

Community Mentoring and Support School

The Annexe, Church Road, Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 5DZ

Inspection dates

19 December 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

Paragraph 2(1)–2(1)(b)(i), 2(2)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 4

- The school's curriculum vision is for each pupil to receive a 'personalised, age-appropriate, integrated curriculum, which will secure a core entitlement of education and wider activities'. It is anticipated that a number of pupils will be admitted to the school during the school year and that some pupils may only be in the school for a short period of time. Therefore, the school plans to deliver a range of subjects through short units of study, which have been matched to pupils' needs. Each of these units will also develop in pupils the learning skills that many of them may have missed due to prolonged absence from school. As the executive headteacher puts it, 'We will help the pupils learn how to learn.'
- The executive headteacher has drawn up a comprehensive curriculum policy which is underpinned by effective schemes of work covering a range of subjects. As well as the core offer of English and mathematics, pupils will have the opportunity to study subjects such as science, physical education (PE), art and design, and humanities. Teaching staff will use initial assessments to plan sequences of learning which address identified gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This, combined with precise planning and effective teaching, should enable pupils to make good progress from their different starting points.
- Beyond the academic curriculum, a key focus of the school's work will be to support pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Plans for this reflect the school's aims and will encourage pupils to respect themselves and other people.

Paragraph 2(2)(e)–2(2)(e)(iii)

- The school plans to use a suitably qualified careers adviser to ensure that pupils receive impartial and up-to-date guidance. This will enable pupils to make informed choices about their future and encourage them to fulfil their potential.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b)

- The school's curriculum policy and schemes of work set out how teaching will help pupils acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability. If implemented effectively, the schemes of work will ensure that lessons are well planned and based on secure understanding of relevant subject knowledge.

Paragraph 2(1)(b)(ii), 3(h)–3(j)

- The school's plans and schemes of work do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- The school's behaviour policy is comprehensive and outlines how teachers will manage pupils' behaviour and encourage them to act responsibly.
- The standards in part 1 are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5(b)(i)–5(b)(iv), 5(c)–5(d)(iii)

- A key focus of the school's work will be to develop pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. As well as through bespoke therapy and support, pupils' moral and social development will be covered through the delivery of a published scheme.

Paragraph 5–5(b), 5(b)(v)–5(b)(vii)

- The executive headteacher intends to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and an awareness of British values through embedded curriculum activities. For example, opportunities for pupils to explore democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty will be provided through humanities, the PSHE and emotional and social curricula. In addition, units relating to religious education (RE) and citizenship will promote pupils' respect and tolerance of different cultures and people with different faiths and beliefs.
- The standard in part 2 is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- The school's safeguarding arrangements are in line with statutory guidance as set out in 'Keeping children safe in education 2018'. Since the previous pre-registration inspection, the proprietor has gained a secure understanding of the safeguarding requirements that relate to schools. The school now has an effective safeguarding policy which outlines the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe. Training is relevant and up to date, and plans are in place to ensure that, as they join the school, new staff will receive an appropriate induction.

Paragraph 9–9(c), 10, 14

- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies outline clearly the expectations of pupils and staff. Assuming these are implemented effectively, they are likely to promote good behaviour and, as far as is possible, minimise incidents of bullying.
- Due to the vulnerabilities faced by pupils at the school, planned staffing levels will provide high staff-to-pupil ratios.

Paragraph 11, 12, 13, 15, 16–16(b)

- The school has a written health and safety policy. This outlines clearly the lines of accountability and, if implemented correctly, should ensure that the school's practices are in line with the relevant health and safety regulations.
- The proprietor has drawn up a series of risk assessments. These identify the specific risks associated with each of the proposed sites, as well as the control measures which will be put in place to mitigate any perceived risks to pupils' safety. The proprietor has also drawn up risk assessments for a range of activities that pupils will be engaged in while attending the school. School staff will draw up risk assessments for individual pupils as they join the school's roll.
- The proprietor has commissioned separate external fire risk assessments for each of the proposed sites. Where actions have been specified, for example in relation to signage and servicing arrangements, these have either been completed, or specialist companies have been commissioned to carry out the identified works.
- The proprietor has drawn up an appropriate first aid policy. If implemented effectively, this should ensure that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner.
- The proprietor has put in place effective systems to maintain admission and attendance registers.
- The standards in part 3 are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a)–18(2)(f), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(4), 21(6)–21(7)(b)

- At the time of this pre-registration inspection, only the executive headteacher had been appointed to the school's staff. A scrutiny of his personnel file demonstrated that the proprietor has a secure understanding of safer recruitment procedures.
- Since the previous pre-registration inspection, the proprietor has put in place a single central record. This is in line with statutory guidance and evidences that pre-employment checks meet requirements. As well as the executive headteacher, the school's single central record includes the checks made for all directors. This includes prohibition checks in relation to section 128 of the Education Act 2008.

