

# Priory Telford

Upper Forge, Dale Road, Telford, Shropshire TF8 7DT

## Inspection dates

25 April 2019

### 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)(c), 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)(g), 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 devised a suitable curriculum policy that emphasises, appropriately, a strong focus on pupils' social and emotional development, alongside promoting academic achievement. Leaders have thought carefully about the aims of the curriculum and created learning opportunities designed to help pupils build confidence and resilience. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It includes a wide range of subjects that will provide pupils with a good variety of study options.
- All subjects have detailed schemes of work that show clear progression and include assessment opportunities. Leaders plan to adapt these schemes to provide individual programmes of work designed to meet pupils' specific needs. These programmes are likely to include sufficient rigour, so pupils can make good progress and work towards attaining recognised qualifications, including entry-level certificate courses and GCSEs, if appropriate.
- Leaders' intentions show that they place significant emphasis on providing pupils with high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance. Plans indicate that pupils will be taught decision-making techniques, how to use sources of information about careers, and how to apply for jobs and perform to the best of their ability at interviews. This should help pupils to make informed choices and pursue careers of their choice.
- An executive headteacher is currently overseeing the set-up of the proposed school. He is ably supported by a lead teacher who is employed by the Priory Group. It is planned that the lead teacher will be appointed to work at the proposed school. Both leaders have successful experience in the field of special education. They are therefore likely to contribute well to securing effective teaching and learning, enabling pupils to make good progress.
- Leaders plan to recruit qualified teachers with relevant experience. It is envisaged that the number of staff will increase as the proposed school expands in size.

Teachers will be supported in classrooms by residential support workers from Priory Group care homes. This will ensure that there is an adequate number of staff to provide education and pastoral support for pupils.

- Arrangements for assessment are in place and appropriate. Teachers intend to carry out a wide range of assessments when pupils first join the school. The outcomes of these assessments will help to establish pupils' academic, emotional and behavioural needs so teachers can plan and deliver suitable work and interventions.
- The proposed school already has accreditation as an examination centre. Leaders plan to offer a wide range of examination and other accredited courses suitable for pupils.
- Leaders intend to monitor the quality of teaching and learning closely, providing guidance and advice to staff on how they can improve their practice. This should impact positively on pupils' learning and help them to achieve well. Staff should also benefit from Priory Group's central offer of training. This will include professional development linked to a range of topics such as autism awareness and supporting pupils' mental health.
- The proposed school already contains basic classroom resources and furniture. Leaders plan to purchase additional resources to meet curriculum requirements. Where specialised resources are required, leaders intend on borrowing these from other local schools within the Priory Group.
- Post-16 provision has been tailored to focus on students' successful continuation of their education, following the most appropriate course of study. This may be a functional skills qualification or something more vocational offered through a local college, such as a course in floristry or electrical engineering. Leaders' intentions are focused on ensuring that each student can pursue their career aspirations.
- Leaders have a comprehensive scheme of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE). This developmental programme of learning should help to equip pupils to lead safe, healthy lives and grow into responsible citizens. The concepts of diversity and equality are to be taught, with due regard to the protected characteristics. Through this, pupils should be encouraged to reflect on their values.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the independent school standards in this part.

## 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 have plans in place to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development will be embedded effectively in the culture of the school. Some aspects of SMSC will be taught discretely in lessons, such as during PSHE.
- In religious education lessons, schemes of work indicate how pupils will be taught to reflect on their own beliefs, and learn to respect the beliefs of others. In other subjects, such as English and art, pupils are to be encouraged to use their imagination and creativity in their learning. This is likely to support pupils' spiritual development well.

- Leaders have already considered how they can promote pupils' SMSC development through visits that inspire and engage pupils. For example, leaders have established a link with a music studio so pupils can try their hand at mixing. Leaders anticipate that pupil premium funding will be used to provide disadvantaged pupils with a range of exciting enhanced curricular activities, such as trail biking.
- Across the curriculum, leaders place a strong emphasis on helping pupils to develop better self-awareness and an acceptance of their individual identity. This should support pupils' social development well.
- Through PSHE, teachers plan to raise pupils' awareness about current world affairs so they gain a deeper understanding about society. Teachers' PSHE planning also incorporates work on helping pupils to understand English laws; for example, pupils will learn about how the law has developed over time and how it protects citizens and deals with criminals.
- Leaders have effective plans to help pupils to play an active role in their local community and uphold fundamental British values.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the independent school standards in this part.

