

# Lyme Brook Independent School

90 King Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 1JB

**Inspection dates**

16 May 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)(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 intend to provide pupils in key stages 2 and 3 with a broad and balanced curriculum that includes the full range of national curriculum subjects. Religious education is also to be taught. At key stage 4, it is planned that the curriculum will be matched carefully to pupils' strengths and future aspirations. Leaders have already begun to resource the different curriculum subjects so that pupils have access to suitable high-quality resources to support their learning.
- Leaders have created a suitable curriculum policy that is supported by appropriate schemes of work for each subject. These show progression in skills and knowledge over time. Leaders expect teachers to adapt these schemes to meet the specific needs of each pupil, including taking into account the information provided on an education, health and care plan for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) where appropriate. The proposed school timetable shows that pupils should receive full-time education between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm.
- Leaders plan to teach science and make use of the kitchen teaching space for practical work. However, because initially there will not be a science laboratory within the premises, leaders recognise the limitations of resourcing for teaching all aspects of GCSE science. Leaders are exploring the possibility of making use of local secondary school science facilities or purchasing a mobile science bench in order to meet the needs of pupils who study GCSE science.
- The school's proposed headteacher has extensive experience of teaching pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. He demonstrates a clear understanding of the characteristics of effective teaching and has appropriately high expectations of what pupils, given the right conditions for learning, can achieve. This should mean that the headteacher sets the right tone for a learning environment where pupils can thrive and achieve well.
- The proprietor intends to recruit an increasing number of qualified teachers as the population of the proposed school grows over time. Leaders expect to begin with a

small cohort of pupils. Initially, the plan is for the headteacher to teach and be supported by a teaching assistant. The proprietor expects to employ qualified subject teachers or tutors on a temporary basis to provide specialist teaching for some GCSE courses. This should help to ensure that teachers have strong subject knowledge and enable pupils to make good progress over time.

- Leaders intend to carry out a range of initial assessments when a pupil is admitted to the school to identify their strengths and weaknesses. These assessments will explore pupils' reading ability, as well as their written and mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. Also, leaders plan to assess pupils' emotional health and well-being. Teachers will be expected to use this information to set achievable steps for pupils so that they experience success.
- Leaders have established a suitable system for assessment to judge how well pupils progress over time. They expect that assessments will be recorded twice a term into an online commercial assessment package. Leaders intend to use this assessment information to identify pupils who are struggling and falling behind, and then provide additional support to help them catch up. Teachers will keep parents and carers informed of their child's academic, personal and social progress on a termly basis.
- Leaders have devised a comprehensive programme to develop pupils' personal, social health and economic (PSHE) knowledge and understanding. This takes into account the specific factors affecting pupils, such as how they should look after themselves in relation to alcohol, drugs and sexual health. The PSHE programme, if implemented effectively, should help to support pupils to make sensible, informed lifestyle choices.
- Leaders have suitable plans in place to assure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This is likely to involve the headteacher undertaking lesson observations, scrutinising pupils' work and talking to pupils about their school experience and what they have been learning. The headteacher plans to use this information to further improve the quality of teaching.
- The school intends to register as an examination centre and offer a range of accredited courses at key stage 4, including level 1 and 2 in functional skills and GCSE courses. Leaders have identified a secure room to store examination papers.
- Leaders have thought carefully about providing good-quality careers education for pupils. They have engaged with several external partners to explore the options available. Leaders' plans to provide bespoke, impartial careers education, information and guidance are appropriate and should, if implemented effectively, enable pupils to select the best possible career pathways and work towards their future aspirations.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the independent school standards for 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 intend that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development will be planned across the curriculum and taught through meaningful, relevant contexts. For example, pupils may develop their cultural awareness through

geographical work related to a focus on a country, exploring its food, customs and music. In addition, the proposed school intends to place an emphasis on celebrating pupils' successes and building their self-esteem. This will be important, given the previous typical experiences of many of the pupils.

