

Heather Field School

New Burton House, Burton Bank Lane, Moss Pitt, Stafford ST17 9JW

Inspection dates

11 July 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)(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

- The proprietors have ensured that an appropriate curriculum policy, schemes of work and associated planning are in place. They are designed to meet the needs of the pupils the school intends to admit. The curriculum model and schemes of work are currently being used in the proprietor's other schools for pupils with similar needs, including those with an education, health and care plan. As a result, leaders have ensured that schemes are suited to the needs of the pupils the school is likely to cater for.
- School leaders have taken positive steps to offer a suitable curriculum that covers all the required areas of learning stipulated in the independent school standards. Skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy are identified as cross-curricular and woven into the schemes of work across all key stages. The curriculum is likely to promote fundamental British values and pay regard to the protected characteristics. Pupils are likely to be taught about safety and keeping themselves safe at home, at school, in the community and online.
- Pupils are likely to have access to a broad range of academic and vocational qualifications and awards. Leaders intend that pupils will receive impartial careers advice and guidance because they have made sure that the curriculum policy and schemes of work include this provision. Plans are in place to provide work experience opportunities for pupils in Year 10 upwards. In this way, leaders are preparing well for pupils moving on into work, education or training.
- The assessment, teaching and learning policy is comprehensive. It provides a clear rationale for the approaches it promotes, and clear expectations in terms of practice. Leaders have established suitable monitoring systems that they plan to implement in the proposed school. This is likely to enable them to assess accurately how well pupils are learning and the effectiveness of teaching.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 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 carefully mapped out where spiritual, moral, social and cultural themes occur in the curriculum plan. They have completed a similar exercise for the protected characteristics. In doing so, they can determine that all aspects are suitably covered in an age-appropriate manner.
- Leaders take their responsibilities under the equality duty seriously. Equality themes are evident in the policy framework and permeate all aspects of the curriculum. For example, the assessment, teaching and learning policy states that teaching must not undermine fundamental British values, must not discriminate and must present a balanced view when political issues are addressed. Staff are required to sign a statement to say they will adhere to these principles.
- These 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 proposed school's safeguarding policy is suitable and reflects the most recent guidance from the Secretary of State. It will be available to parents and carers on the proposed school's website and as a hard copy on request if the school is able to admit pupils. The website is ready to launch but leaders will not do this until the school has been registered with the Department for Education (DfE).
- The new headteacher for the proposed school has designated safeguarding lead (DSL) status and the new deputy headteacher will also be trained to this level. This will provide at least two qualified DSLs to ensure continuity in the leadership of child protection issues in school.
- The proprietors are knowledgeable about risk awareness and safeguarding. They have taken positive steps to ensure that all staff appointed to the proposed school will be well trained in safeguarding practices and procedures. In this way, they are contributing to protecting pupils from risk and/or harm. The school's risk assessment policy also identifies the commitment to work with pupils so that they become proactive in reducing risks in school and in keeping themselves safe.
- An experienced and appropriately qualified maintenance manager has been overseeing compliance with health and safety regulations. Compliance certificates have been issued for fire safety, electricity and gas. As the premises have not been in use for some time, the water system had been drained down. New systems have been added as the buildings have been converted for school use. An external assessor has completed a legionella assessment. Two outstanding issues have since been attended to. A re-assessment has been completed and the proposed school is waiting for the external assessor's final report.
- A caretaker has been appointed and is receiving appropriate training to enable him to carry out his health and safety duties. The proprietors are proactive in securing a safe working environment.

- The floor plan of the proposed school's premises shows the whereabouts of the emergency call points, first-aid boxes, emergency lighting, smoke detectors and firefighting equipment. This enables site staff to check the equipment is where it should be and to ensure that it remains safe and fit for purpose. Each room has an emergency evacuation plan so that, in the event of an incident, staff can safely guide their pupils outside to a designated meeting point.
- The proposed school's behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy set out clearly how unacceptable behaviour will be managed, and how positive behaviours will be recognised and rewarded. Guidance is incorporated which emphasises the importance of de-escalation strategies and positive handling as a last resort. Leaders have recognised well the trauma caused by such incidents and have also incorporated post-intervention procedures in the behaviour policy.
- The policy and arrangements for first aid are suitable. Leaders propose that all staff will be trained in paediatric first aid. The policy details the expectations in contacting parents and emergency services and in reporting incidents.
- Providing the outstanding report for legionella does not identify any adverse issues, these 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(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), 21(7)(b)

- The proprietors have recruited a headteacher and a deputy headteacher. The new headteacher is participating in an extensive induction programme prior to taking up her responsibilities. This will enable her to identify with the ethos, policies and systems that the proprietors are fostering within their group of schools. The deputy headteacher is expected to take up her new post from September 2019. Recruitment to the remaining posts will begin if registration is confirmed.
- The single central record for the new school is in place. The single central record in the other schools run by the proprietors shows that all necessary pre-employment checks are carried out and recorded accurately. Checks on the suitability of the proprietary board members have also been carried out and recorded. New staff cannot take up a post until all checks have been completed. In this way, leaders are likely to take appropriate steps to secure the safety of pupils from encountering unsuitable adults.
- The school's assessment, teaching and learning policy states that the school does not plan to use supply staff to cover lessons. However, the school's leaders know how to check the suitability of supply staff should they ever employ them at a later date.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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 single-storey premises have recently been refurbished and provide clean, well-lit classrooms, as well as specialist rooms for information technology, music, science, home skills, craft and technology. The medical room is also a beauty therapy room when not in use for medical purposes. School leaders have also provided a multi-sensory room, a meetings room and four discrete spaces for those occasions when pupils need some quiet time.
- Most rooms are carpeted, which contributes to the good acoustics in the building and in creating a comforting environment. Resources are new, with a television in each room to which teachers can connect their laptops. Four of the five classrooms lead onto a secure outdoor space providing an extension to the main classroom. The main play area for breaks, lunchtime and physical education is spacious and secure.
- Suitable toilet and washing facilities, including showers, are available for the sole use of pupils. Hot water is set to a safe temperature to avoid scalding. Drinking water is provided from a dispenser from which staff will fill jugs for use in classrooms.
- The proprietors have invested substantially in the conversion of these premises to create a well-appointed, welcoming and comfortable setting for pupils to feel safe, secure and valued.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 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)(f)

