

Bright Futures School for children with autism

1 Friezland Lane, Oldham, Lancashire OL3 7EU

Inspection date

9 July 2020

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

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The school's safeguarding policy is sufficiently detailed. It provides clear guidance for staff and others should they need to respond to a safeguarding concern. Further information for staff about safeguarding is included in other linked policies, such as those about behaviour, the code of conduct for staff and whistle blowing. The safeguarding policy and other linked documents are available on the school's website. Leaders made some minor adjustments to the safeguarding policy during this inspection to ensure that it fully matches the current guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) about safeguarding.
- The head of learning is the designated senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding. When she is not available, the head of development fulfils this responsibility. Both senior leaders have completed suitable recent training to ensure that they know how to respond if any concerns arise. Senior leaders keep all members of staff up to date about safeguarding in weekly staff meetings and regular training activities.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 10

- The school's behaviour management policy provides helpful details for staff in supporting pupils to behave well. The arrangements for any sanctions form part of this policy. However, the school's approach is to help pupils to regulate their own behaviour in a positive way so that sanctions are rarely used. Leaders explained that staff know pupils very well and that any concerns about pupils' behaviour are discussed in daily staff meetings. This helps staff to nip in the bud any developing poor behaviours. The school uses an electronic system to record any concerns about pupils' behaviour or welfare.
- Leaders confirmed that no instances of bullying between pupils have recently happened. They explained that relationships between pupils are typically positive. The school's anti-bullying policy is comprehensive. It includes different types of bullying, such as cyber bullying and homophobic bullying.

Paragraph 11, 13

- The school's health and safety policy sets out the responsibilities of people working in the school to ensure that the welfare of staff and pupils is protected. Leaders have prepared other policies, including the first-aid policy, to ensure that people are looked after well. Leaders have ensured that they have considered health and safety in the context of the new buildings. For example, they have installed signs about health and safety and made sure that first-aid kits are readily available.

Paragraph 12

- The premises have been built to comply with fire safety requirements. For example, there is an automatic fire alarm system and fire extinguishers are available at accessible locations within the school. Emergency exit routes are clearly marked. Additionally, nearly all classrooms have an external door to aid swift evacuation in the event of fire.
- Leaders have organised regular fire drills to ensure that pupils know what to do should there be a fire in the new building. The fire assembly point is separated from the buildings. Leaders completed a fire risk assessment for the new premises in advance of their use by pupils. Leaders have also appointed a fire marshal.

Paragraph 14

- The school's staffing levels allow for very close supervision of pupils. Most teaching and learning take place with one member of staff working with each pupil. Leaders have prepared detailed rotas to ensure that similarly close supervision happens during breaktimes.
- Leaders have started the process to appoint new members of staff to ensure that similar, high levels of supervision are available should the school increase its size and number of pupils.

Paragraph 15

- The school's admission register is kept in a hard-bound register designed for this purpose. Leaders have installed an electronic system for all people who visit the premises, including pupils, to log in and out. The information this system provides about pupils is used to compile the school's attendance register. Leaders use the attendance codes set out in the DfE guidance in this register. Leaders analyse pupils' attendance to ensure that reasons for any absence are understood and can be acted on, if necessary.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The school's risk assessment policy provides a suitable framework for protecting pupils from risk. The school has its own format for recording risk assessments. Leaders have used this to prepare appropriate risk assessments for the new premises, for example concerning the kitchen and workshop. In addition, leaders regularly update each pupil's personal risk assessment. Leaders were careful to manage the transition of pupils to the new premises so that any risks associated with this transition were reduced and pupils' learning was not interrupted.
- Leaders have taken care to ensure that the school and its activities are currently organised in a way that matches to national guidance about reducing the risk from

