

# New School Canterbury

Garlinge Green Road, Canterbury, Kent CT4 5RU

**Inspection date**

3 September 2019

## Overall outcome

**The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards. It is currently operating without registration.**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4*

- The proposed school will offer a Waldorf (also known as Steiner) approach to education.
- The school's schemes of work set out what pupils will learn and when. These schemes cover the range of learning required by the independent school standards. Teachers and leaders are developing more detailed plans to support daily teaching. Once operating as a school, they intend to design and adapt their plans according to the needs of pupils. Planning draws on 'The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum (2014)'. Leaders report that aspects of this curriculum are currently being updated. They intend to consider new versions as they become available.
- The lower school curriculum provides for pupils aged six to 11. It includes subject disciplines such as history, geography and physical education (PE). There are also plans for aesthetic and creative education.
- The kindergarten will provide for children and pupils aged three to six. Schemes of work for these classes include literacy, mathematics, science and technology in an 'integrated' way. This will include creative play. There are also plans for adult-led tasks such as cooking, gardening, art, craft and storytelling.
- The kindergarten age range includes pupils of compulsory school age. Leaders and teachers recognise that the needs and aptitudes of three-year-olds are likely to be very different from those aged six. The school is committed to providing opportunities for these pupils to make good progress. This commitment is backed up by the school's curriculum documents. Schemes of work set out the learning that will prepare the oldest pupils in kindergarten for the start of lower school.
- Reading and writing will not be formally taught in kindergarten. Leaders and teachers intend to teach pupils phonics once they start in lower school. However, the school intends to take account of the needs of those kindergarten children who are already able to read and write. Teachers will provide opportunities in the environment for children to practise these activities. The curriculum places emphasis on other aspects of literacy. For example, the curriculum aims to develop pupils' imagination. Teachers

will seek to improve pupils' recall of stories and expand their mastery of language orally.

- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is timetabled weekly for lower-school pupils. If implemented well, the suggested topics are likely to promote fundamental British values. For example, pupils are likely to gain an understanding of democracy and government. Religious education (RE) is also part of the curriculum. Plans take account of the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act. There is a strong focus on acceptance and tolerance.
- Initially, the school does not propose to register to accept pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who already have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Leaders have made provision to commission additional advice and guidance for assessing and supporting pupils with SEND where these needs become apparent for an existing pupil.
- While preparing to open the school, leaders have placed a strong emphasis on training for teachers. Leaders intend this professional development to be an ongoing feature of the school's work. Leaders have also planned how they will hold teachers to account for the quality of education they provide. Their approach is likely to be proportionate and supportive.
- Leaders and teachers propose to assess pupils' learning and progress against the school's stated curriculum. They intend to share this information with parents and carers. Teachers can explain how they will use these assessments to plan their teaching and promote pupils' progress.
- The standards contained within this part are likely to be met.

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

### *Paragraph 5*

- Explicitly stated values and standards underpin the proposed school's ethos and approach. These values, such as 'mutual respect', are threaded through the school's documentation.
- Curriculum plans set out how the school intends to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The PSHE programme includes a wide range of suitable themes. Older pupils are set to study the importance and differences of laws in all communities and a range of diverse cultures and traditions.
- As well as the weekly PSHE lesson, leaders plan to have specific 'awareness' days. The overarching ethos is also likely to support pupils' personal development because it runs consistently through all documents and plans. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' flexible thinking. The school is likely to encourage respect for others' views, attitudes and beliefs, 'generosity of spirit', and so on.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils learn about the protected characteristics in an age-appropriate way. Schemes of work pay close attention to teaching pupils about the effects of social exclusion.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

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

### *Paragraphs 6 and 7*

- The school's safeguarding policy is displayed on the school's website. The policy is suitably informed by the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. It sets out clear pathways for raising and sharing concerns. This includes steps to take within the school as well as how to raise concerns with other agencies. The chair of trustees is clear about the proprietor's safeguarding responsibilities.
- It is likely that staff will be well trained to safeguard pupils. Those already appointed are familiar with the very latest guidance. They understand the issues that can threaten pupils' welfare and safety at home or in school. As well as providing formal training, leaders plan to enhance adults' understanding of safeguarding guidance through weekly meetings.

### *Paragraphs 9 and 10*

- The school's values firmly underpin the behaviour policy. In particular, the policy recognises that each individual is unique. Therefore, leaders intend to adapt their approach for different children of different ages. The policy is likely to be fair and workable. Its resolutions and sanctions for misbehaviour are reasonable. There is also a clear emphasis on determining and alleviating the causes of undesirable behaviour.
- The anti-bullying policy sets out how the school will aim to prevent bullying and respond to it. The perceptions of pupils, parents and staff are central to the proposed strategy. It is likely that the school will not tolerate bullying and will tackle it tenaciously.

### *Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16*

- The health and safety policy refers to a wide range of relevant legislation. Arrangements for implementing the policy are likely to be workable in practice. The policy and provision for first aid are likely to meet requirements. The number and deployment of staff are likely to mean that pupils are adequately supervised.
- A fire risk assessment has been carried out by an external fire-safety expert. This assessment identified necessary steps to reduce risks further. Leaders have used qualified contractors to take all required action. Systems are in place to maintain ongoing checks.
- Leaders have set up admissions and attendance registers which are likely to meet requirements.
- A variety of risk assessments have already been completed, in line with the proposed policy. These are likely to be fit for purpose. There are systems in place to ensure that staff understand their roles in managing risk.
- The requirements of the paragraphs within this part are likely to be met.

