

Arbour House

15–17 Glendinning Avenue, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 7QF

Inspection dates

30 April 2019

Overall outcome

The school meets the independent school standards relevant to the material change

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2

- Pupils are provided with a curriculum that is personalised to meet their different, often complex needs. Leaders recognise that 'one size does not fit all'. The curriculum policy sets out how pupils are taught the knowledge and skills required to prepare them well for their next steps.
- The curriculum consists of core subjects such as English, mathematics, physical education and science. In addition, pupils study creative subjects and topic work. They also have opportunities to focus on special interests and participate in community activities.
- Staff have developed long-term plans and detailed programmes of study with which to deliver the curriculum. Schemes of work are centred on interesting and engaging topics. Leaders have ensured that curriculum planning is in place for key stage 5 students, in respect of the material change.
- The curriculum provides various opportunities for pupils to develop their personal, social and health (PSH) education and understanding of British values. The PSH education programme focuses on helping pupils to manage their feelings and relationships with others. Staff encourage pupils to work together and cooperate to enhance their social skills. Pupils learn the value of tolerance and inclusivity.
- Key stage 5 planning supports students' PSH education. Opportunities are planned for students to learn about self-care, managing finances, running a home and learning to cook.
- In addition to classroom activities, pupils undertake extra-curricular activities and visits to enhance aspects of PSH education. For example, some older pupils recently undertook a visit to London that required them to negotiate and compromise to decide the day's activities.
- Older pupils are provided with appropriate careers guidance and work experience to prepare them for independent living and life after school. Where appropriate, staff set up work placements with local businesses.

Paragraph 3

- Teachers plan enjoyable activities for pupils that engage their interest. Teachers use appropriate resources, ask suitable questions and provide clear explanations that help pupils move forward in their learning. Tasks are pitched at the right level for pupils of different ages and abilities.
- Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff. Staff are patient, understanding and measured in their approach. The approach of staff puts pupils at their ease, and pupils develop confidence and a willingness to participate in activities as a result. Pupils behave well. No low-level disruption was observed during the inspection.
- Classrooms, some of which have been recently refurbished, are comfortable, inviting places in which to work. They provide suitable space for pupils and are well appointed with facilities and resources.
- Teaching approaches, materials and activities support pupils' understanding of British values. Pupils learn the value of mutual respect and cooperation. They learn about diversity and appreciate why rules need to be followed for the collective good. Staff arrange group activities involving larger numbers of pupils to explore some of these values in practice.

Paragraph 4

- Leaders have established a clear and effective system for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress. Pupils are set appropriate weekly and longer term targets in conjunction with their individual education plans (IEPs) and education, health and care (EHC) plans. These targets are reviewed regularly, and adjustments are made to teaching and support as necessary. Leaders analyse information to identify patterns and concerns.
- The school meets the standards in this part.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5

- The school's curriculum, vision and teaching approaches are focused in large part on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Staff endeavour to nurture 'well-rounded' individuals who can navigate the wider world, recognise their part in it and fulfil their potential.
- Pupils play a full role in the local community. For example, they have produced kits for homeless people containing items they might need. They have also made soup to be served at the local homeless shelter. Pupils have baked and sold cakes to raise money for BBC Children in Need.
- Staff celebrate and share pupils' achievements. For example, the 'Wow! Wall' promotes a sense of collective achievement and togetherness. Every pupil features on the wall for having achieved something worthwhile. Achievements include, 'showing fantastic listening skills,' and 'designing and making a lovely birthday card for another student'.

- During class discussions, pupils are encouraged to listen to each other and respect each other's opinions. Staff help pupils to form balanced views about issues, and to develop empathy and consider matters from different perspectives.
- The school meets the standards in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7

- The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and published on the school's website. It contains the necessary information, including the names of designated safeguarding staff.
- All staff have received appropriate training in child protection. They are aware of the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child. Designated safeguarding leaders monitor referral records closely and take appropriate action to resolve issues.
- Staff discuss potential safeguarding issues on a regular basis, and safeguarding is a standing item on meeting agendas. Consequently, staff communication helps to keep pupils safe. Leaders ask for support and guidance from external sources, such as the local authority designated officer, when necessary.

Paragraph 11

- Leaders have published a health and safety policy on the school's website. This policy provides information in relation to matters such as potential hazards, fire, hygiene and off-site activities. Key personnel are identified in the policy.

Paragraph 12

- The school complies with fire regulations. Leaders have undertaken audits to identify any potential issues and have taken action to address them. Assessments from external organisations confirm that systems for the detection and prevention of fire are fit for purpose.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders ensure that there are enough staff in place to supervise pupils of different ages throughout the school day. Suitable ratios of staff to pupils are decided according to pupils' needs.
- Pupils behave well during social times. They eat lunch together sensibly and use recreation time and resources appropriately. High levels of staff supervision help to maintain positive behaviour.

