

Stone Lodge Therapeutic School

Stone Lodge, Rothwell Road, Kettering, NN16 8XF

Unique reference number (URN): 149665

Material change inspection report:

9 June 2026

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), which is the registration authority for independent schools. The school has applied to the DfE to make a material change to its registration. The school proposes to change the age range of pupils and to change the maximum number of pupils attending.

The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

When we carry out material change inspections of independent schools, we report on the school's likely compliance with part 8 of the independent school standards first. Under part 8, the proprietor is required to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards consistently. The standard in part 8 is intended to ensure that the quality of leadership and management at the school is sufficient for that purpose.

The proprietor, school leaders and governors understand the school's context well. They are aspirational for all pupils. Their ambition is to provide nurture, alongside high-quality education, for pupils who have struggled with education previously. Some pupils arrive at the school quite late in their education, having spent a significant amount of time out of school. Leaders want to extend the age range and number of pupils at the school so that they can make a positive difference to these pupils. The school's proposal to extend the age range to include post-16

provision is intended to give pupils sufficient time to gain a broad range of knowledge, skills and qualifications.

Leaders have planned the proposed changes carefully. A new site will offer high-quality, purpose-built spaces for pupils to gain technical skills, including motor vehicle maintenance. The site offers sufficient classroom spaces and resources to accommodate the increased number of pupils in the school. Leaders' plans include recruiting and training new staff to meet the proposed increases in age range and pupil numbers. Training for new staff will include safeguarding, teaching and learning, health and safety, and risk assessment.

The proprietor has effective systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the school and to hold leaders to account. Governors are knowledgeable about education, including specialist settings. They provide appropriate expertise, support and challenge that benefits the school.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Curriculum

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. It is designed to provide pupils with a breadth of knowledge, skills and qualifications so that they are prepared well for their next stages in education, training, or employment. All pupils study a curriculum that includes English, mathematics and science as well, as humanities, computer science, art and food. Alongside these traditional subjects, pupils have opportunities to gain technical skills that reflect their interests and aspirations, including, motor vehicle maintenance and small animal care. Leaders plan to extend the curriculum offer so that students in key stage 5 can access an extended range of vocational qualifications.

All pupils have previously experienced significant disruption to their education. They all pupils have an education, health and care plan. When pupils arrive at the school, leaders quickly and accurately identify pupils' starting points and any barriers to learning that they face. Leaders design individual curriculum pathways for pupils, combined with personalised support plans. This helps pupils to overcome their barriers, build confidence, and learn securely.

Pupils' personal and social development are priorities for the school. The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. This provides pupils with opportunities to learn new skills, enjoy a wide range of sports, and volunteer in the community. The school's careers programme ensures that pupils are empowered to make informed choices when they leave the school. All pupils benefit from relationships and sex education that

meets statutory guidance. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to make sure that this is extended to be age-appropriate for sixth-form students.

Teaching

Teachers deliver the planned curriculum effectively. They follow planned strategies to focus sharply on important knowledge and subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their learning and apply new skills. Staff make sure that any gaps that pupils have due to missed education are closed quickly.

Leaders routinely monitor the impact of the curriculum. They identify where further improvements can be made. Leaders provide high-quality professional learning for staff to strengthen their subject knowledge and teaching expertise. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to ensure staff, including new staff, are well-equipped to deliver the curriculum to the increased numbers and age range.

Assessment

In classrooms, teachers question pupils carefully to identify gaps and check understanding. Leaders track pupils' progress, and their personal and social development, rigorously. They make sure that this informs future curriculum planning. These assessment routines are appropriate for the proposed increases in numbers and age range.

The standards checked in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

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

Therapy and nurture are at the heart of the school's provision. Leaders are committed to supporting pupils to develop character, gain social skills and grow confidence. This vision is supported across the curriculum and other activities that the school offers. Most pupils have had negative experiences of education in the past. Staff work together to create a safe and happy community so that all pupils can feel a sense of belonging.

The school's priority is to prepare pupils well to be citizens of modern Britain. Pupils learn to understand and respect fundamental British values and equalities. The curriculum supports pupils to find out about and celebrate different faiths and cultures. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to their community. These include volunteering in charity shops, food banks, and care homes.

