

Arc Oakbridge School

Joseph Lucas Building, Great Hampton Row, Birmingham B19 3JG

Inspection dates

25 July 2018

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

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)(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)(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

- Leaders have developed an appropriate, differentiated curriculum that is matched well to the specific needs of pupils who have an autistic spectrum disorder. There is, rightly, a strong emphasis on supporting pupils to develop their social interaction skills. The curriculum is supported by detailed, purposeful schemes of work for each subject. These schemes set out pupils' intended learning outcomes and associated teaching activities with clarity. If implemented effectively, they should help pupils to make good progress, both academically and socially.
- The curriculum offers pupils experiences in a wide and diverse range of subjects that should support their all-round development. There are ample opportunities built into the curriculum to ensure that pupils develop their speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy skills effectively. For example, in science it is expected that key stage 2 pupils will create a PowerPoint presentation to describe the function of the digestive system.
- Leaders, in developing schemes of work, have drawn on successful models used in other Kedleston Group schools. However, they plan to adapt schemes accordingly so that learning is personalised carefully and takes into account the aims set out in pupils' education, health and care plans. This should support pupils' good progress.
- Leaders have a clear view about the skills and personal attributes of the staff who they want to appoint, which is closely aligned to the school's vision and values. Leaders explained that all staff appointed so far have relevant teaching qualifications and either personal experience and/or professional knowledge and understanding of pupils who have an autistic spectrum disorder. This should help to ensure that pupils are taught effectively and achieve well. The school has already recruited a headteacher, a senior teacher with qualified teacher status, and a class teacher with qualified teacher learning and skills status. All have experience of teaching pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Other support staff have also

been recruited. This means that there should be enough staff to teach pupils in small groups effectively.

- The headteacher has explored links with a local careers service in order to provide independent, impartial careers advice to pupils. The headteacher plans to offer pupils first-hand practical work experiences, exposing them to a wide range of occupations and careers. Leaders have thought carefully about the challenges that they may face because of pupils' specific needs. For instance, leaders are trying to identify safe, low-stress environments, such as working with the school chef. However, they remain committed to supporting pupils to manage work experiences and develop their social interactions beyond school.
- The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is appropriate. It includes units of work, such as 'Living in communities – me and other people', to help pupils improve their social understanding. The programme, if implemented according to the long-term plan, should provide pupils with effective preparation for their responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. It should also contribute to meeting the expectations regarding protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.
- Leaders have set in place clear procedures for assessment to determine how well pupils achieve, both academically and socially. Leaders expect that pupils will be entered for a range of qualifications, including GCSE level and functional skills qualifications. Leaders plan to hold subject moderation days for English, mathematics and science, working alongside other schools, to ensure accuracy of teachers' assessment.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the above standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders place a great deal of importance on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This is clearly reflected in curriculum planning, which identifies meaningful opportunities to develop pupils' SMSC understanding. There is a particular focus on helping pupils to show respect for, and tolerance of, others. This is closely linked to providing pupils with experiences that will enable them to function successfully in society.
- The school has an overarching Kedleston Group schools' SMSC policy. However, there is an expectation that individual schools take this policy and adapt it to meet the needs of each school.
- Several subject schemes of work include references to SMSC, demonstrating how it is likely to be woven into the subject. For example, in English pupils are expected to write a letter to the government about an important social issue, developing their understanding of British institutions. In other lessons, pupils will be supported to distinguish right from wrong and make sensible choices.
- The headteacher demonstrates a genuine desire to listen actively and respond to the opinions of pupils. Leaders have considered ways to collect and act on pupils' views

about their educational experiences, including through the establishment of a school council.

- Leaders propose that pupils' learning is supplemented by a range of educational visits to places of interest in order to widen their cultural experiences. School documentation makes it explicit that the promotion of partisan political views will not be tolerated.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the above standards are likely to be met.

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)

- Leaders demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of safeguarding procedures relevant to the school setting. The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and has attended training to prepare him well for the role. In addition, the Kedleston Group schools has a head of safeguarding who has oversight of the school's management of safeguarding matters. This person carries out detailed, termly audits of each school's safeguarding arrangements, then sets in place an action plan to address any shortcomings quickly.
- Leaders have a clear expectation that all staff will keep up to date with safeguarding advice and guidance in order to help keep pupils safe. Leaders intend to check staff's knowledge on a regular basis through questionnaires, then use this information to determine any future training needed. This will include each new member of staff having a personal induction which covers the proposed school's general safeguarding principles and how to report concerns. It is expected that this induction will be completed before a member of staff begins working with pupils. Leaders say that annual refresher training will be provided. These measures should help to keep pupils safe from harm.
- The proposed school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. It includes all relevant and required information, and therefore takes into account the Secretary of State's guidance, as referenced in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016.
- Leaders have developed a suitable behaviour management policy that, if implemented, should support pupils with managing their behaviour. The proposed school plans to record all behaviour incidents, and any associated sanctions, on an electronic system and use the information to identify patterns and put in place the necessary support for pupils.
- The proprietor has established a safeguarding overview committee, which meets monthly in each of the group's schools and considers any emerging issues. This suggests that the proprietor and senior managers have a secure oversight of safeguarding arrangements. Leaders are clear about the action that they would take should there be an allegation against a member of staff.
- The headteacher has undertaken safer-recruitment training and was able to demonstrate how he has put into practice his training when selecting new staff.
- The school has a health and safety policy in place with appropriate coverage of current health and safety legislation. Its implementation is monitored by internally