- The proprietors have prepared a website that is ready to go live if the school is registered. All the required information about the school is on the website and the school has also produced a hard copy of its prospectus for those without internet access.
- Information about admissions, behaviour and exclusions is set out in the relevant policies. More information relating to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who speak English as an additional language is available. The school also intends to provide a range of therapeutic interventions to meet the diverse needs of the pupils it plans to admit.
- The proprietors ensure that parents of pupils in the other schools within the group receive regular reports. It is intended that this practice will be extended to parents of pupils that attend the new school.
- The school's business manager has established clear protocols for providing statements of income and expenditure to local authorities. This practice will be extended to local authorities placing pupils at this proposed school.

- These standards are likely to be met.

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 school's complaints policy is suitable and meets the requirements of the independent school standards.
- A whistle-blowing policy is also suitable and comprehensive.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietors have a clear vision for the proposed new school. They have good experience of working with pupils with SEND and demonstrate suitable knowledge and sensitivity about the needs of these vulnerable pupils. They intend to provide a caring and therapeutic environment for the pupils they plan to admit, many of whom are likely to have had difficult experiences in previous settings. The proposed curriculum is suited to the needs of the pupils they plan to admit.
- The proprietors are experienced in setting up and running other independent special schools, one of which is like the proposed school. This is evident from the policy framework and organisational systems that they plan to replicate in the running of the proposed school. This is likely to ensure a consistency of approach and high expectations.
- The school's policies are well crafted to ensure that there are clear expectations about what to do and why. Leaders have taken positive steps to ensure that the policies relate directly to the independent school standards. In doing so, they demonstrate their depth of understanding of their responsibilities to educate and protect.
- The proprietors have been meticulous in ensuring that all health and safety measures identified through internal and external audits have been fully implemented.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's policies show that the proprietors clearly understand their responsibilities under the 2010 Equality Act.
- The school's accessibility policy and action plan are suitable. They take account of potential physical and cognitive barriers to learning that may be presented by the pupils the school plans to admit.

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	146981
DfE registration number	860/6050
Inspection number	10099752

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 SEND day school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Heather Field School Limited
Chair of proprietors	Mrs S Deaville
Headteacher	Ms Allison Prosser
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,500 to £55,500 depending on level of need
Telephone number	01782 987 012 (temporary)
Website	www.heatherfieldschool.co.uk (not active)
Email address	sdeaville@hopedale.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	0	5–19	5–19
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	50	50

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	0	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	50

Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	50
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	50
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	50

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	2 qualified teacher	6 qualified teachers 1 unqualified teacher
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	2 higher-level teaching assistants 13 teaching assistants

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is situated in a self-contained single-storey building, which was a former NHS care facility. The premises are located in a residential area of Stafford. The premises had been used by various health and probation services before becoming dormant for a long time. The site was acquired earlier this year by the proprietors.
- Three proprietors and a director of Heather Field School Limited own the proposed school. This proprietary body runs two other independent SEND schools in the Stafford area. One of these other schools has a similar spread of ages and abilities to the profile of pupils the proposed school plans to take.
- Two of the proprietors are directly responsible for setting up and running Heather Field School. One is also chair of the proprietary board.
- The proposed school provides five well-appointed general classrooms and specialist rooms for teaching music, science, information and communication technology, home skills, craft and technology. Also, most classrooms have access to their own secure outside space. The main playground is expansive, enabling a range of play and physical activities to take place.
- The site is secure, and people cannot gain access unless authorised at the main

reception.

- The proposed school plans to offer up to 50 places to pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum disorder and/or cognitive learning difficulties.
- The school will not have a religious character.
- The school does not intend to use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection, carried out at the request of the DfE under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- Before the inspection, the inspector checked the internet for any information relating to the proposed school. A press article covered the planning approval of the local authority. As part of the registration process, the school had submitted documents which enabled the inspector to review the following policies beforehand: safeguarding, curriculum planning, assessment, teaching and learning, behaviour, bullying, complaints and health and safety.
- The inspector met with the two directors who have been leading on the project and the company's business manager to discuss their application for registration. The inspector conducted a tour of the premises with an accompanying director.
- The inspector reviewed and discussed a range of documents with leaders. These included school policies for different aspects of health and safety, first aid, risk assessments, the templates and systems to be used for recording safeguarding information, attendance, behaviour incidents and pupils' assessments. The inspector also checked health and safety compliance certificates, monitoring audits and logs and financial reporting. The pre-employment checks for staff recruitment and the single central record were also scrutinised, and staff files of recent appointments were reviewed.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Ellis-Martin, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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