COVID-19 (coronavirus). The proprietor has ensured that the standards in paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 are likely to be met. However, because the inspection was conducted without visiting the school site owing to COVID-19, the inspector is not able to provide the full level of assurance to judge that the standards in paragraphs 12 and 16 are likely to be met if the material changes are implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The newly built school was handed over to the proprietor in February 2020. It appears to have been constructed to a high standard. The architect's designs took account of the leaders' knowledge about the best way of meeting the needs of pupils.
- Leaders reported that there are a few snags to be attended to following the building's construction, but that there are no significant problems with the building or its maintenance. Some outside areas remain to be planted with grass, but there is already enough outdoor space for pupils to use for learning and play.
- The inspector's virtual tour of the school showed that the building appears to be suitable. There are sufficient classrooms for up to 15 pupils to receive one-to-one tuition, with most in a classroom that only they use. The building includes two dining rooms, one with a kitchen. It also has specialist facilities, such as a small workshop for pupils' use and a sensory room. The sensory room includes projection equipment, other lighting and furnishing designed to help pupils to manage their feelings and to contribute to learning.
- The building's design provides for ample natural light throughout the school. Suitable internal and external electric lighting has been installed. There appears to be no issues with sound from one activity disturbing any others.
- There are suitable toilet facilities for the use of pupils. The disabled toilet is housed in a wet room. This allows pupils to use a shower if necessary. The medical room has a washbasin with hot and cold water taps. Drinking water is available in the kitchen area of one dining room. This supply is clearly marked. Leaders confirmed that the temperature of the hot water supply is controlled so that it is cool enough to be safe. It was not possible for the inspector to check this directly.
- This inspection was conducted without visiting the school site due to COVID-19. Owing to this, the inspector is not able to provide the full level of assurance to judge that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Leaders demonstrate a good knowledge of the independent school standards (ISS). As far as is possible to confirm without visiting the school, they have ensured that the

standards checked during this inspection are likely to be met if the material changes considered are fully implemented.

- Leaders have ensured that the new school has been designed so that it is suitable to meet the particular needs of pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school building has a single storey and has been designed to meet current requirements about physical access. For example, there is a ramp up to the front door and a disabled toilet is easily accessible. So far, leaders have not identified any potential problems that could make it harder for a person with mobility difficulties to use the premises. The school's accessibility plan pays close attention to reducing any barriers that might restrict pupils' learning.
- The proprietor has ensured that the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are likely to be met.

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 changes.

School details

Unique reference number	105748
DfE registration number	353/6015
Inspection number	10149428

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 changes that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Zoe Thompson
Headteacher	Alison Hughes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000 to £49,500
Telephone number	01457 878738
Website	www.brightfutureschool.co.uk
Email address	office@brightfutureschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	11–13 December 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 16	5 to 16	5 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	12	15	15

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	12	15

Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	12	15
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	12	15
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	12	15

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	12.6	15.2
Number of part-time teaching staff	11	12
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	0

Information about this school

- Bright Futures School is situated near Oldham. It moved into newly built premises in February 2020. Since then, the school has been closed for much of the time as a result of the restrictions relating to COVID-19. The school's roll has remained at 12 pupils.
- The proprietor is also the school's head of development. The headteacher is known in the school as the head of learning. The head of development and head of learning are the school's senior leaders.
- The school caters for pupils who have autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. They have all been placed at the school by their local authority.

- The school's mission is for pupils to 'make and maintain meaningful relationships; to adapt their thinking and behaviour to everyday real-life challenges and to lead a happier and more fulfilling life'.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE following the proprietor's requests for the school to use new premises and, at the same time, to increase its roll from 12 to 15 pupils. The DfE requested that the inspection should consider parts 3, 5 and 8 of the ISS. The material change concerning the change of school premises has already been implemented. The material change to increase the number of pupils has not been implemented.
- This was the school's first material change inspection in relation to these requested changes.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in December 2018.
- This inspection was conducted remotely. This was due to the restrictions placed on non-essential travel during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- During this inspection, the inspector held a series of telephone calls with the proprietor and the head of learning. He used these calls to discuss the school's policies, procedures and organisation in relation to the new premises. He took part in a video call to allow him to make a virtual tour of the school's premises.
- The inspector considered policies, including the safeguarding policy. He also considered other documents, including plans of the school and records about staff deployment. Some documents were available on the school's website. Electronic copies of others were provided by the school.

Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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