trained staff and by external consultants with expertise in health and safety matters. The policy has due regard to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The policy identifies that risk assessments are required and that a responsible person will monitor these on an annual basis.

- Leaders have an understanding about the requirements of how to record pupils' attendance accurately, using the agreed Department for Education's absence codes. They expect that all teachers will adhere to the agreed protocols for recording pupils' attendance.
- The arrangements for First Aid are included within the health and safety policy. The policy states that paediatric First Aid training will be available to meet the requirements of those pupils under eight years old. It is planned that there will be monthly checks on the contents of First Aid boxes.
- Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that the building, once complete, will comply with the various fire regulations. Leaders have commissioned a fire risk assessment for the proposed school in its current unfinished state. The fire safety policy demonstrates that there should be the necessary fire notices and signage within the school.
- Leaders have established a range of comprehensive policies related to health and safety matters that set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of everyone in maintaining a safe, comfortable, working school environment. Policies show how leaders plan to conduct termly audits to check that policies are implemented correctly. Leaders say that they will undertake periodic reviews of policies to ensure that they remain current and useful.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the above standards are likely 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), 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)

- The school has a single central record, which includes all school staff. It demonstrates that all required checks, such as a person's identification, their right to work in the United Kingdom and teacher prohibition checks have been completed. This means that leaders reduce the likelihood of employing unsuitable adults to work with pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that medical checks have been carried out on all staff to make sure that they are fit to carry out their roles.
- The school does not intend to use supply teachers.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the above standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 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)(b)

- Building alterations were still in progress at the time of the inspection. Almost all physical spaces, such as classrooms and offices, had been created and electrical work was being finalised. Building plans show that a suitable medical room, complete with sink and near to a toilet, had been planned.
- Plans show that accommodation will include seven classrooms of appropriate size to accommodate the proposed number of pupils, including: a science laboratory complete with a secure storage area for chemicals; suitable toilets and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils; a staff toilet; a kitchen area where school staff will prepare meals; a staff room; a reflection room; a secure reception area where visitors will be checked before entry to the school; a medical room; a multi-purpose, large space for large group activities; and a dining room.
- There is a small, but sufficient, hard-surfaced outdoor space in which pupils may take breaks and have social time. There is also a small garden space, which leaders intend to use as a sensory area for pupils.
- Leaders and the 'site and estates manager' have given careful thought to the building design in order to meet the specific needs of pupils who have an autistic spectrum disorder. For example, they have installed LED lights that do not flicker and can be changed to a multitude of colours to create a calming effect for individual pupils when needed.
- Builders are working to architects' plans to ensure that all rooms are appropriately sound insulated. This includes carpeted classrooms to reduce noise levels.
- Building plans show that leaders have planned for an appropriate number of boys' and girls' toilets with hot and cold running water. They plan to ensure that the flow of hot water will be regulated to a maximum of 40 degrees Celsius to avoid the risk of scalding.
- While no external lighting for the building was in place at the time of the inspection, leaders were able to demonstrate how this is going to be included in the near future.
- The proposed school does not intend to cater for pupils with complex needs.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the above standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(c), 29(1), 29(1)(a)

- There is insufficient outdoor space for pupils to undertake physical education.
- Leaders have not made any provision in their building plans for showers and changing facilities for pupils aged 11 years or over who receive physical education. However, they intend to make use of local community facilities to address this requirement. Leaders have begun to explore some options, but do not yet have any firm plans in place. For example, they have not considered properly the risk assessments for pupils using changing accommodation which they could potentially share with members of the public.
- Leaders have not ensured that all of the above standards are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(e), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g)

