

The Stable School

12 Dudmoor Farm Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 6AQ

Inspection dates

29 May 2019

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1)(a), 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)-(iii), 2(2)(f), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j) and 4

- The proprietor and his partner, who together are intending to become co-headteachers, have ensured that there is a written policy and curriculum overview in place. This covers the breadth of the national curriculum including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.
- Leaders have opted to use a commercial scheme as the foundation of the curriculum. This has planned units of work with key questions intended to make the learning engaging and relevant to pupils. Leaders could demonstrate those ways in which pupils are likely to be able to ask their own curricular questions. This is with the aim for pupils to make their own decisions and shape learning to meet their interests.
- Leaders are ensuring that topic themes and ideas are likely to be well connected and motivating. For example, studies relating to dinosaurs and life processes provide interesting subject matter to 'hook' the pupils.
- Leaders, including the proprietor, have already provided specialist provision for vulnerable pupils elsewhere in the local authority. They have knowledge and experience in teaching pupils with complex special educational needs, particularly those with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. They have used this expertise to consider how the particular needs and behaviours of the pupils should be met through teaching, assessment and the curriculum. Their aims and mission in setting up the school are reflected in the written policies for the quality of education.
- Leaders are intending to admit pupils through local authority placements. Therefore, the vast majority, if not all pupils, are expected to have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. During the inspection, leaders provided information about how teaching will integrate the aims of EHC plans and annual reviews with the school's curriculum and intended assessment practices. This is likely to enable teachers to make pertinent

and timely ongoing assessments to ensure pupils' needs are met.

- Leaders also provided information about the school's assessment framework and how pupils' progress will be checked and evaluated. Leaders have appropriate plans for assessing pupils in a wide range of subjects to ensure that their academic needs will be met. This includes ways to adjust individual plans to stretch the most able pupils.
- The school's behaviour policy sets out clearly how behaviour is to be managed to promote positive attitudes and reinforce high expectations. This includes managing pupils through uncertain periods and times of stress in the school day.
- Leaders have suitable plans for ensuring older pupils will have access to relevant qualifications, including mathematics and English GCSEs. The use of specialist mentors from different sectors, such as retail and air-traffic control, and an external adviser is likely to offer pupils varied and independent careers advice. Leaders' plans for this aspect are well developed. Their aims to ensure pupils succeed beyond the school and into employment, or through returning to a mainstream provision, are clear.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 3 and 3(d)

- However, leaders have not yet taken enough account of the aptitude, skills, knowledge or prior attainment of any pupils who may arrive working below the programmes of study found in the national curriculum, and similarly, where pupils may still be functioning within the developmental stages of the early years foundation stage. As a result, written plans and strategies for these pupils are not yet sufficiently robust.
- Furthermore, the coverage of English in the curriculum plans does not show how leaders intend to promote early reading development, including phonics, well enough. As a result, it is not clear how pupils who need to learn their letters and sounds to decode, or to progress through stages in pre- and early reading may be well supported and targeted to catch up on this vital aspect of their learning and development.
- These standards are unlikely 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) and 5(d)(iii)

- The personal, social and health (PSH) education policy reflects the school's aims for every pupil to 'live their best lives', both now and in the future. The curriculum design has clear activities and objectives to promote this, including taking full account of British values and the Equality Act 2010.
- Leaders' holistic aims for pupils are reflected appropriately in the school's aims, statements and curricular plans. British values, including democracy, individual liberty and tolerance, are woven into the curriculum themes and linked to subjects of the national curriculum. Additionally, there is scope for teachers to adjust these to take account of different contextual situations and political events occurring at that time.
- Leaders' clear ethos and rationale to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development underpin each aspect of teaching, learning and the curriculum. This is in keeping with the proposals of the school and the proprietor's aims to enrich the lives of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 11, 14, 15 and 16(a)

- Leaders have ensured that there is a relevant written behaviour policy that demonstrates how pupils will be supported at school, including when proportionate sanctions may be required. This takes into account the vulnerabilities and experiences of the pupils likely to be admitted to the school.
- Leaders have a range of written health and safety policies and some risk assessments in place. However, there are some weaknesses in the implementation of these, including training for the co-headteachers, which has not taken place yet. In addition, risk assessments for the use of the local leisure centre for physical education are not yet in place.
- Leaders have given due consideration to supervision and staff deployment. At this time, no staff have been appointed. However, the proprietor and trustees have stipulated that pupils will be taught in small groups, most likely to comprise one teacher with a teaching assistant for up to eight pupils. All pupils will be designated a trained key worker to support their individual social and emotional needs.
- A recording system to monitor pupils' daily attendance is already in place. This is a secure system and will link into the school's wider online management system.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 12, 13, 16 and 16(b)