Paragraph 19(1)–19(3), 21(5)–21(5)(c)

- The school does not intend to use any supply staff.
- The standards in part 4 are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–23(1)(b), 28(1)–28(2)(b)

- At all three sites, there are either separate toilet facilities for boys and girls or individual toilets which are lockable from the inside. These toilets are designated as being for the sole use of pupils. Toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have hot and cold water. Hot water is set at safe temperatures.

- Labelled drinking water is available at all of the sites.

Paragraph 23(1)(c), 26, 27–27(b), 29(1)–29(1)(b)

- In each room, acoustics and lighting are suitable for the intended purpose. External lighting is also appropriate.
- At each site, pupils will have access to an outdoor space suitable for PE, as well as somewhere they can socialise and, should they wish, play. At two of the proposed sites, PE provision, including suitable changing facilities, will be at a local leisure centre.

Paragraph 24(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2),

- All of the proposed sites have suitable accommodation to cater for pupils' medical needs, including the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. In all cases, this accommodation includes washing facilities and is close to a toilet. Where the medical accommodation is used for other purposes, for example at the Churchdown site, it will be readily available should the need arise.

Paragraph 25

- The proprietor is fully aware of the need to maintain each of the sites to a standard which, as far as is practically possible, ensures the health, safety and well-being of pupils. Where the school is not the sole user of the premises, the proprietor will ensure that regular maintenance checks are carried out. These will confirm that the premises remain compliant with health and safety regulations and, consequently, the independent school standards.
- The standards in part 5 are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(4)(c)

- The proprietor intends to make information available through a bespoke website. Although not yet live, all of the relevant information, including the required policies, will be contained within this site.
- The standard in part 6 is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–33(k)

- The school has a written complaints procedure, which will be made available on the school's website. It sets out clear timescales for the management of complaints and allows for a complaint to be considered informally in the first instance.
- Should a complainant be dissatisfied with the school's response to a complaint, the procedures outline clearly the steps they may take to escalate their concerns further. This includes a formal written stage and a panel hearing. Procedures state that any such panel will consist of at least three people not involved in the matters relating to the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the school.
- The school's policy outlines the arrangements for maintaining records of complaints and how these will be kept confidential. The exceptions to this, for example during an inspection, are stated clearly.

- The standard in part 7 is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- Since the first pre-registration inspection, the proprietor and executive headteacher have gained a detailed understanding of the independent school standards and associated regulations. They have worked systematically to ensure that all of the standards are now likely to be met when the school opens.
- Systems have been put in place to ensure that the independent school standards continue to be met consistently.
- The standard part 8 is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has established an ethos for the school, where all pupils will be treated equally. The school's curriculum policies outline clearly how school leaders and staff will ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
- All of the school's proposed sites are fully accessible. Teaching spaces are all on the ground floor with ramps provided where it is necessary to provide step-free access.
- On opening, the school is likely to meet the requirements of paragraph 3 of 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	146671
DfE registration number	916/6025
Inspection number	10085629

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	Independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Community Mentoring and Support CIC
Managing Director	Ben Evans
Executive headteacher	James Evans
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,000 tbc
Telephone number	01242 224 509
Website	www.communitymas.co.uk
Email address	ben.evans@communitymas.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	27 July 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	13–16	13–16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	32	32

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	32
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	To be confirmed
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	To be confirmed
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	To be confirmed
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	To be confirmed

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	18
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The Community and Mentoring School is based in Gloucestershire and will operate on three sites, situated in Lydney, Churchdown and Dursley. The school intends to open in January 2019.
- The school will cater for pupils who have found traditional, formal education difficult. Its focus will be on working with pupils who are out of school and at risk of permanent exclusion. Pupils will be referred to the school either by the local authority or their existing school. It is anticipated that pupils will attend the school for varying amounts of time with some arriving in-year and some leaving before the end of Year 11 where this is planned and appropriate.
- During their time in the school, pupils will follow a range of national curriculum subjects. Due to the transient nature of their placements, these will be taught through short units tailored to individual need. Pupils will also be supported in addressing the behaviours which have resulted in them being at risk of permanent exclusion.

Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in order to assess the school's readiness to open. This was done by checking whether it is likely to meet the independent school standards should it be registered.
- This was the school's second pre-registration inspection. The first pre-registration inspection, which took place in July 2018, judged that the school was unlikely to meet all of the independent school standards when it opened.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietor and the executive headteacher. He examined the school's application and looked at other documentation provided by the school. The inspector visited two of the three sites which the school proposes to use as its premises. He evaluated documentation relating to the third.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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