yet have any formal responsibility for the proposed premises.
- The proposed site is located within a purpose-built school site that closed in August 2017 and has remained empty since. It belongs to the local authority, who will become the landlord when the agreement is formalised.

- This is a temporary arrangement potentially offering improved facilities and capacity for the numbers of pupils that the school proposes to admit.
- The proprietors have committed the time and resources over the forthcoming holiday period to improve the proposed accommodation and bring it as close as is reasonably practicable to the standard necessary to ensure the health, welfare and safety of the pupils it plans to admit.
- In addition, non-teaching days at the start of term are to be utilised to develop the accommodation further, and to complete location and accommodation risk assessments following internal restructuring, repairs and redecoration.
- Leaders are planning to have the proposed accommodation ready for use in mid- to late January 2018.

Paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(b), 25, 27, 27(a), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(d),

- The proprietors have identified a space for a dedicated medical room which is near a toilet. At present, the room does not have a washbasin but the proprietors know this is a requirement and are pursuing options either to have one plumbed in or to install a portable facility.
- In some spaces, lights and diffusers are missing, therefore lighting is not adequate. The local authority has plans to restore the lights and diffusers, thus improving the lighting.
- Drinking water is available in the kitchen but pupils will not have access to this area. The proprietors plan to make bottled water available for pupils but at present there is none readily available.
- In some of the toilet facilities, the hot water is too hot and has the potential to scald pupils. Again, the local authority is aware of this and is planning to solve the problem.
- The site offers the space and range of facilities that the proprietors are seeking for the numbers of pupils it proposes to admit, and for the diverse needs of those pupils. However, the site has been empty for some time and is in need of repairs, refurbishment and redecoration throughout to make it suitable and welcoming.
- The school is unlikely to meet the requirements for these parts of the standard at the present time.

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(c), 24(2), 26, 27(b), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b), 30

- The site offers separate toilets and washing facilities for boys and girls, and separate facilities for adults. All are equipped with hot and cold water supplies.
- As all the pupils that the school plans to admit are under 11 years of age at the start of the school year, there is no issue over the provision of showers and changing facilities for physical education. However, the local authority has offered access to the on-site leisure facilities if the school wishes it. This would enable the use of proper changing and showering facilities, thus teaching pupils about healthy lifestyles and widening their opportunities for sport and leisure activities. The sports hall also offers a covered space for breaktimes and lunchtimes for ball games and play.
- External lighting is provided along the drive and over the entrances and exits so that

people can enter and leave the school premises safely when it is dark outside.

- In addition to the on-site leisure facilities, the proposed accommodation includes a large indoor space which can be used for assemblies and indoor games, and an enclosed outdoor play area.
- These parts of the standard are likely to be met when the proposed refurbishment to raise the quality of provision is complete.
- The school is unlikely to meet all of the standards for this part at present.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school brochure has been updated and is available to parents and carers. It is not yet available on the school website as that is not currently operational.
- Likewise, the safeguarding and other policies are available on request, and parents are advised of this through the school brochure.
- The school's contact details are also incorporated in the school brochure so that parents know who to contact for information or advice.
- The requirements for this part of the standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietors have a good understanding of the independent school standards, and have the skills and commitment necessary to ensure that they are met consistently.
- They have recognised the limitations of their current provision and have been working hard and closely with the local authority to secure a suitable, permanent site for the future. They are not content to 'make do' with their current provision, and have been seeking suitable interim provision which is the basis of this material change application. They want to improve the learning experiences and learning environment for their pupils and staff in order to promote the overall well-being of pupils.
- The proprietors have been limited in what they can do to improve the quality of the proposed accommodation until the outstanding reports commissioned by the local authority have been received and a formal agreement entered into. They are working closely with the local authority representative to agree what the local authority will undertake and what they need to do themselves.
- The proprietors know that the accommodation is not yet ready for use, but they have a clear idea of what needs to be done and have realistic timescales to achieve this.
- The requirements for this part of the standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school meets the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 as a draft accessibility plan is in place. This will be reviewed further when the modifications and refurbishment are complete.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet all 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	144374
DfE registration number	332/6008
Inspection number	10044786

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	Day school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietors	Michael Searle and Ben Whittall
Headteacher	Ms Veronica Fenlon
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,000
Telephone number	07449 971116
Website	Not currently available
Email address	bwhittall@therowanschool.org
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 11	5–11	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	13	20	Not applicable

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	13	20

Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities	13	20
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	13	20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	13	20

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	3 QTS 3 HLTA/instructors	4 QTS 4 HLTA/instructors
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2 TA/carers 0.1 educational psychologist	5 TA/carers 0.1 educational psychologist

Information about this school

- The Rowan School is currently located in church premises in Coseley, near Bilston in the West Midlands.
- Two proprietors are the owners of the school and play active roles in developing the school provision.
- One proprietor is an experienced educational psychologist and is also a proprietor of an independent special school in Runcorn. The other proprietor is a serving deputy headteacher in a local authority maintained special school. They are experienced professionals in the field of special educational needs.
- Pupils are placed at the school by Dudley and Wolverhampton local authorities.
- The current school caters for 13 pupils. It is registered for 12, but in agreement with the Department for Education it has temporarily increased its numbers to 13. The

school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum disorders and associated learning difficulties.

- As the school has reached full capacity and with increasing demand for places, the proprietors have taken the decision to look for larger and more suitable premises. They are negotiating a permanent solution with the local authority, but this will not be concluded until the autumn term 2018. In the interim, the proprietors are seeking alternative short-term, temporary premises with more capacity than their current provision.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by Ofsted at the request of the registration authority, the Department for Education, under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The school applied for a material change in respect of proposals to increase the numbers on roll and relocate to larger and more suitable premises.
- This inspection was conducted in one day, with two days' notice.
- The inspector met with the proprietors of the school and the local authority's business manager for buildings and premises. Discussions included the support of the local authority, access to other parts of the site such as leisure facilities, health and safety audits, arrangements for pupils entering and leaving the building and timescales for completing the necessary work to upgrade the provision.
- A range of school documents and policies were reviewed in relation to the material change application and relevant independent school standards. These included health and safety policies, risk assessments, the school accessibility plan, staff files and training certificates. The school's safeguarding policy, school brochure and single central register were also checked.
- The inspector, proprietors and local authority representative also checked the internal and external facilities against the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Ellis-Martin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including—
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 27(a) the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 28(1)(a) suitable drinking water facilities are provided;
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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