- However, some key plans and documents are not yet in place or have not yet been implemented well enough. In particular, the safeguarding and child protection policy does not reflect the Secretary of State's latest guidance. The school is not demonstrating that it is working to meet the expectations in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2018).
- In addition, leaders who are designated to be the safeguarding leads have not yet undertaken training to meet the full requirements for these roles. Furthermore, safer recruitment training has not been undertaken by leaders, including the proprietor, co-headteachers or trustees. This is a matter of urgency for leaders.
- Leaders have not ensured that the premises and accommodation are ready or likely to be fit for purpose, including not yet conducting a fire risk assessment. There is much to do to ensure that the physical environment and conditions will be acceptable to ensure pupils' and staff welfare on the premises (see Part 5).
- Leaders have not completed any external advice, checks or audits of the property in relation to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. As a result, practice and policy are not compliant and are unlikely to meet the independent school standards.
- Leaders have not yet completed relevant training in emergency first aid. Despite planned professional development and training, nobody currently intended to work on the site has the skills, knowledge or expertise to ensure that appropriate first aid

would be provided in a timely or competent manner.

- These standards are not 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(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)(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(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)

- The proprietor has not yet made any appointments to the school. However, there is already an online facility for recording recruitment and vetting checks in line with the independent school standards and the guidance from the Secretary of State.
- The proprietor has submitted his details for approval by the Secretary of State.
- The single central record takes account of relevant requirements, including checks on those prohibited from teaching or undertaking leadership responsibilities (S128). It also includes full checks for teachers, supply staff and volunteers, such as scrutinising identity documents, qualifications and references.
- This standard is likely to be met. However, the implementation of the systems and their effectiveness are, as yet, untested.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(2), 26, 27(a), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b)

- The premises have some features that currently meet the independent school standards. For example, there are suitable toilet and washing facilities which may be made for the sole use of pupils, and these can be secured from the inside. Toilets are separate for boys and girls. The proprietor is currently considering plans to increase the number of toilets for boys.
- The overall facilities and intended use may be suitable to deliver the full curriculum offer and entitlement of the pupils, including space to develop the outside for pupils' play, recreation and learning.
- The proprietor has recognised some of the practical limitations of the premises. Consequently, he is making plans to use the local leisure centre for pupils' physical exercise (PE) as well as a local field for therapeutic and educational purposes. The latter is still pending a lease agreement.
- There are potentially other rooms and areas for pupils to be taught separately or in groups. The overall presentation of the premises is likely, with further thought, to be fit for purpose in meeting teaching, learning and the school's curricular aims. The general acoustics and lighting are appropriate for the intended purposes as articulated at this time.

- Leaders are mindful of having separate facilities to accommodate pupils' sensory and SEND needs, given the nature of the pupils who are likely to be in the school.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 25, 27, 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(c) and 28(1)(d)

- The proprietor only received confirmation of the lease agreement two days before the pre-registration inspection. As such, there has not been much significant work to develop it towards meeting its purpose as an independent school. It was formerly a pre-school.
- Overall, there is much to do to ensure that the facilities and accommodation are safe, usable and suitable for the purposes of high-quality care, teaching and learning. For example, some windows open too far, which would permit small children to exit through them, including from the first storey. The proprietor has not been able to begin tackling the range of health and safety matters arising through the visit.
- In particular, fire risks, evacuation, signage and use of fire doors have not been evaluated. Currently, this falls short of the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and poses potential risk and the possibility of harm to those who may use it as a school.
- In addition, the planned entrance is too exposed and 'open' so that unwanted visitors may force access to any part of the school.
- The proprietor has not ensured that other standards in this part are likely to be met. For example, there is no external lighting to ensure safety for those using the premises when it is dark. Leaders have not identified safe drinking sources on the premises. Furthermore, there is a scalding risk to pupils from an integrated tap.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is a well-prepared facility to act as a medical and first-aid room. The proprietor and co-headteachers have considered such emergency facilities, but presently pupils who need additional or medical care, or those with complex needs, would not have these consistently met.
- These standards are not likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(e), 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)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g), 32(4), 32(4)(a), 32(4)(b) and 32(4)(c)

- Leaders, including the proprietor, have ensured that key documents and policies that are applicable to them at this time can be made available to parents, carers and other interested bodies.
- Currently, the proprietor has a website for his other SEND provision which is already widely used by others, including the local authority for work with vulnerable pupils, particularly those with an EHC plan.
- Leaders understand their role in providing information to others in the community, particularly parents and carers. They are intending to utilise their current website or to create a new one so that all required information is published and easily accessible for parents. For example, this will provide the platform for providing links to Ofsted

reports or information about how to contact the proprietor outside of term time. Leaders have all specified contact information ready to be provided at this time.