Paragraph 16

- The school's risk assessment policy provides clear guidance about how risk assessments should be conducted and the factors they need to take into account. Risk assessments show that staff consider the severity and likelihood of risk. Moreover, they indicate the preventative measures that will be taken to minimise risks.
- The school meets the standards in this part.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18, 19 and 21

- Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils are comprehensive and up to date. Staff monitor these checks, including identity, right to work in the United Kingdom and prohibition from teaching, regularly. They make appropriate adjustments to the single central record when staff join or leave the school.
- Staff who have leadership positions in the school are also subject to appropriate checks to ensure they are suitable to carry out these roles.
- Staff involved in appointing new staff to the school have received training to help them make suitable appointments.

Paragraph 20 (6)

- Governors and members of the body of proprietors are subject to the checks indicated above. Checks are up to date and detailed.
- The school meets the standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23 and 28

- Suitable toilet and changing facilities are provided for pupils. Toilets are clean and hygienic. They can be locked to ensure privacy and contain hand-washing facilities with water that runs at a suitable temperature. A shower is available for older pupils following physical exercise.
- Pupils have access to drinking water. For example, pupils can use the drinking fountain located in the dining area.

Paragraph 24

- The school has a dedicated medical room that is locked when not in use. The room is equipped with a bed and a washing facility. Toilet facilities are located close by.

Paragraphs 25, 26 and 27

- Much of the school has been refurbished to meet the requirements of the material change, namely to extend the age range and increase the number of pupils on roll. Consequently, new spaces have been created using internal partition walls. New and existing rooms have been redecorated, furnished well and equipped with new facilities. Good-quality materials have been used and the construction has been approved by external assessors. Spaces are well insulated for sound and have been developed with pupils' safety in mind.
- Spaces inside the building are suitably lit. External lighting is also in place.

Paragraph 29

- Pupils use outside spaces for recreation. Two separate spaces exist for younger and older pupils respectively. These are currently being redesigned and renovated. Pupils receive physical education (PE) off-site using local amenities. PE provision has the added advantage of helping pupils to develop their social skills and become more comfortable with different locations and unfamiliar people.

- The school meets the standards in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Leaders have cultivated an open, friendly school culture in which pupils are valued as individuals. Leaders ensure that staff have high expectations and share leaders' ambitions for pupils.
- Leaders ensure that staff are appropriately trained to support pupils' academic and pastoral needs on a case-by-case basis. The proprietor, Potens, ensures that staff can access additional resources, such as respite care, to support pupils when necessary.
- Leaders have been quick to drive improvements, including the actions necessary to meet the requirements of the material change. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to accommodation, staffing and the curriculum. These changes reflect leaders' commitment to improving age-appropriate provision for pupils and their desire to offer more places to deserving pupils.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the independent school standards. They monitor the standards closely to ensure that the school is compliant in every way.
- The school meets the standards in this part.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets 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	143642
DfE registration number	838/6039
Inspection number	10093047

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 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
Proprietor	Potens
Chair	Nicki Stadames
Headteacher	Julie Perks
Annual fees (day pupils)	£51,000
Telephone number	01305 781400
Website	http://potens-uk.com/young-people/education/welcome-to-our-school/
Email address	julie.perks@potens-uk.com
Date of previous standard inspection	26–28 June 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	6–16	6–18	6–18
Number of pupils on the school roll	10	25	25

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	10	25
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10	25
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	10	25
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	10	25

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	5	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	0

Information about this school

- Arbour House was first registered with the Department for Education in June 2017 and opened in September 2017. The school's first standard inspection took place in June 2018. Its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- Arbour House is a day special school that provides education for boys and girls with autism spectrum disorder, complex personal, social and emotional health issues, and learning difficulties. There are currently 10 pupils, aged six to 16.
- The pupil population of the school is drawn from different local authorities across the region.

- The school does not make use of other alternative education provision.
- A new headteacher commenced her role in April 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It is the school's first material change inspection. The purpose of the inspection was two fold. The first purpose was to consider whether the school can accommodate an extension to its age range to take pupils up to the age of 18 instead of 16. The second purpose was to consider whether the school can accommodate an increase in the number of pupils on roll to 25.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and Potens's regional director for the South West region. Accompanied by the headteacher, the inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- The inspector evaluated documentation, including curriculum plans, schemes of work and progress monitoring and assessment information. He also scrutinised documents relating to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Furthermore, the inspector considered documents relating to pupils' personal development and welfare.
- The inspector reviewed the school's single central record.
- The inspector, accompanied by the regional director, toured the school site to establish the degree to which the premises complied with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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