The standards checked in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Safeguarding

The school has policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff. The safeguarding and child protection policy is published on the school's website and reflects up-to-date statutory guidance. The systems in place for reporting any concerns about pupils' welfare are appropriate. Leaders keep detailed records of the decisions they make and actions they take to keep pupils safe.

Knowledgeable and experienced leaders and staff work together to make sure there is an open culture underpinned by a priority on keeping pupils safe. Leaders and staff are well trained to understand their statutory responsibilities and the school's context. Policies and systems are regularly reviewed by school leaders, governors and the proprietor.

Health and safety and fire

The school has a detailed and robust health and safety policy. Leaders check routinely that the policy is applied. They make sure that all staff receive up-to-date training. This rigour ensures that the school is safe for pupils and staff. Leaders have updated the health and safety policy to ensure that this remains the case when the number and age range of pupils increase.

Leaders have ensured that the appropriate fire safety arrangements are in place. Regular checks ensure that fire alarms, fire extinguishers and emergency lighting are working and that evacuation procedures are understood. External fire risk assessments are undertaken at all sites and leaders make sure that any recommendations are implemented.

Risk assessment

The school has a suitable risk assessment policy in place. All pupils have individual risk assessments. These indicate where pupils may be at risk and identify suitable strategies to keep them safe. Pupils' risk assessments are shared with appropriate staff and reviewed and updated often. There are detailed and up-to-date risk assessments for all school sites and to cover school activities. These measures are suitable for the proposed increases to pupil numbers and age range.

The standards checked in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

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

The recruitment checks made on staff, supply staff and the proprietor

The proprietor ensures that robust safer-recruitment policies and procedures are in place at the school. These systems are well understood by school leaders who make sure that all required checks are made on new staff before they join the school. School leaders have had suitable safer-recruitment training. They follow statutory guidance carefully throughout the recruitment process.

The single central record of these recruitment checks

The single central record is maintained accurately and complies with statutory requirements. It is checked regularly by the headteacher, the proprietor and the chair of governors.

The standards checked in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Toilet and washing facilities, water supply, changing accommodation and showers

There are adequate toilets with washing facilities to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers. The water temperature is appropriate and checked often. There are sufficient changing facilities and showers.

Medical room and accommodation for pupils' therapy needs

Medical rooms are fully equipped and provide a comfortable space for sick pupils with toilet and washing facilities nearby. This is suitable for the increase in pupil numbers.

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils

All school sites are clean, safe and well-maintained. Leaders ensure that health and safety checks, including fire safety, are made regularly. Risk assessments are comprehensive.

Lighting and acoustic conditions

All classrooms have appropriate acoustics and are appropriately well lit. There is suitable external lighting.

Outdoor space

The school has pleasant outdoor spaces at the Stone Lodge and Thrapston House sites. There is adequate room for pupils to play and enjoy at social times. These spaces are secure and well-maintained. At the Meadow Farm site there are fields that pupils use for forest school activities. The site is safe and the surroundings are secure. The school provides physical education off site.

The standards checked in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved.

The school's accessibility plan

The school has an appropriate accessibility policy and plan in place, which includes consideration of the proposed additional spaces and increase in pupil numbers.

The proprietor has ensured that this regulation is likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. Inspectors checked the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspector spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the proprietor and the chair of governors.

Inspectors also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers. These requirements of the ISS are met.

Stone Lodge Therapeutic School is an independent special school that currently provides education for up to 77 pupils, aged 11 to 17 years.

In addition to the school's main site, the school currently operates from Thrapston House, Huntingdon Road, Thrapston NN14 4NF and Meadow Farm Learning Centre, Rushton Road, Desborough, Kettering NN14 2QN. As part of the material change request, the school also proposes to operate from Unit 2, Top Close, Thrapston NN14 4PP.

The school caters for pupils with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 4 to 6 June 2024.

The school uses 2 unregistered and 1 registered alternative provisions.

Lead inspector

John Spragg

His Majesty's Inspector

About this school

Proprietor

Rockingham Educational Services Ltd

Headteacher

Ollie Sharp

Type of school

Other independent special school

Capacity

77

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll

75

Number of part-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll

0

Age range of pupils

11 to 17

Gender of pupils

Mixed

Annual fees for day pupils

£55,000 to £71,000

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