

Gloverspiece

Ladywood, Wychavon, Droitwich, Worcestershire WR9 0RQ

Inspection date

14 November 2019

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 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(c), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(f), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- The school proposes to raise the upper age range of the pupils it admits to 16 years old. This is because it is felt that some of the pupils are too fragile and vulnerable to cope with moving on to a new provision when they reach the age of 13. Leaders are proposing to offer these pupils continuous educational provision through raising the upper age range of the school's pupils.
- The proprietor intends that this proposal will provide these pupils with a stable and consistent learning experience in which they can continue to thrive.
- Leaders have developed effective curriculum plans for pupils in the new age range that build on the work done before.
- The school has five qualified teachers. Three of these teachers have secondary school and post-16 experience. The staff have the skills and expertise to prepare pupils for a key stage 4 curriculum and beyond, should the change in age range be approved.
- The school has developed its approach to learning on the principles of nurture. This approach has helped pupils to settle well into this small and caring learning community. Pupils said that staff understand their issues and help them do better. Pupils' classwork and homework reflect the school's curriculum plans and schemes of work. Pupils are making progress in what they know and can do.
- Every pupil at the school has a support adult working with them. Work is highly individualised to meet the needs and abilities of pupils.
- Most learning takes place in a large, well-resourced classroom. There are facilities for some pupils to work in smaller rooms if that is more helpful to them. These breakout rooms have the potential to be used for some teaching of secondary subjects to small groups of pupils if the material change is approved.

- Age-appropriate careers education is already included in the curriculum. It is planned that enhanced careers education will be provided to meet the needs of older pupils if the material change is approved.
- The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements for this standard.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 6, 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a), 16(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school has developed a suitable safeguarding policy that reflects current statutory guidance. It is regularly updated. The policy is published on the school's website.
- A comprehensive framework of policies supports the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Audits, risk assessments and safety checks are regularly carried out, and defects are dealt with quickly. In this way, leaders promote positive health and safety on a daily basis.
- The school offers a therapeutic and nurturing environment that provides well for its pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils attend the school with one-to-one support. This ensures that pupils are always appropriately supported and supervised during the school day. These arrangements are expected to continue for the new age range so that learning continues to be personalised and pupils' behaviour is closely monitored.
- The behaviour of pupils was good during the inspection. They spoke comfortably and confidently to the inspector about their experiences and how much they like being at the school. They said that they think it is a safe place.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met.

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(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)(i)(dd), 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)

- Leaders follow safer recruitment procedures when appointing new staff.
- Leaders continue to make sure that all appropriate checks on staff's suitability to work with children are completed before employment is taken up.
- The single central record meets the requirements of the independent school standards.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 24(2), 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 accommodation and premises have not altered since the school was previously inspected in February 2018 and September 2019.
- The accommodation and facilities can support the school's revised proposal to enable a small number of vulnerable pupils, within its current capacity of 25, to continue to attend the school until they are 16 years of age.
- This is possible because of the effective ways that the school supports and manages behaviour and learning. Staff are well trained in de-escalation strategies, and the school utilises the farm and animal-based activities to diffuse pupils' anxieties when appropriate.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue 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)

- Leaders are ambitious and are planning for an all-through independent school in the future.
- They want to do this because they know that some of their pupils struggle with change. These pupils, in particular, need a stable, consistent approach to the way they are taught and managed over a longer period of time.
- The school is seeking to raise the upper age limits to meet the welfare needs of some of the pupils already at the school, rather than for the admission of new pupils. Leaders know that some pupils will naturally need to move on to another type of provision. They also recognise that other pupils with SEND may lack the resiliency and confidence they need to cope with change.
- Leaders have also experienced external pressure to admit pupils with needs that the school cannot meet. Leaders are very clear about what they can offer and the needs of the pupils they plan to admit. They have the resilience to maintain this approach.
- School leaders have a secure understanding of the independent school standards. For example, the proprietor knows that the proposed sixth-form site would not meet the independent school standards without modifications to the buildings. Similarly, the school plans to develop a space above the current ground-floor provision, but again the proprietor knows that it would not meet the independent school standards at this time. This contributed to the proprietor's decision to change their initial proposal and stagger developments as pupils move through the school.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding and promoting the well-being of pupils.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue 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 change.

School details

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 143106 |
| DfE registration number | 885/6045 |
| Inspection number | 10129571 |

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 school |
| Proprietor | Lynne Duffy |
| Headteacher | Lynne Duffy |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £29,350 |
| Telephone number | 01905 452343 07918 026036 |
| Website | www.gloverspieceminifarm.co.uk |
| Email address | gloverspiece@gmail.com |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 13–15 February 2018 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal | Inspector's recommendation |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 12 | 4 to 18 | 4 to 16 |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 23 | 37 | 25 |

The school's initial proposal was based on a long-term plan to provide an all-through school for those pupils already moving through the different key stages. Leaders know that they are not ready for post-16 pathways because, at this time, they do not have any pupils in key stage 4. During the inspection, the school asked for a change to its original proposal. The revised proposal was to increase the upper age range to 16 rather than 18 and to defer the plans for sixth-form provision.

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Mixed |
| Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age | 23 | 25 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 1 | None |
| Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities | 23 | 25 |
| Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan | 23 | 25 |
| Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan | 23 | 25 |

Staff

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| Number of part-time teaching staff | 5 | 5 |
| Number of staff in the welfare provision | 24 support staff | 25 support staff |

Information about this school

- Groverspiece School Limited is a small independent day school located near Droitwich. It is part of a group of four interrelated companies registered with Companies House.
- The school is situated in a rural setting, with access to a partner business known as Groverspiece Farm.
- The school is registered to admit up to 25 pupils with SEND, including autism spectrum disorder. The school also offers places to pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

- The school offers education provision alongside therapeutic support and a nurturing environment. Outdoor activities, farming and animal care are used to support the holistic development of children.
- Currently, the school does not have any children in early years.
- Pupils are placed at the school by local authorities, including Worcestershire and Birmingham.
- The school does not use alternative provision and does not operate on alternative sites.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.

Information about this inspection

- This material change inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education (DfE). The purpose of this material change inspection was to establish whether the school is likely to meet the relevant standards if the material change is implemented.
- The school initially approached the DfE with a proposal to extend the age range from four to 12 years old to four to 18 years old. The initial proposal also included the setting up of a sixth-form provision at an off-site satellite location for a further 12 students.
- During this inspection, the proprietor recognised that the school was not ready to have its own sixth form. The revised school proposal is to extend the upper age range of pupils to 16 years old and to keep the maximum number of pupils at 25. The school wishes to continue to use the current premises and accommodation, should the revised material change be accepted.
- This was the school's first material change inspection. The school's first standard inspection took place in February 2018, when the school was judged to be good. An emergency inspection took place in September 2019 following a complaint. The school met all of the independent school standards that were checked during that inspection.
- This material change inspection was carried out with two days' notice.
- I met with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher, and with the assistant chief executive officer, the assistant headteacher and various staff members.
- In the context of the upper age range being increased to 16, I checked the school's premises and accommodation against the independent school standards. I examined a range of documents relating to the quality of education, pupils' welfare and health and safety, and the suitability of staff recruited to the school, including the single central record and staff files.
- I visited lessons and looked at pupils' work and the school's curriculum plans. I spoke to pupils and staff about how support is helping pupils.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Ellis-Martin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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