

Spring Hill High School

C/O 28 Slade Road, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 7PG

Inspection dates

2 February 2017

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 11, 14, 16, 16(a) and 16(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- These standards were met at the time of the full inspection in February 2015. However, the Department for Education (DfE) received information that the school's arrangements to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety were no longer effective. This was particularly the case in regards to staff's use of physical restraint and the deprivation of pupils' liberty.
- At the time of this inspection, the school's website was under reconstruction. As a consequence, the school's website does not contain the policies for: safeguarding and child protection; behaviour; health and safety; and risk assessment. However, the website states that hard copies are available for parents and others on request. The proprietor and leaders quickly and readily made copies of these policies available to inspectors.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures meet requirements, and are informed by, and reflect, guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The proprietor and leaders implement the range of policies, for example those relating to behaviour and anti-bullying, effectively. The proprietor ensures that staff and leaders suitably record and review the sanctions imposed upon pupils for misbehaviour.
- The school's designated safeguarding leaders demonstrate the necessary knowledge, understanding and expertise to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. For example, they have an in-depth understanding of 'sexting', the 'Prevent' duty and of the signs of grooming and child sexual exploitation. All staff complete frequent child protection training, including how to identify pupils at risk. As a result, staff understand their duty in protecting pupils. Staff address incidents of pupils' poor or unsafe behaviour quickly and effectively.
- The arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school are detailed and thorough. Suitable procedures, appropriate training and detailed risk assessment, including for individual pupils, underpin the school's safeguarding culture and ethos. All of the pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school and that staff are caring and thoughtful. Pupils said that staff deal with any issues, for example bullying, quickly and effectively. Pupils told

inspectors that they are free to leave classrooms or the premises if they become distressed, and that staff always provide appropriate supervision. Communication between the school sites and the care settings is highly effective. For example, staff and leaders review pupils' behaviour and any safeguarding concerns at the end of each school day, and pass this information to staff in the care homes or to parents and carers.

- Staff are clear that they should only use physical intervention as a last resort. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the range of de-escalation techniques that they use before physical intervention. They are able to identify the early signs of pupils' agitation and the correct approaches they can take to manage pupils' anxiety, for example by talking quietly to pupils or by distracting and engaging them in other activities. The school's detailed records of physical intervention incidents show that the number of occurrences over time declines for each individual pupil and across the different school settings.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors said that they were satisfied with the school's approach to behaviour management, including the use of physical restraint. Staff notify parents when an incident occurs. Parents said that they have sufficient opportunities to comment and provide feedback after an incident.
- Pupils' behaviour observed during this inspection across the five school sites was calm and relaxed. At breaktimes, pupils mix with each other and with staff well. Pupils are polite, thoughtful and demonstrate suitable social skills. For example, they take turns and share equipment and resources appropriately. The detailed information provided by the school shows that the number of poor behaviour incidents decline over time.
- The proprietor ensures that staff implement the health and safety policy effectively. For example, the premises are safe and secure, and staff supervise pupils properly at all times during the school day, including on trips and visits. The health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors are of paramount importance to the proprietor. He demonstrates a secure understanding of the current government guidance and works successfully with outside agencies, for example local authorities' children missing in education teams, to ensure that safeguarding is effective and pupils are safe.
- The school has a suitable risk assessment policy which the proprietor implements effectively. Risk assessments for each subject, school activity and trip and for each individual child are thorough and detailed, and minimise any risks appropriately. However, the proprietor and leaders correctly identify that they could use the information about pupils' medical and psychological history to inform individual risk assessments more effectively. Staff teach pupils how to keep safe and how to identify potential dangers and risks through personal, social and health education lessons.
- The school continues to meet these standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- These standards were met at the time of the full inspection in February 2015. However, the DfE received information that the school's arrangements to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety were no longer effective. This was particularly the

case in regard to staff's use of physical restraint and the deprivation of pupils' liberty.

- The proprietor and the headteacher have appropriate experience, knowledge and understanding of working with pupils with extreme social, emotional and mental health difficulties. They have put in place systems and procedures, which ensure that the independent school standards checked during this inspection continue to be met. Leaders and staff understand how to implement statutory and other relevant policies effectively.
- The proprietor demonstrates a secure understanding of how to provide educational and personal and emotional support for pupils who have found mainstream education difficult to access. Staff training is relevant and frequent. As a result, staff provide appropriate provision so that pupils achieve well both academically and socially. For example, the vast majority of pupils who leave the school are successful in finding further education or employment and training.
- Pupils and parents who spoke with inspectors are positive about the school and about the prompt and effective support, help and guidance they receive.
- Pupils' welfare and safety have a high priority. The compliance with child protection requirements and a clear focus on meeting the needs of the individual child exemplify this.
- The school continues to meet these standards.

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 were checked during this inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School Details

Unique reference number	134982
DfE registration number	330/6112
Inspection number	10030985

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Secondary
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr J F Sullivan
Headteacher	Mrs Sheraine Reid-Ferguson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,300 – £83,980
Telephone number	0121 448 3001
Website	www.springhillhighschool.co.uk
Email address	info@springhillhighschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	10 to 12 February 2015

Information about this school

- Spring Hill High School offers provision for a maximum of 50 pupils aged 11 to 19 years with social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties.
- The vast majority of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Their local authority places all the pupils. The school is currently working with 11 separate local authorities.
- The majority of pupils live in children's homes which are managed by the parent

company 'Thoughts of Others Limited'.

- Since the previous standard inspection in February 2015, the headteacher has taken overall responsibility for the educational provision over the school's five sites at: Slade Road; Orchard Road; Hunton Road; Wood End Lane; and Stuart Court.
- All of the pupils in key stages 3 and 4, and a few students in key stage 5, are educated at the Slade Road, Orchard Road, Hunton Road and Wood End Lane sites. Almost all of the students in key stage 5 are educated at the Stuart Court site.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This unannounced emergency inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools following concerns about the use of physical intervention and the restriction of pupils' liberty.
- The inspection checked on the school's compliance with some of the Independent School Standards in: Part 3 – welfare, health and safety of pupils; and Part 8 – quality of leadership and management of schools.
- Inspectors checked the school's website and safeguarding policy.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the following: the school's safeguarding and child protection policies and the checks made on staff's suitability to work with children; admissions and attendance registers; the behaviour policy and record of sanctions imposed on pupils; the health and safety policy; staff rotas for the supervision of pupils; the risk assessment policy and risk assessments; the physical intervention policy and the physical intervention incident records and analysis.
- Inspectors held discussions with the proprietor, leaders, pupils, parents and staff.
- Inspectors visited and toured the five school sites.

Inspection team

Peter Humphries, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Morris-King	Her Majesty's Inspector

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