

The Seeds School

Seeds Centre, Unit 6, The Bridges Business Park, Horsehay, Telford,
Shropshire TF4 3EE

Inspection dates

13 September 2018

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- The proposed school offers a suitable curriculum for the pupils who will attend. There is a significant focus on vocational skills, such as construction and hair and beauty. The teaching areas are well resourced, and pupils will be able to gain qualifications that can help them to get apprenticeships. In addition, the school will offer functional skills programmes in English and mathematics. Given that pupils will have had a disrupted education before being referred to the school, the programmes of study and level of qualifications are appropriate.
- Careers guidance forms an integral part of the current and proposed curriculum offer. Staff have established links with many local businesses. Employers, such as a hairdressing company, visit the school to talk with pupils and explain how the skills learned in school can help in the workplace. Staff also arrange trips to places of interest to inspire pupils and broaden their horizons.
- Leaders will keep the school curriculum under regular review to ensure that it is appropriate for pupils' needs. Indeed, evidence of this happening was seen during this inspection. For instance, when it became apparent that recent pupils had, at their previous schools, missed out important parts of their health and sex education, staff arranged additional lessons to make sure that pupils had all the information they needed. This ensured that pupils knew how to act responsibly, resist peer pressure and stay safe.
- Since the first pre-registration visit, senior staff have improved provision for pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils will be taught how to become responsible and respectful members of society. They will learn about different faiths, the value of democracy and the implications of the protected characteristics, both in everyday life and in the workplace.
- Through the curriculum and values promoted at school, staff aim to motivate pupils and refresh their attitudes to learning so they can obtain qualifications and gain feelings of success.
- Staff have developed a well-organised system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and aspirations when they first start at the school and their subsequent

progress. Staff will have regular phone conversations with parents to keep them informed. Parents will receive written reports each term.

- During this inspection, the inspector observed effective teaching and learning taking place. In a functional skills session and a construction lesson, for example, pupils were engaged and responded positively to teachers' good subject knowledge and motivational approach. Resources were used to good effect and sessions were purposeful. Consequently, pupils made progress and could see the relevance of their learning to their lives and ambitions.
- The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the standards in this part.

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

- Pupils will be taught to distinguish between right and wrong and to take responsibility for their actions. Staff are trained in conflict resolution and know how to respond to challenging behaviour in constructive ways. They aim to help pupils find coping strategies, and improve their behaviour and their outlook on education and life.
- Visiting speakers and trips to places of interest will serve to inform pupils about life beyond school and support their learning about the wider world. School leaders have produced guidance for staff and visitors to follow. This guidance makes it clear that adults must act and speak in a responsible manner that promotes respect for others and the law. Similarly, school leaders have taken steps to protect pupils from extreme views.
- Furthermore, the promotion of British values is woven through numerous policy documents, the proposed school curriculum and careers guidance.
- The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the standards in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy that is informed by the most recent version of 'Keeping children safe in education'. A copy of the policy document is available on the school's website. The policy gives clear guidance to staff about what to do in response to a concern. Staff receive appropriate training and know about the risks that pupils can face. During the inspection, a member of the teaching staff was able to explain how to respond to any concerns or information relating pupils' safety.
- The school's behaviour policy is fit for purpose and pupils who spoke with the inspector described the rules as fair and consistent.
- Around the school site, and in the school's anti-bullying policy, there is clear and helpful guidance about what constitutes bullying and what to do if it happens. Staff and pupils say that it is very rare and is not tolerated.
- First-aid treatment is available if needed and staff know how medicines in school should be stored.
- Fire-safety equipment has all been tested this year and records are kept as they should be. Fire escape doors and alarms all work. The escape route to the rear of the building passes several other businesses and has the potential to become blocked by clutter from other premises. At the time of this inspection, it was passable.

- Staff complete risk assessments for school activities with appropriate care and in line with guidance provided in the school's teaching and learning and health and safety policies. Pupils' access to the internet is filtered and staff receive monitoring reports about internet use in school.
- The admissions and attendance registers are maintained correctly. Through existing links with local authorities, staff keep in touch with education welfare officers in order to monitor pupils' welfare and attendance.
- The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the standards in this part.

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

- Leaders follow the proper processes when interviewing and employing staff. A single central record of checks on staff is kept and is informed by all the necessary information. Staff and pupils' files are kept securely in purpose-built offices.
- The proprietor and headteacher know that they must record the outcome of checks made under section 128 of the 2008 Act on staff holding management positions. These checks are currently being completed.
- The school has no plans to employ supply staff to cover absence. However, volunteers or visiting speakers may be used to support some aspects of the curriculum. In such instances, school leaders will ensure that all the necessary checks are done.
- Supervision arrangements for pupils during lessons and breaktimes are fine.
- The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- On all three sites, classrooms are well equipped and set out to ensure that pupils can learn effectively.
- There are separate toilets for boys and girls and all have suitable hand-washing facilities with cold and warm tap water that is temperature-controlled.
- Drinking water is readily available from water coolers and is clearly marked as such.
- At the Dudley and Walsall sites, there is outdoor space for play and sport. At both sites, pupils can use the host school's changing rooms and showers before and after physical activity and sport. The Telford site does not have any outdoor space, changing rooms or showers. Pupils will, however, have access to the sports facilities at two nearby schools. On a day-to-day basis, pupils attending the Telford site do not go outside at breaktimes. Instead, pupils have use of a large indoor communal area that is equipped with table tennis and billiard tables.
- Since the first pre-registration inspection, the Telford and Walsall sites have been improved and now include medical rooms for the short-term care of any pupil who becomes sick during the school day. These are located near toilets and wash rooms. At the Dudley site, pupils can use the host school's medical room, if needs be.
- Access in and out of the school buildings is controlled.
- The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the standards in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