- Leaders anticipate that pupils' SMSC development will be enhanced by a wide range of educational trips and visiting speakers from the wider community. For example, leaders plan to ensure that pupils visit a variety of places of worship to help them develop their understanding of, and respect for, people's different religions and those of no faith.
- Leaders plan to promote fundamental British values across the curriculum. A school council, likely to involve all pupils, is intended to provide an opportunity for pupils to express their views and make decisions about learning and the curriculum. This should help pupils to understand the importance of democratic values.
- Leaders intend to create a welcoming, inclusive school environment that enables pupils to recognise and celebrate difference and diversity. It is expected that teachers will have regard to the Equality Act 2010, and teach explicitly about all of the protected characteristics, including fostering respect for different genders and sexual orientations.
- The proposed school's policies make clear that it is unacceptable for anyone to promote partisan political views. Leaders expect that pupils will be presented with a balance of views when debating or engaged in discussion about political issues.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the independent school standards for this part.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 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 developed a comprehensive safeguarding policy. This outlines clearly the importance of staff or visitors reporting any concerns that a pupil may be, or is, at risk of harm to the designated safeguarding leader (DSL) without delay. Leaders acknowledge that the draft safeguarding policy is slightly ambiguous in relation to the expectation that staff will make a written record of any concerns. Leaders plan to make minor amendments to the draft policy to stress the importance of recording all concerns in writing.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The policy is published on the proposed school's website.
- The school's proposed headteacher has a good working knowledge of effective safeguarding practice and local authority procedures. He is due to complete local authority training for DSLs in June 2019. This should provide the headteacher with the necessary skills and knowledge to take on the role of DSL and to lead safeguarding effectively across the school. The proposed school has made arrangements to have a deputy DSL in the event that the headteacher is absent.
- Leaders propose that all new staff will complete comprehensive safeguarding training as part of their induction. This will cover a wide range of topics, including child sexual

exploitation, female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty. Training will be revisited with staff at least annually. This should help to ensure that the proposed school has effective safeguarding arrangements in place to keep pupils safe from harm.

- Teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe has been built into curriculum planning, mainly through the proposed school's PSHE programme. As a result, pupils are likely to develop a good knowledge of personal safety matters, including managing their online presence safely and being aware of the risks of gang involvement.
- The proprietor has taken appropriate action to ensure that the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. An adequate number of fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and emergency lighting all contribute to reducing the likelihood of fire. Leaders have carried out a recent fire risk assessment and acted promptly on the findings, for example making repairs to the ceiling to minimise the risk of fire spreading.
- Leaders have effective plans in place to carry out risk assessments of activities that pose a potential hazard to pupils. If implemented effectively, these should reduce the chance of an accident happening. In addition, leaders expect that all pupils will have their own personal risk assessment that will identify possible triggers and reduce the chance of pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour.
- Leaders have already set up attendance and admissions registers in readiness for the arrival of pupils if the proposed school is registered by the Department for Education (DfE). Leaders plan to record pupils' absence using the official DfE codes. They also intend to monitor pupils' attendance carefully and take action if a pupil's attendance falls below an acceptable level.
- The proprietor has developed an appropriate policy for the management of pupils' behaviour. The policy adopts an approach that is focused on recognising and celebrating positive behaviour. It sets out clearly the rewards and sanctions, including the use of exclusion as a last resort. Leaders have created a separate policy for exclusion that gives parents the right of appeal.
- The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy that defines the different types of bullying. If this policy is implemented effectively, it should contribute to an environment where any bullying behaviour is challenged and therefore less likely to occur.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the independent school standards for 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)*

- The proprietor has created an electronic single central record for recording all required recruitment checks. While leaders are aware of all the checks that have to be made on staff, the proprietorial body and other visitors to the school, the draft version of the single central record had a few columns missing. For example, there was no column related to making checks on staff who have worked overseas. Leaders intend to add in the missing columns imminently and transfer the information from staff files to the single central record.
- Leaders may employ the services of supply staff. They understand the requirements of vetting checks in relation to employing supply staff and they intend to apply these.
- Leaders understand the requirement to carry out health checks on staff. They plan to undertake these checks for all staff to ensure that they are able to carry out their roles and responsibilities well.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the independent school standards for 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 proposed school is situated in an extension to a former 19th century doctor's house. Previously, the building was used as local authority offices. The main house is occupied by the company's head office staff. The proposed school is accessed (for parents and visitors) through the main office so that entry is controlled and all visitors can be checked. The pupils have a separate entrance.
- The premises offers suitable accommodation for the proposed school and number of pupils. This includes a classroom, several other teaching spaces, a large chill-out room for pupils, a kitchen, a computer suite, toilets and an office. The proposed school will share its site with the company's central office. However, the offices are separated from the main school by an access-controlled door.
- Classrooms and offices are mainly carpeted throughout. All rooms are freshly painted and in good condition. Rooms are light and airy, and acoustic conditions are appropriate for the nature of activities likely to take place. The school is partially furnished with age-appropriate desks and chairs. Leaders have plans to add more furniture and resources if the proposed school is registered by the DfE.
- The proposed school has an enclosed courtyard area suitable for pupils to play outside during breaktimes. There is a separate car park for staff and visitors. The site is safe and secure and monitored by external CCTV.
- The proposed school has a large medical room with hot and cold running water and a fully stocked first aid kit. The proprietor has ordered a bed for the room. Leaders say the room may be used for other purposes, although this will not be for teaching. The medical room is situated near to a toilet.
- The proposed school has a single lockable toilet and washbasin for both boys and girls. There is a separate staff toilet that also serves as a disabled toilet. Toilet areas

have hot and cold running water. With the exception of one hot tap, water does not pose a scalding risk. However, the temperature of the water from the pupils' washbasin is too hot. Leaders have made arrangements with a plumber to have the temperature controlled so that it does not get too hot. This plumbing work is planned to be completed imminently.

