

Oaklands School

Norgate House, Tealgate, Charnham Park, Hungerford RG17 0YT

Inspection date

4 July 2023

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h)–2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d)–2A(2), 3–4

- The school's curriculum is designed to provide pupils with 'creative opportunities and a variety of experiences to enable every individual to grow and become their best self'. It is likely to provide suitable breadth of learning as required by the independent school standards.
- Each pupil will have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). They will learn a variety of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, drama, music and physical education. Some subjects will be taught in the nearby leisure centre. Pupils will follow one of five 'pathways' according to their needs and starting points.
- Pupils are likely to have a wide range of needs in addition to their primary need of autism. The curriculum is designed to be flexible, with content and delivery adapted according to pupils' individual requirements. Each pupil's EHC plan will provide the starting point for teaching. These, combined with discussions with parents and assessments, will be used to target specific areas of need. Leaders have the knowledge and expertise required to ensure that this is done well.
- Leaders see developing pupils' reading skills as a key component of the curriculum. They have identified a suitable phonics programme to support early reading. Leaders intend that staff will be trained to use the programme and be able to access suitable resources. They clearly understand the importance of this linked to the fact that many of the pupils who will attend the school may have been out of education for long periods of time before joining the school.
- The school's policy and intended practice around relationships and sex education are fit for purpose. Leaders will publish the policy on the school's website once it goes live. They plan to consult with parents when the school opens.
- Leaders are acutely aware of the school's responsibility to help prepare pupils for future independence. They have developed an appropriate personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme to support pupils' personal development. Fundamental British values will be promoted through the taught curriculum and school life. Pupils

are expected to have access to independent careers guidance which is likely to meet requirements.

- Leaders are at the very early stages of appointing staff. They intend to employ well-qualified and experienced staff who will be able to support pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills required to make strong progress through the relevant curriculum pathway. Training for staff will be a routine and regular part of school life.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- Leaders understand the importance in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through both the taught curriculum and through establishing a strong, caring ethos at the school. They plan to tailor support according to pupils' individual contexts and circumstances. It is intended that pupils will benefit from a culture that promotes respect for others, and for themselves, building and supporting their ability to make a positive contribution to society.
- Leaders aim to offer a 'therapeutic' approach to education. This will include a focus on supporting pupils to develop their social and communication skills. Pupils will be encouraged to recognise and understand their feelings, and to appreciate the impact of their actions on others. They will be taught how to express their feelings in appropriate ways.
- The school's PSHE curriculum will support pupils' understanding and respect for diversity. For example, tolerance of, and respect for faiths and beliefs will be promoted throughout the school's curriculum.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the school is granted permission to register.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 6–7(b), 9–16(b)

- Leaders have a good understanding of health and safety requirements, including the need for comprehensive risk assessments and ongoing monitoring and action needed to keep the school safe.
- The proposed school's policies, written guidance and procedures to assure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are in place. The school's written policy for safeguarding and child protection reflects current guidance, is available on request and will be published on the school's website when it is live.
- The headteacher will be the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). She has completed all required safeguarding training and is knowledgeable about safeguarding matters. Leaders understand the requirements to ensure the deputy DSL receives appropriate safeguarding training once they have been appointed.
- Staff will complete safeguarding training regularly. This will be supplemented with daily staff briefings, which will be used to share key information, including revisiting key aspects of the safeguarding policy. All safeguarding concerns will be recorded on a centralised electronic system in a timely manner. Leaders intend to complete regular

checks on staff's safeguarding knowledge to ensure they are confident about taking action when required.

- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are likely to achieve leaders' aim to secure positive behaviour if implemented securely and effectively. Staff will be suitably trained to understand the varying needs of pupils. Leaders plan to monitor behaviour records carefully to spot and respond to any patterns that emerge.
- Admission and attendance registers will be maintained in accordance with paragraph 15 of the standards. Pupils will be expected to attend regularly. Leaders will monitor their attendance closely. They intend to work constructively with parents and carers and agencies to support pupils' welfare.
- Leaders have considered the supervision of pupils carefully. They have thoughtfully planned the staffing to ensure that pupils will always be in sight of an adult. In addition, leaders plan to admit a small number of pupils in the first instance, gradually increasing the number of pupils on roll over time.
- Fire safety is given high priority. A fire risk assessment was carried out by a qualified external consultant prior to the refurbishment commencing. Leaders have planned for a further fire risk assessment to be completed once the building works are fully completed in the forthcoming weeks. Leaders plan for all staff to complete fire warden training.
- A first-aid policy is in place. It is intended that key staff will be suitably trained to deliver first aid. The school's medical room has been identified, but it does not yet meet the requirements of part 5.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

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

Paragraph 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders will manage staff safeguarding and recruitment checks. The directors, along with other members of the advisory board, will monitor arrangements to ensure that they are completed fully and in a timely manner.
- The single central record was in place and complete at the time of the inspection. It is set up in a way which is likely to ensure that it will meet the statutory requirements when staff recruitment has been completed.
- One of the directors and another member of the local advisory board have completed suitable training in safer recruitment procedures.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- The building is suitable for the proposed number of pupils. However, the completion of work to prepare the accommodation for use as classrooms and learning spaces was still ongoing at the time of the pre-registration inspection. This means that the accommodation is not yet fit for purpose. As a result, several standards in part 5 are not met. While the proposed classrooms, break out and sensory spaces are of

sufficient size. Currently, the lighting, heating and acoustics for each area are not suitable. Because of this, paragraph 25 regarding the health, safety and welfare of pupils cannot be assured at this stage.

