

Peak Education – Primary

2 Castle Hill, Nantwich Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST7 8DH

Inspection dates

1 October 2018

Overall outcome

The school is likely 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)(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

- The school is not currently operating.
- The executive headteacher and proprietor already have significant experience in supporting pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Much thought has been given to how this new setting, within the wider organisation, will specifically support pupils with these special educational needs. For example, the curriculum is designed to engage pupils and has a clear focus on developing pupils' personal development and well-being.
- Staff have devised detailed schemes of work and plans to support the age group and aptitude of pupils they intend to admit. Leaders are also aware that day-to-day learning will depend on pupils' individual needs. Leaders plan to assess pupils individually on arrival and tailor the curriculum appropriately.
- Though not yet recruited, the headteacher intends to appoint qualified teachers with a background and expertise in the primary sector.
- Leaders have purchased a range of resources to support pupils' acquisition of basic skills. These include reading schemes, a wide range of practical mathematical resources, and hardware to support the information technology curriculum.
- The school's original application requested a potential age-range of 5 to 11. The building and facilities would currently meet the needs of pupils aged 7 to 11. Further adaptation would be required for younger pupils because, for example, the desks and tables in classrooms and some toilet and washing facilities are too high.
- A framework to assess pupils' work is in place. Teachers will cross-reference the key aims from the schemes of work and monitor the extent to which pupils are 'mastering' their learning. The framework is well thought out.
- The school's policies and plan for the delivery of the curriculum do not undermine fundamental British values or the Equality Act 2010.
- Leaders have ensured that the 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)

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is set out in a separate policy. Leaders have clear expectations about how these different facets will be taught and learned. For example, the policy states that as a result of their experiences, pupils will be 'reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings and faiths'.
- The school plans to promote the development of SMSC through assemblies, opportunities for quiet reflection, outdoor education and whole-school values.
- Leaders have established a personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum for every year group. Schemes of work set out what pupils will learn over the school year. For example, in Year 3, pupils will be taught how to play an active role as citizens. This will include knowing how and why rules are made, realising the consequences of anti-social behaviour and knowing what democracy is.
- The school also plans to give pupils the opportunity to visit different places of worship, such as local churches and mosques.
- The delivery of the school plans will ensure that fundamental British values are promoted. Plans also encourage respect for other people and the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Leaders have ensured that the 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)

- The executive headteacher will be the school's designated safeguarding lead. He has experience in this position and has attended appropriate training. Throughout the inspection he demonstrated a clear understanding of his role and safeguarding issues. Although the current safeguarding policy does not reference peer-on-peer abuse, the executive headteacher showed a clear understanding of the issue, how it should be managed and why this kind of abuse should never be dismissed as 'kids being kids' or 'banter'. During the inspection, leaders updated the safeguarding policy to include clear guidance on peer-on-peer abuse.
- The school's behaviour policy adopts a positive approach and states that misbehaviour should not be seen as 'inevitable or unchangeable'. The school's plans for recording and tracking any incidents of serious behaviour are appropriate.
- The anti-bullying strategy clearly sets out reporting and recording procedures.
- The school undertook a fire risk assessment earlier in the year. The majority of actions relating to this assessment are now complete. Leaders are aware that a few minor matters remain outstanding. For example, a closing hinge on a fire door requires maintenance and a schedule for checking the operation of the release button on the front door needs to be established. Fire extinguishers are regularly checked by an external company.

- The school aims to have a ratio of one adult supporting every two pupils (subject to pupils' needs and any stipulations within education, health and care plans). Levels of supervision are therefore adequate.
- The health and safety policy, risk assessments, and admission and attendance registers are all appropriate and in place. Some risk assessments cannot set out the full control measures required until pupils' needs have been fully assessed.
- Leaders have ensured that the 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), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 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), 21(4), 21(7), 21(7)a, 21(7)(b)