- Leaders have worked hard to ensure that the full range of information about the school is available and easily accessible to parents and carers. Documents are clear and generally easy to follow and understand.
- The proposed school has a comprehensive website that contains a wealth of information for parents and other interested parties such as local authority commissioners. It includes all necessary policies that need to be made available to parents to meet the requirements of the independent school standards, including the behaviour policy, safeguarding policy and complaints procedure.
- Despite the school's website reporting that it will cater for pupils aged seven to 17 years, and admit up to 42 pupils, leaders confirmed that this is incorrect and needs to be amended. Leaders stated that the school will take up to 40 pupils aged seven to 16 years.
- The proposed school's website outlines the school's vision and values. It provides a helpful overview for parents of the curriculum on offer to pupils.
- The SEN policy is available on the school website. This explains the provision for pupils who have an education, health and care plan, which includes an annual review of the plan.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the above standards are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)

- The proprietor has ensured that parents have access to a straightforward complaints policy that sets out clearly the action parents should take if they wish to raise a complaint. This policy includes clear and appropriate timescales so that parents are aware of how long they can expect to wait before receiving a response.
- The complaints policy makes provision for parents to escalate a complaint to a formal procedure should they be dissatisfied with the school's initial response. This includes the opportunity for a panel hearing where one member of the panel is independent of the school. The policy also states that written records of the details of complaints and their outcomes will be retained, remain confidential and only made available to the appropriate persons, including an inspectorate or the Secretary of State.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the above standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)(c)

- Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to developing pupils' academic, social and emotional development. Many of their proposed policies and practices are based on tried and tested methods from other successful schools within the Kedleston Schools

group. Overall, leaders are knowledgeable about the independent school standards and have put in place arrangements to ensure that almost all of the standards are likely to be met. Leaders have placed appropriate emphasis on putting in place structures and processes to ensure pupils' well-being.

- Leaders have ensured that the above standard is likely to be met.

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- While there is not likely to be a governing body, the proprietor has put in place mechanisms to ensure that a central, support team will have a sharp oversight of the school's operations and performance. This includes the headteacher providing a weekly report to the chief operating officer, a weekly remote monitoring visit using key performance indicators, and termly audit visits from members of the central team, such as human resources and the safeguarding officer.
- Leaders propose that a school improvement partner will visit every six months to offer challenge and support to school leaders. During this time, a staff survey will also be completed to gather the views of staff. These arrangements should help contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning over time.
- Because leaders have not yet established clear plans for providing sufficient outdoor space for physical education and suitable accommodation for changing with showers, leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are likely to be met. However, these issues are relatively easy to rectify, and leaders have already made positive inroads into resolving them. They have begun exploring options with Birmingham Centre Council about hiring facilities at a local leisure centre to provide outdoor space for physical education and appropriate changing facilities.
- Due to two of the standards in Part 5 being unlikely to be met, the proprietor has not ensured that all the standards in Part 8 are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The headteacher has conducted an extensive review of the proposed school's accessibility arrangements, taking into account a wide range of factors. This has included considering non-visual guides to assist people using the building, and to making sure that information is presented in a way which is user-friendly for people who have disabilities.
- The headteacher has used the findings from the review to devise an appropriate accessibility plan. Therefore, the proprietor has ensured that the school is likely to fulfil its responsibilities in line with the requirements of paragraph 3 of 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	145859
DfE registration number	330/6041
Inspection number	10054345

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	Day school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Kedleston Group Ltd
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Phil Petch
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000
Telephone number	0203 823 3033
Website	https://kedlestongroup.com/oakbridge
Email address	s.bhatti@kedlestonschools.com
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	7–16	7–16
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	43
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	43
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	43

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	5
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	4

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located in a former sixth-form school block in the Jewellery Quarter, Hockley, near to the centre of Birmingham.
- The proposed school is for pupils aged seven to 16 years who have an autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils are likely to have an education, health and care plan. Pupils are to be referred to the school by local authorities.
- The proposed school does not have a governing body.
- The premises comprise of seven classrooms, including a science laboratory, offices, medical room, hall, toilets, dining room, reflection room, staffroom and kitchen.
- The proposed school will not have a religious ethos.
- The school proposes to offer full-time provision, after a short transition stage for pupils.
- The headteacher informed inspectors that the name of the school had changed to Arc Oakbridge School. This is because leaders did not want the name of the school linked to a specific geographical area.

Information about this inspection

- Proprietors wishing to open a new school must apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for registration. This inspection was commissioned by the DfE to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards and other requirements that registered schools must comply with or have regard to.
- This is the school's first pre-registration inspection carried out at the request of the DfE under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the school's head of education and quality assurance. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the proprietor to discuss the application for registration. Inspectors conducted a tour of the premises and talked to the site and estates manager. They reviewed a wide range of policies, the staff handbook, schemes of work, fire information, health and safety documentation and risk assessments. An inspector scrutinised the school's single central record.

Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mel Ford

Her 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.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable –
 - 29(1)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum.

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)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk
© Crown copyright 2018