- Drinking water is labelled accordingly and readily accessible from the kitchen.
- Leaders have made preliminary enquiries with a sports provider to secure the use of a local sports facility, with indoor and outdoor space, for teaching physical education. This has suitable changing accommodation and showers that will be risk-assessed by school staff.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the independent school standards for this part.

## Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraph 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)(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 begun to create a school website where they plan to share all required documents for parents and others interested in the school. Contact details for the headteacher and proprietor are easy to locate. The proposed school's mission statement and aims are published on the school's website.
- The proprietor has developed a wide range of policies, including ones related to special educational needs and English as an additional language. These policies are generally informative and provide parents and others with useful information about how the proposed school intends to operate and meet the needs of its pupils. All relevant policies will be available to parents on request and published on the school's website.
- Leaders have created several areas on the proposed school's website ready to add key information, including the complaints policy, copies of any inspection reports and the school's examination or national test results. The proposed school has an admission policy, although leaders plan to refine it to make it easier for those seeking a place to understand the admission criteria.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the independent school standards for this part.

## Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraph 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 developed an appropriate complaints policy that is easy for parents to follow should they ever have need to raise a complaint. Clear timelines, the right for parents to be accompanied at a panel hearing and parents' right to escalate a complaint are all included in the policy.



- The policy indicates that leaders are likely to take complaints seriously and, where possible, resolve them quickly and informally. However, there is provision for parents to follow a formal procedure when they are not satisfied with the initial informal response.
- Leaders have mechanisms in place to keep carefully recorded information about complaints, their resolution and any recommendations or actions resulting from a complaint. This information will remain confidential and only shared with appropriate persons or relevant inspectorates as necessary.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the independent school standards for this part.

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

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- Leaders have a good knowledge of the independent school standards and have considered carefully the needs of prospective pupils. They have formulated an appropriate development plan to help with the establishment of the proposed school.
- The proprietor does not plan to have a governing body. However, they have made arrangements for senior managers within the company to maintain an oversight of the school's work and hold leaders to account. The proprietor expects to commission the services of someone with educational expertise to support managers in checking on the proposed school's performance.
- The proposed headteacher has previous management experience in a similar type of independent school. The proprietor is committed to the proposed headteacher's professional development and supporting him in his quest to undertake a qualification to get qualified teacher status.
- The proprietor and proposed headteacher have a clear and appropriate rationale for setting up the school – to meet the needs of vulnerable children looked after who are awaiting a school place. Leaders' aim is to ensure that children looked after are settled into education without delay following their move into care or from another placement. Leaders are committed to meeting the needs of these vulnerable pupils and minimising the risk of them missing education.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the independent school standards for this part.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have developed an appropriate accessibility plan that outlines how features of the physical building, the planned curriculum and the sharing of information can be enhanced for pupils with a disability. Therefore, the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 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	146982
DfE registration number	860/6051
Inspection number	10101680

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
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Prestige Adolescent Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Adrian Colerick
Headteacher	David Cantillon
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,000
Telephone number	01782 987 520
Website	<a href="http://www.lymebrookschool.org.uk">www.lymebrookschool.org.uk</a>
Email address	dave@paceuk.net
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	8–16	8–16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	16	16

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	16	16

Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	16	16
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	8	8
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	8	8

## 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	Up to 6
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	8

## Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is situated in former domestic premises, which were extended, then later converted to offices. The proposed school is a short walk from the centre of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire.
- The proposed school will be part of Prestige Adolescent Care and Education (PACE). This company currently has four small children's homes.
- The proposed school plans to cater for pupils aged eight to 16 who are looked after and attend PACE care homes. Pupils are likely to have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Most pupils are likely to have SEND. Many are likely to have missed substantial amounts of schooling and have significant gaps in their learning.
- The proposed school, if registered by the DfE, would like to open as soon as possible.
- The proposed school will not have a religious ethos.
- The proposed school does not intend to use any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection commissioned by the DfE under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards if it is registered.
- The inspection was conducted with two working days' notice.
- The inspector held meetings with the proposed school's headteacher and one director from PACE. The inspector examined a wide range of documents, including school policies, curriculum planning, risk assessments, schemes of work and the single central register of checks on the backgrounds of staff and directors.
- The inspector carried out a tour of the premises.

## Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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