- The proposed school has a website that includes all the required information. In addition, all the documents and information requested during this inspection were readily available and easy to understand.
- School leaders have created a report format for recording information about pupils' attainment, progress, behaviour and welfare at school. This will be used to inform parents and local authorities about how well pupils are doing.
- Due to the nature of the school, all pupils will be referred by local authorities or other schools. The school's systems for gathering and sharing information have been carefully thought through. Consequently, it is likely that the right information will be available to the right people at the right time.
- The school's behaviour policy contains sufficient information about rewards and sanctions.
- Leaders have appropriate arrangements to account for funds received from local authorities. This information about the use of public money will be available for scrutiny as required.
- The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the standards in this part.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- As was the case at the first pre-registration inspection, the complaints policy is fit for purpose. So far, there have not been any formal complaints.
- The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the standards in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- School leaders understand the independent school standards and have taken effective steps to improve provision following the first pre-registration inspection.
- The proposed provision is likely to promote the well-being of pupils who have failed to cope in other school settings.
- Suitable safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- The proprietor has ensured that all of the independent school standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an accessibility plan that identifies how the site can accommodate pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This plan also makes references to the school curriculum and how it will be adjusted to meet pupils' specific needs. Together with other school policy statements, the plan promotes equality, an understanding of the protected characteristics and the diversity of modern Britain.
- The proprietor has ensured that the school is likely to fulfil its responsibilities under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	146164
DfE registration number	894/6011
Inspection number	10068631

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 school
Proprietor	Steve Knight
Headteacher	Rob Pritchard
Annual fees (day pupils)	£80 per day
Telephone number	01952 630710
Website	www.the-eds.org
Email address	enquiries@the-eds.org
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	35
Number of pupils of compulsory school age for whom a statement is maintained under section 324, or who is looked after by a local authority	3
Total hours operating as a school per week	17 hours a week as an alternative provision training provider rather than a school.
Total hours of teaching provided per week	2–17

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	14–16	14–16	14–16
Number of pupils on the school roll	35	50	50

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	50
Number of part-time pupils	35	0
Number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities	6	6
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	3	3
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	13	13

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	9	9
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	6 teaching assistants	6 teaching assistants

Information about this proposed school

- The Seeds School is currently operating as a training provider, offering part-time alternative provision to pupils who have been excluded, or are at risk of being excluded, from mainstream schools. It now wishes to become an independent school, so it can offer full-time education.
- The main hub is on a business park at Horsehay, Telford. In addition, the proposed school operates two satellite units that are based on school sites in Dudley and Walsall. The Seeds School works with the local authorities for each setting and is owned by an organisation called Education Development Service (EDS) Limited.
- Pupils are referred to The Seeds School by local authorities and other schools local to the setting. Many pupils have unmet learning needs and/or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some are in care and some have been out of education for significant periods of time.
- The new school proposes to admit pupils who have been excluded, or are at risk of being excluded, from mainstream schools and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities that may include: cognitive and learning needs, specific and moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some will have education, health and care (EHC) plans and some may be children looked after by a local authority.
- The current training provision caters for up to a maximum of 50 pupils on a part-time basis. The proposed school wishes to offer 50 full-time places.
- The proposed school does not have a religious character.
- The proposed school intends to retain a focus on vocational education.

Information about this inspection

- This second pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to consider an application by the training provider to become registered as an independent school. The first pre-registration inspection took place on 11 July 2017.
- The scope of the inspection incorporated all parts of the independent school standards.
- This one-day inspection took place with two working days' notice.
- The inspector had meetings with the proprietor, the headteacher designate and quality manager. He also met staff and pupils during an inspection of the premises at the main Telford site. He reviewed policies, pupils' records, schemes of work, curriculum plans, the single central register of checks on staff, attendance registers, risk assessments and the school's website.
- The inspector observed teaching and spoke with pupils during their morning breaktime.
- The proposed school's two satellite sites, which are located on school sites in Dudley and Walsall, were visited during the first pre-registration inspection in July 2017 and found to be suitable, provided that a medical room was added at the Walsall site. During this inspection, the inspector reviewed building plans of these two satellite sites, the proposed staff structure and arrangements for pupils' safety, welfare and education when attending any of the three sites.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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