

The Spires

School Lane, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3YA

Inspection date

14 September 2023

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

Paragraph 7

- The proprietor, leaders and staff understand the critical importance of keeping children safe in school and beyond. The school's safeguarding policy is compliant with the most recent safeguarding requirements outlined in 'Keeping children safe in education'. The policy is accessible on the school's website. It provides clear guidance for leaders and staff to implement robust safeguarding procedures.
- All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training when they start employment at the school. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular updates to ensure that they understand the risks that pupils may face.
- Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn about online safety through external sessions.
- Leaders meet frequently to review concerns about the physical and emotional safety of pupils to ensure that individual pupils receive the right support at the right time.

Paragraphs 11, 12

- The school's detailed health and safety policy outlines the key roles and responsibilities for health and safety in the school. Leaders monitor the implementation of the health and safety policy to ensure that the school is safe for all pupils.
- The proprietor has ensured that the school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The school has well maintained fire doors and fire equipment, alongside appropriate signage and fire escape routes. Leaders ensure that an external consultant conducts annual fire safety reviews.
- Leaders ensure regular maintenance of a modern fire protection system that operates throughout the school. Leaders ensure that staff and pupils follow regular evacuation drills. This is to ensure that all pupils know how to act and where to assemble in the case of a fire.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders have ensured that supervision ratios are appropriate. They have put in place suitable arrangements to address the planned increase in pupil numbers. Additional classrooms have been allocated alongside the newly constructed primary area to enable pupils to learn. Leaders have planned to appoint additional staff members to ensure that the current staff-to-pupil ratio is maintained.
- Pupils have access to music equipment and tuition, games and sports equipment at breaktime and lunchtime. Staff provide appropriate supervision ensuring that pupils are safe and well supported.

Paragraph 16

- Leaders have established a suitable risk assessment policy. They have provided staff with clear guidance for creating risk assessments, ensuring that hazards are identified and addressed. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are appropriate. For example, individual risk assessments for pupils are reviewed frequently to ensure that they address pupils' needs and provide bespoke support.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in part 3 are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

- Leaders have diligently maintained the single central record of checks on staff who work at the school. They ensure that all requisite checks are completed before staff begin work at the school. This includes checks on the proprietor's board members.
- The standards in part 4 are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 24, 25, 26, 27,

- The proprietor has increased capacity to educate more pupils through the use of rooms that were formerly used for therapeutic purposes. In addition, the proprietor has established a well-designed primary area with additional outdoor space and classrooms to meet the needs of primary-age pupils.
- Classrooms and the new primary area are very well maintained with suitable heating, lighting and acoustic properties. Fire escape routes are signposted clearly. Internal and external lighting is in place at each of these points.
- Leaders have ensured that suitable medical facilities are well maintained. These rooms have access to a toilet, sink, bed and fully stocked first-aid kit.

Paragraphs 23, 28

- Leaders have ensured that separate toilets for girls, boys and staff are in place. Toilet facilities are suitable for the increase in pupil numbers. Each of the toilets has a washbasin with hot and cold water. The temperature of the hot water is carefully regulated to ensure that it does not pose a risk to pupils. Pupils have access to drinking-water.

Paragraph 29

- Leaders have established an outdoors education curriculum, alongside a physical education (PE) curriculum. Pupils learn PE in the school's large playground. The newly constructed primary area has a large green area which can be used for PE. It is enclosed by a large wall, thereby creating a safe space for pupils. In addition, pupils access the PE curriculum at the local leisure centre and through outdoor education activities such as kayaking.
- The standards in part 5 are likely to continue to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The headteacher, senior teacher, head of education and compliance officer provide robust oversight of the school on behalf of the proprietor. They know the standards well and review their implementation regularly. School leaders understand the needs of pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs well.
- Leaders demonstrate passion and commitment to meeting the needs of pupils with SEMH. Leaders develop personalised curriculums for all pupils to meet their individual needs. Leaders continue to support pupils once they have transitioned to other educational settings. Leaders have strong communications with the local authorities that commission places at the school. Leaders have a carefully considered plan to meet the SEMH needs of an increased pupil roll.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a robust culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders' focus on the physical and emotional well-being of pupils is strong.
- The proprietor and leaders have ensured that all of the standards have been consistently met. The standards in part 8 are likely to continue to be met if the proposed material change is approved.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has created an appropriate accessibility plan for the premises. The school meets the requirements 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	146166
DfE registration number	865/6051
Inspection number	10305239

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 school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Five Rivers Child Care Ltd
Chair	Mr David Howard
Headteacher	Mrs Kirsty Fletcher
Annual fees (day pupils)	£91,880
Telephone number	01722820970
Website	www.five-rivers.org
Email address	kirsty.fletcher@five-rivers.org
Date of previous standard inspection	18 to 20 June 2019

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	31	40	40

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	31	40
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	31	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	31	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	31	40

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	21	26
Number of part-time teaching staff	4	6
Number of staff in the welfare provision	8	9

Information about this school

- The Spires is an independent special school. The school provides education for pupils with SEMH needs.
- The proprietor is Five Rivers Child Care Ltd. This is a social enterprise company that provides fostering, education and residential care services for children nationally. The proprietor employs a head of education and a compliance officer to oversee the work of its education provision.
- The Spires is currently registered for up to 32 pupils from age six to 18 years. At the time of this inspection, there were 31 pupils on roll.
- The great majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan. Local authorities place pupils at the school. Pupils have experienced significant disruption to their education prior to joining the school.

- The school uses three alternative education providers, Wiltshire Outdoor Learning (an outdoor pursuits centre), Riverbourne Community Farm and GUL (an equine therapy centre).
- The school operates an outreach provision called 1ACE. It provides tuition for any pupils who are not able to attend on site.
- The school's previous inspection, a standard inspection in June 2019, was the school's first inspection after its initial registration in November 2018. At this time, the school was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education commissioned this inspection to establish whether the school is likely to meet the relevant standards if a material change to the school's registration is implemented. The proprietor proposes to increase the maximum number of pupils from 32 to 40.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the chief executive officer, the chair of the board of Five Rivers Child Care Ltd, its head of education and its compliance officer, the headteacher and the senior teacher. Some of these meetings were held online. The inspector held meetings with the business manager. The inspector carried out lesson visits, observed breaktime activities and spoke with pupils. The inspector considered a range of documentation, including site plans, curriculum plans, policy documents and documents relating to safeguarding. She toured the site and visited the rooms that the school proposes to begin using. She visited the outdoor space that the school proposes to use.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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