- Suitable external lighting is in place around the buildings. The grounds are spacious and afford ample parking and grassed areas which are suitable for pupils to play outside. Some of the school's physical education will take place off site at local sports facilities.
- Separate toilet facilities are available for boys, girls and staff. Drinking water will be available for pupils and is clearly labelled. However, at the time of the inspection, the heating system was not operating, and there was no hot water. It was not possible to check that the hot water does not present a scalding risk.
- There is a dedicated medical room for the examination and treatment of pupils and the short-term care of those who are sick and injured. There is a toilet nearby. However, the medical room has not been furnished and it does not have a lockable cabinet for the storage of medicines. Similarly, while there is a suitable space allocated for changing accommodation and showers for pupils over 11, leaders are waiting for the showers to be fitted. Currently, neither of these two rooms has an adequate supply of hot and cold running water. The proprietor intends to address these issues as part of the ongoing refurbishment work before the school opens.
- It is unlikely that all the standards in this part will be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(d), 32(1)(f)–32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii)–32(4)(c)

- The proposed school's website is still under construction. However, during the inspection, leaders demonstrated how the website will function and shared the key information that it will contain. This includes the school's safeguarding policy, which is compliant with current guidelines. Other key policies will also be available through the website or on request.
- Leaders see high levels of communication between parents and school staff as a key aspect of the provision. They value parents' views and look forward to working with them to support pupils' progress. Leaders intend to provide regular updates and written reports to parents as well as local authorities placing pupils at the school.
- Leaders are fully conversant with the requirements for reporting on pupils' progress and attainment, as well as supporting the annual review process of pupils with an EHC plan.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33–33(k)

- The complaints policy and procedures meet the requirements of part 7. They set out clear timescales for the management of a complaint. The policy will be available on the school's website once the website is live.
- There is provision for formal complaints to be heard by at least three people who have not been directly involved in the complaint. The policy stipulates that one of the

members of the panel must be independent of the management and running of the school.

- Leaders have appropriate plans in place to keep records of any complaints received by the school. Monitoring of complaints and any arising actions will be part of routine checks carried out by the local advisory board.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has appointed a local advisory board, which will be chaired by one of the directors. Members of the board represent a wide range of skills and expertise in areas such as special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), school leadership and finance. Leaders intend that the local advisory board will provide an additional layer of scrutiny over the school's work so that leaders are held to account robustly, as well as providing support and advice.
- The headteacher and members of the local advisory board bring suitable knowledge and expertise to their roles. They have substantial experience in providing education for pupils with SEND. They are clearly committed to making sure that pupils with SEND can access high-quality provision.
- The school was not able to demonstrate that it is likely to meet all the requirements of the standards at the time of this inspection. Nevertheless, overall, the proposed arrangements, policies and procedures for the new school reflect positively on leaders.
- Leaders are confident that the remaining work required to ensure that the premises are fit for purpose will be completed in the next few weeks.
- The school is unlikely to meet all the requirements of part 8 because the proprietor has not yet ensured that all of the relevant independent school standards are likely to be met during this pre-registration inspection.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a suitable accessibility plan in place. The headteacher intends to update the plan at appropriate intervals and as required to take account of the school's pupils and staff. The school is likely to meet schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	149694
DfE registration number	869/6023
Inspection number	10282214

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	P5E Limited
Chair	Julie Smith
Headteacher	Megan Stratton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,500 to £72,000
Telephone number	07713 255 531
Website	www.oaklands-school.co.uk
Email address	info@oaklands-school.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	5 to 16	5 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	40	40

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	40

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	40

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	6

Information about this proposed school

- Oaklands School intends to cater for up to 40 pupils, regardless of gender, between the ages of five and 16. All pupils will have an EHC plan and their places will be funded by a local authority.
- Leaders intend to specialise in providing education for pupils with autism. Pupils may also have a range of associated conditions such as learning difficulties, communication and language difficulties and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- It is not intended that the school will use alternative provision.
- The accommodation will consist of a range of classrooms, break out and sensory spaces for small group and one-to-one teaching. The ground floor is designed for primary-age children and the first floor is for secondary-age children.
- The proposed school is led by a proprietor body, consisting of two directors who are also members of the local advisory board. This board will provide school leaders with support and challenge about the quality of their work.

Information about this inspection

- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection. The purpose of this inspection was to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Schools must comply with the independent school standards to be registered.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the independent school standards, safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector met with one of the directors of the proprietor body, who is also the chair of the local advisory board, the headteacher and another member of the local advisory board. She toured the school's premises and grounds. She reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, policies and curriculum and assessment information.

Inspection team

Louise Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils; and
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 26 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the acoustic conditions and sound insulation of each room or other space are suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 27(a) the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 28(1)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water; and
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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