### 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 have an appropriate, detailed safeguarding policy that sets out clearly the expectations of all staff in relation to keeping pupils safe. The procedures are easy to follow and aligned with local authority guidelines. The policy has due regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The policy is to be published on the proposed school's website.
- Leaders are knowledgeable about effective safeguarding practices because they have attended relevant training. They expect that all newly appointed staff will undertake appropriate safeguarding training, so they are well prepared to identify any pupil that may be at risk of harm. This should ensure that staff are vigilant and report, without delay, any concerns about a pupil's welfare to the designated senior leader for safeguarding.
- The proposed school has devised policies to support the effective management of pupils' behaviour and deal with any issues of bullying. Three simple school rules, with an emphasis on acknowledging pupils' positive behaviour, and a series of sanctions for poor behaviour, should encourage pupils to behave well. Consistency, fairness and choice are the three key elements of the policy.
- The proposed school's anti-bullying policy sets out a definition of bullying and the reporting procedures that staff will be expected to follow. Implementation of the policy is likely to lead to the creation of an inclusive learning environment that minimises any bullying behaviour and promotes a culture of mutual respect.
- Leaders have prepared an admissions register and attendance registers ready for the arrival of new pupils. They understand the requirements of how to complete registers accurately, using the correct Department for Education (DfE) coding, and intend to adhere to this guidance.

- Leaders have an appropriate health and safety policy, risk assessment procedure and agreed process for dealing with incidents that require first aid. All residential support workers will hold a first aid qualification and therefore will be available to administer first aid as required.
- Leaders have a suitable fire evacuation plan and the building has the necessary fire exit signage and emergency lighting. The proposed school recently commissioned a fire risk assessment. Leaders have already responded to several of the identified issues and have plans in place to rectify other issues imminently. For example, currently, fire alarm tests are undertaken although leaders have not yet started to record these in the fire log.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the independent school standards in this part.

#### 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(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 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(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6)*

- Priory Group has a well-established procedure for checking the backgrounds of new staff. The proprietor understands all of the mandatory checks that have to be made on all adults working in the school to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Leaders plan to record all required checks on staff, volunteers and the proprietorial body in a single central register. This will be in electronic format and will also include checks on a member of staff's medical fitness.
- Leaders with responsibility for employing staff have completed safer recruitment training. They intend to have at least one member of any interview panel who is trained in safer recruitment to ensure a robust appointment process.
- Leaders have stated that the proposed school may employ the services of supply staff. Leaders are fully aware of all the checks that must be made prior to supply staff undertaking any work.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the independent school standards in this part.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 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 premises offer suitable accommodation for the proposed school, its staff and pupils. The building was previously an old forge that has been converted to provide two classrooms, administration offices, storage rooms, toilets, a medical room, and a

relatively large open plan space (that may be used as an additional classroom) which incorporates a kitchen. Drinking water is readily available. The building is on three levels, all accessed via a staircase.

- The proposed school is situated in a tranquil, rural setting surrounded by woodland and hedges. There is a grassed lawn area at the front and a gravel driveway and parking area for several cars. The lawn provides suitable outdoor space for pupils to play outside. Entry to the building is through a secure electronic-controlled access door.
- A few offices in the building are currently occupied by centrally employed Priory Group staff. The building is well maintained throughout and has teaching spaces already set up with essential furniture such as desks and chairs of appropriate height for the proposed age range.
- Leaders have ensured that a range of health and safety checks have been completed in readiness for the anticipated opening of the school. For example, a legionella risk assessment is carried out monthly and all relevant electrical equipment has had portable appliance testing in the last year.
- All physical education (PE) lessons are planned to take place off-site. Leaders have established links with providers of PE and sports, including local sports and leisure centres, where suitable showering facilities are available. Leaders plan to complete the appropriate risk assessments to ensure that pupils are safe.
- All rooms have an adequate amount of light, typically a combination of natural sunlight and artificial light. The outside of the building is well lit by external lighting. Classrooms and other office spaces are appropriately sound insulated.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the independent school standards in this part.

## Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 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)(ii), 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), 32(3)(g)*

- The proprietor has all the required information available to share with parents and carers or other interested parties. This includes policies on behaviour management, exclusions, admission arrangements, special educational needs and the school's curriculum. Leaders intend that all of this information will be available on the proposed school's website.
- Leaders are currently preparing a school prospectus for parents that will contain useful information, including the contact details of the headteacher, and information about the school's ethos and the proprietorial body.
- Leaders intend to provide regular reports to parents on pupils' progress, attainment and behaviour. This will also include an annual written report for parents with detailed information about their child's achievements.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the independent school standards in this part.

## 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 proposed school's draft complaints procedure largely complies with the requirements of the independent school standards. It includes a clear timeline for the management of a complaint and allows for a parent to escalate a complaint through the formal procedure. However, the draft procedure does not make provision for a parent to be accompanied, if they so wish, at a panel hearing. Leaders intend to make this minor adjustment to the policy imminently.
- The complaints procedure is in writing and will be readily available to parents on the proposed school's website or in paper format. However, leaders recognise that the current draft procedure could be refined to make it even easier to read and follow for parents. They intend to make these revisions before final publication of the procedure.
- The complaints procedure, once leaders have made minor changes, and if effectively implemented, should enable the effective management of complaints from parents of pupils.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the independent school standards in this part.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The original application form to register an independent school records the proprietor's name as Castle Homes Limited. However, leaders informed the inspector that the proprietor is Priory Group. It should also be noted that the declaration on the back page of the original Department for Education (DfE) application had not been completed by the applicant.
- Priory Group has several mechanisms in place to check on the actions of leaders and their impact on the proposed school's performance. The headteacher will report directly to an operations director on pupils' outcomes and other school improvement matters. It is planned that the operations director will make weekly site visits and produce half-termly reports about the school's performance for the Priory Group.
- Leaders are aspirational about what pupils can achieve. They show a strong commitment to creating a nurturing, successful learning environment for vulnerable pupils, many of whom have had a negative experience of education and may have been out of education for some considerable time. Leaders demonstrate the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to provide a rich learning experience for these pupils.
- Leaders raised the issue about the number of proposed pupils on the original application possibly being too high. They agree with the inspector's recommendation that a maximum of 18 pupils is more appropriate than 20 given the space available within the building.

- Leaders have a good knowledge of the independent school standards. All leaders and those directors associated with establishing the proposed school have a clear ambition to set up a school that re-engages young people in formal education so they achieve success. Their preparations and forward planning to date should enable them to achieve this overarching aim.
- Priory Group anticipates that, initially, an experienced executive headteacher will oversee the initial set up of the proposed school. Leaders plan to recruit qualified teachers as necessary, linked to the increase in pupil numbers over time.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for the independent school standards in this part.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have ensured that they have an accessibility plan with appropriate aims that relate to improving access to the curriculum, information and the physical environment for pupils with a disability. However, in a few instances, the strategies outlined in the plan do not fully contribute to achieving the intended aims. Leaders plan to amend these strategies to ensure that aims and strategies are more closely aligned.
- Leaders have ensured that the proposed school is likely to fulfil its responsibilities in accordance with 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	146350
DfE registration number	894/6012
Inspection number	10099622

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 day
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Priory Group
Chair	Anthony Armstrong
Headteacher	James Wookey
Annual fees (day pupils)	£44,000 to £55,000
Telephone number	01952 432 660
Website	Not known
Email address	JamesWookey@priorygroup.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	11–18	11–18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	20	18

### *Reason for inspector's recommendations*

- The classroom space available is too small to accommodate 20 pupils, given that many classes will have an equal number of staff to match the number of pupils.

## 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	20
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	20
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	20

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	20

## Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located in a rural setting in a former old forge. It is a grade two listed building near to the historical Shropshire town of Ironbridge.
- The proposed school will cater for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils will be admitted to the school as part of a care package with the Priory Group. Most, if not all, pupils will have an education, health and care plan.
- The premises include a reception area, classrooms, several offices, storage rooms, two kitchens, a large multi-purpose area and a medical room.
- The proprietor is the Priory Group. This is different to the name of the proprietor in the original application (Castle Homes Limited). The inspector was unable to establish whether the proposed school had notified the DfE of this change.
- The proposed school does not have a religious ethos.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection carried out at the request of the Department for Education under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards.
- The inspector met with an executive headteacher from the Priory Group, a lead teacher and the company's managing director for the north. The inspector completed a tour of the premises. He examined a wide range of documentation including schemes of work and school policies.

## Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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