- The executive headteacher demonstrates a strong understanding of safer recruitment principles.
- The school's single central record is compliant. The relevant checks are made on all staff before they commence work. The school has also established a detailed induction process for staff. This outlines expectations regarding training and conduct.
- The proprietor is awaiting notification from the Department for Education (DfE) of a satisfactory enhanced disclosure. However, a satisfactory check is already in place for the other settings in the group.
- The school does not intend to use supply staff. However, leaders are aware of the necessary procedures required for making checks on this group of staff.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2), 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), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The building is maintained to a satisfactory standard. A wide range of work has been undertaken to ensure that rooms are safe, dry and warm. The heating system was operating on the day of the inspection. Classrooms were warm and dry and have been fitted with secondary glazing.
- Classroom resources are bright, new and clean. However, the specification of desks and chairs, and some fixings in the toilets, are such that they are only suitable for older primary children. This report therefore recommends that, at this stage, only key stage 2 pupils (7 to 11 years) are admitted to the school.
- Drinking water is not yet labelled as such. The proprietor is aware that this matter must be addressed. This is easily rectifiable.
- The outdoor play area has artificial grass on the ground and is housed within a high brick wall. There is ample space for 20 pupils to play.

- Lighting (including external), acoustic conditions, sound insulation and medical facilities are all appropriate.
- The temperature of hot water is controlled from one of the boilers. This water does not present a scalding risk. An external company has recommended that temperatures are regularly recorded on a maintenance log. This is something that the proprietor intends to do from now on.
- Although the overall upkeep of the building is satisfactory, the executive headteacher has established an action plan for addressing some minor areas for development. These include the fitting of blinds to windows, the removal of an old notice board and some general tidying and gardening.
- Leaders have ensured that the 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)(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)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f)

- The school does not have a website, although one is being designed. The proprietor has commissioned a company to produce a useful prospectus that sets out the key aspects of school provision. This includes the school's ethos and mission statement, arrangements for admissions, curriculum design, and rewards and sanctions.
- The school does not have a governing body.
- The school has established separate policies for exclusion, pupils who speak English as an additional language and special educational needs.
- Leaders are aware of their duty to publish particulars of any future inspections and the school's academic performance.
- Leaders have ensured that the 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 school's complaints policy fully meets the standards set out in Part 7. There is scope for an individual to raise a concern informally. The policy includes a clear timeline and there are arrangements for keeping the detail and outcome of any complaints confidential and secure.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The school's leaders are knowledgeable. They demonstrate skills that are appropriate to their roles and are clear about the climate they want to create at Peak Education.

- The school's mission statement explains that staff want to ensure that 'young people are well qualified and prepared to be a positive member of society'.
- The executive headteacher has received training to ensure that he understands his duties as the designated safeguarding lead.
- Leaders have established links with other schools and professionals to ensure that they are surrounded by colleagues who can offer both support and challenge.
- The executive headteacher and proprietor both hold roles on the governing bodies of local schools. This demonstrates their commitment to education and their desire to make a difference.
- The school has invested in high-quality furniture and resources. Classrooms are bright and inviting.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's accessibility plan is in place. However, it currently only makes an assessment of the physical environment. The plan will be extended to take account of access to the curriculum and improving the delivery of written communication as the needs of stakeholders are assessed.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards are likely to be met.

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	146078
DfE registration number	860/6048
Inspection number	10079034

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 school
Proprietor	Paul Ball
Headteacher	Andrew McCreedy
Annual fees (day pupils)	£295 per day
Telephone number	01782 722226
Website	N/A
Email address	headteacher@peakpursuits.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	N/A	5–11	7–11
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	20	20

- The specification of desks and chairs, and some fixings in the toilets, are such that they are only suitable for older primary children. This report therefore recommends that, at this stage, only key stage 2 pupils (7–11 years) are admitted to the school.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	N/A	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	N/A	20
Number of part-time pupils	N/A	0
Number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	20
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	20

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	N/A	2
Number of part-time teaching staff	N/A	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	N/A	Up to 8

Information about this proposed school

- Peak Education proposes to provide full-time education for primary-aged pupils. The proprietor already operates two schools in the West Midlands: Peak Education Gailey (for pupils aged 11 to 18 years) and Peak Education Stoke (for pupils aged 5 to 18 years).
- The proposed school is situated in the village of Audley on the outskirts of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire.
- All pupils who attend the school are likely to have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils are also likely to have education, health and care plans.
- The school will be part of Peak Activity Services, a company that specialises in outdoor education and alternative provision for pupils at risk of exclusion from main stream schools.

Information about this inspection

- This is the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents to ascertain if the school is likely to meet the independent school standards. These included schemes of work; examples of teachers' planning; information relating to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the single central record; school policies and procedures (with particular reference to those relating to safeguarding); the prospectus and accessibility plan.
- The inspector undertook a tour of the premises to ensure that accommodation and facilities are maintained to a suitable standard.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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