- Leaders have already ensured that there are frameworks and models in place for reporting to parents. These include ongoing assessment information and annual written reports. Leaders have ensured that these are matched to the school's assessment processes and have the functionality to work with the intended school management systems.
- The proprietor is aware of his responsibilities for accounting to the local authority, in terms of an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school.

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(3), 32(3)(a) and 32(3)(b)

- Despite the majority of information being considered, there are some shortfalls which are unlikely to meet the standards in this part. Most significantly, admissions arrangements are not set out in a written policy.
- In addition, the proprietor has not ensured that sufficient thought has been given to the education or welfare of pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are no current plans or policies where this is specifically taken into account. Consequently, there is a gap in the school's arrangements for pupils with such needs.
- Furthermore, the proprietor does not set out how the school will promote pre- and early reading or specify the school's preferred approach for the teaching of daily synthetic phonics.
- The standards in this part are not 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) and 33(k)

- The proprietor has used a model policy from an outstanding non-association independent school to inform his practice. This is fully compliant with the independent school standards. It provides clear and detailed information about the complaints process, including: formal and informal stages; timescales; and responding to complaints.
- The policy has been amended to take full account of the context and structure of the school, for example that a panel hearing for a complaint will consist of at least three people who were not involved in the complaint and furthermore, that one panel member will be independent of the running of the school.
- The proposed leadership structure of the school facilitates the complaints policy such that this is likely to be a feasible model which is fit for purpose. However, it is untested and not implemented at this time.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Leaders, including the proprietor, have established a strong moral purpose and rationale for the school. This is based on their own experience as teachers and

practitioners, including being a special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) in mainstream education.

- Leaders demonstrate the expertise and knowledge required to work with pupils who have SEMH difficulties. Their current work in a specialist outreach provision is already used by the local authority to work with identified pupils with an EHC plan.
- The proprietor has formed a strong partnership with the local authority of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The SEND team from this authority strongly endorses the work of leaders. The SEND team is keen for the school to open as it is of the opinion that this should provide much needed high-quality provision in the area for vulnerable pupils.
- The proprietor has drafted a leadership structure for the school. This includes a board of trustees to act as an advisory 'governing body' and hold leaders to account. Three other leaders, including the co-headteachers, will make up the school's main leadership team.
- However, the proprietor has yet to gain an in-depth understanding of the independent school standards. This leads to some weaknesses in the implementation of key policies, including safeguarding, child protection and first aid. As a result, the proprietor is not in a position to have sole responsibility for pupils and staff using the school.
- The premises and leaders' regard for health, safety and welfare require much work. It is not fit for purpose at this time.
- Subsequently, the standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's policies and documentation, including curriculum planning, show that leaders are demonstrating an awareness of their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Act 2010.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	147198
DfE registration number	838/6007
Inspection number	10104065

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 special school
Proprietor	Dan Vincent
Chair of trustees	Gavin Kewley
Headteacher	Dan Vincent
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,000 to £30,000
Telephone number	07825 915182
Website	www.thestableschool.co.uk
Email address	thehappylearningcentre@outlook.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	6 to 16	6 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	35	35

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	33

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	2
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	35
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	35
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	35

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	11

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is situated in a self-contained building. It was previously used as a pre-school for a separate provider. It is in a setting with access to residential amenities, including the local leisure centre for PE as well as local stables and farmland for therapeutic and recreational pursuits.
- The proposed school is managed by The Happy Learning Centre Limited. It will operate under the intended name of 'The Stable School'.
- The proposed school intends to provide for up to 35 pupils with an EHC plan. Most, if not all, are likely to be placed by local authorities, particularly Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The nature of the school's work will be to support pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- The school does not have a religious character.
- The school intends to offer pupils a full-time education, including, where applicable, those with dual registration.
- The proprietor acquired the lease for the premises two days before this inspection was carried out.

Information about this inspection

- This was the proposed 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.
- The inspector met with the co-headteachers (including the proprietor). He also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the SEND team at Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authority.
- The inspector toured the premises with the co-headteachers to evaluate the school's readiness against the independent school standards.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including policies, health and safety documentation (including risk assessments), safeguarding information, schemes of work and associated planning. The pre-employment checks and staff recruitment arrangements, such as the proposals for the single central record, were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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