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

### *Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21*

- Leaders are well trained in safer recruitment procedures. They understand the purpose of, and procedures for, different types of suitability check.

- There is a single central record in place. It contains all the required information about the suitability of staff already appointed. Trustees have also been subject to all required checks.
- The proprietor does not intend to make use of agency supply teachers. All volunteers will have an enhanced check.
- The standards contained within this part are likely to be met.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 31*

- The premises are secure, well maintained and clean. The building is resourced with suitable furniture for the proposed operation. Teaching and learning resources are tidily organised, creating an uncluttered and functional space.
- Separate toilets for staff and pupils meet recommended ratios. Hot and cold running water is thermostatically controlled. Drinking water is clearly labelled and separate from the toilets.
- Classrooms are spacious and well lit. There is also a large school hall, office space and a staff room. The internal acoustics are likely to be suitable for the intended purpose of each room.
- The medical room meets all requirements.
- Outdoor areas are attractive and well appointed. There is ample space for recreational activity and the school's proposed PE curriculum. Entrance and access areas have external lighting.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

## Part 6. Provision of information

### *Paragraph 32*

- All of the information required by this part is available, either on the school's website or in hard copy on request.
- The proprietor knows the information the school must provide to each parent, the local authority or inspectors once the school is operating. The headteacher has devised a format for reporting to parents about their child's progress.
- This standard is likely to be met.

## Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

### *Paragraph 33*

- The school's complaints policy is published on the school's website. It meets all of the requirements of this part. For example, the policy provides for both informal and formal processes, which are likely to be workable in practice. There are clear and reasonable timeframes for each stage of the policy.

- The policy states that a complaint review panel will include one member independent from the leadership and management of the school. Leaders have plausible ideas of how to source a suitable independent person.
- The standard contained within this paragraph is likely to be met.

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

### *Paragraph 34*

- The proprietor and leaders demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards. They have thought in detail about how their ideas and policies might work in practice. They have considered carefully a range of associated guidance.
- The board of trustees will oversee arrangements to ensure that the independent school standards are continually met. Trustees bring a wide range of expertise and experience. They intend to draw on this, and commission support from other external experts, to hold the headteacher to account. Ongoing training for trustees is planned, aimed at securing continual improvement to both the school and its governance.
- The headteacher will be responsible and accountable for the daily running of the school and for the quality of education it provides.
- Leaders propose a range of mechanisms for assessing the overall effectiveness of the school and the implementation of individual policies. There has been an obvious systematic approach to ensuring that all requirements are likely to be met.
- This standard is likely to be met.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school's accessibility plan covers all of the required elements of improving access to information, the curriculum and the physical environment.

## Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- Early years children will be part of the school's kindergarten. This aims to create a 'family environment' that is 'unhurried and stress-free' for the children to 'discover the world around them'. It also aims for children to 'master' social interaction, learn positive behaviours and develop physical coordination, speech, language and other life skills.
- Leaders have systems in place which are likely to ensure that all welfare requirements are continually met.
- Once registered, the proprietor intends to apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for an exemption to some of the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage. This is in line with other similar schools.

## **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	147331
DfE registration number	886/6158
Inspection number	10119886

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	Waldorf (Steiner) School
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	New School Canterbury Ltd
Chair	Robin Harris
Headteacher	Beth Cuenco
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,000
Telephone number	01227 730067
Website	<a href="http://www.newschoolcanterbury.co.uk">www.newschoolcanterbury.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@newschoolcanterbury.co.uk">info@newschoolcanterbury.co.uk</a>

## Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	19
Number of pupils of compulsory school age for whom a statement is maintained under section 324, or who are looked after by a local authority	0
Total hours operating as a school per week	14 hours
Total hours of teaching provided per week	12 hours

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11	3 to 11	3 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	19	120	100

- Based on the current designation or purpose of each room in the premises, and the proprietor's own intended class sizes, there is scope to accommodate up to 80 full-time pupils. Because some early years children will only attend part time, this will allow for up to 100 on the school roll in total.

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	For example, 60, up to a combined total of 100
Number of part-time pupils	19	For example, 40, up to a combined total of 100
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	0
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	0
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	0

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	6	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	10	4



## **Information about this proposed school**

- The proposed school will occupy two buildings on a rural site near Canterbury, Kent. The school's accommodation and grounds are set within its own boundary.
- The proprietor does not propose to use any additional premises.
- The proposed school will offer a Waldorf (also known as Steiner) curriculum.
- The school intends to offer full-time education to pupils of compulsory school age. Kindergarten children who are not yet of compulsory school age may attend part time.
- The school will not have any religious denomination.
- The school's proprietor will be New School Canterbury Limited. The organisation has charitable status, and all the company's directors are also trustees.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first pre-registration inspection under this application. The proprietor previously applied to register an independent school but decided not to proceed with the application at that time.
- The purpose of the inspection was to check whether the school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, if the DfE decides to register it.
- The inspector held detailed discussions with the chair of trustees, the headteacher and the office manager. An educational consultant, commissioned to work closely with the proposed school leaders, also took part in the discussions. The inspector also met with a group of teachers and other staff.
- Both before and during the on-site visit, the inspector scrutinised an extensive range of documents, policies and provision for keeping records, against the requirements of the independent school standards.
- The inspector toured the proposed school site and accommodation.
- New School Canterbury currently offers a home education support service for parents for up to 14 hours per week. This service was not operating on the day of this inspection. It was previously visited by Ofsted's unregistered schools team and was found not to meet the definition of an independent school.

## Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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