

Nurture Learning

County Buildings, Bewdley Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 6RQ

Inspection dates

2 October 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

- The proprietor has an ambitious vision for the school. The planned curriculum is likely to provide a fulfilling education for pupils, many of whom will have suffered trauma. If plans are delivered as intended, pupils are likely to show enjoyment in learning and have pride in their achievements.
- Leaders plan to offer a broad curriculum. They intend to place an emphasis on ensuring that pupils gain a good grounding in essential literacy and numeracy skills so they are well prepared for their next steps in education or work. Leaders hope to offer a range of qualifications, including functional skills and GCSEs at key stage 4. Leaders intend to use the locally agreed syllabus for the teaching of religious education.
- Leaders have devised a well-thought-out curriculum policy that takes into account the specific needs of vulnerable pupils. While leaders have detailed schemes of work that cover national curriculum subjects for key stages 1 to 4, they understand that a pupil's starting point may not match their chronological age. It is likely that many pupils will have gaps in their education due to missing a significant amount of education.
- Leaders intend to create individual learning plans for each pupil. It is expected that these will be established using outcomes from baseline assessments and knowledge from various agencies working with pupils, as well as the views of parents and carers. Leaders say that they will ensure that objectives in education, health and care (EHC) plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are used to inform the learning plans for each pupil.
- The school proposes to offer pupils full-time education, with the school day commencing at approximately 9.00am and finishing at 3.00pm. When pupils first start there may be a transition period, where they build up their hours of attendance gradually. Pupils' timetables and learning plans are likely to be bespoke to their

academic, social and emotional needs.

- Leaders plan to use a range of assessments, including observations, to determine each pupil's learning needs. These will include assessments that help staff to find out pupils' individual developmental needs. Staff will be required to use this information to set realistic expectations, then plan learning to help pupils overcome barriers and achieve well. Leaders are mindful about pupils' mental well-being and the impact this has on learning. They intend to use a therapist to support them with meeting pupils' emotional needs.
- Leaders have placed pupils' personal development at the heart of the school's curriculum. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum, if implemented effectively, should support pupils' development well. The PSHE scheme of work is comprehensive and is likely to allow staff to respond to any issues that arise. The scheme builds pupils' knowledge progressively over time. For example, younger pupils learn about drugs as medicines and older pupils go on to learn about the dangers of 'legal highs'.
- Leaders have developed suitable arrangements for ensuring that secondary-aged pupils have access to independent, impartial careers advice and guidance. Leaders have established a link with another local mainstream independent school where they intend to share expertise. This is likely to include using the partner school's career service and library. Nurture Learning plan to provide opportunities for older pupils to experience the world of work and think about their future aspirations. For example, they are planning a visit for pupils to Worcestershire Skills Show.
- The proprietor has already appointed well-qualified staff, some with teaching qualifications. They demonstrate good subject knowledge in relation to planning learning across a range of curriculum subjects. In addition, they have experience of working with, and coordinating provision for, pupils with SEND. This should help to ensure that teaching at the school is well planned, enabling pupils to know more and remember more, and ultimately achieve well.
- 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)

- The proprietor has ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is integral to all aspects of the school's curriculum. Teachers are likely to teach some topics discretely through PSHE lessons. However, broader objectives, such as developing pupils' self-confidence, are also likely to be promoted through daily interactions between staff and pupils.
- Leaders have developed an SMSC policy to help staff to understand the importance of developing pupils' skills and understanding in this area. The policy promotes pupils' participation in a range of cultural and artistic activities to help them acquire an appreciation of the wider world. Leaders say that this will include visits to places of worship such as a mosque or trying food from other cultures. Teachers are likely to promote fundamental British values effectively through the planned SMSC

development of pupils.

- Teachers will be expected to plan SMSC into units of work, following the proposed school's agreed progression. Teachers are currently considering how different activities, for example a trip to Dudley Castle to see a re-enactment, can be included in the curriculum to encourage awe and wonder and add an extra spark of excitement to learning.
- Leaders understand that a crucial aspect of SMSC will be to develop pupils' self-esteem. They have many strategies in place to do this. Teachers say that, at a simple level, this is done 'just by noticing them [pupils]' and expressing a positive comment, such as recognising a pupil's good manners.
- Teachers intend to support pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour through helping them to see the 'natural consequences' of their actions. They will help pupils to describe their behaviour and assist them with self-regulating. This might involve offering the pupil space or chance to climb on the outdoor climbing frame.
- The school's curriculum and supporting policies demonstrate how staff should help pupils to show respect for all of the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act. Leaders provided specific examples, for example how they plan to use Stonewall materials to educate older pupils about different types of relationships.
- The proprietor has devised policies that make it clear to staff that it is unacceptable to promote biased political views when teaching. Teachers will also be expected to help pupils build resilience to reduce the risk of them becoming radicalised.
- 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)

- The proprietor has published the proposed school's safeguarding policy on the website. The school has adopted Worcestershire local authority's model policy and adapted it to meet the needs of the school. The policy is comprehensive and fit for purpose. It has regard to the latest advice issued by the Secretary of State.
- Leaders have established strong safeguarding protocols that should help to keep pupils safe in school and beyond. One leader has expertise in safeguarding as a result of previous experience as a designated safeguarding leader in another school. Safeguarding leaders have undertaken appropriate training to equip them well for the role. The proprietor has completed safer recruitment training.
- Safeguarding leaders have devised a suitable system for logging any concerns about a pupil. They have prepared staff so they can be vigilant and act on any concerns in a timely way. The proposed school, in its current capacity as an alternative provider, already works closely with other agencies to support children effectively. In addition, leaders have planned a range of opportunities in the curriculum to help pupils learn about how to keep safe. For example, pupils will be taught about how to combat bullying.
- The proprietor has developed a suitable behaviour management policy. It focuses on ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent, nurturing approach to behaviour

management. Behaviour expectations are appropriate, given the vulnerabilities of the pupils likely to attend. The policy emphasises the importance of establishing a positive relationship between adult and child. Leaders intend that a 'behaviour tracking sheet' will be maintained for each child. This will note the actions taken by the school as a result of any poor behaviour. This should satisfy the independent school standards with reference to recording sanctions.

- The proposed school has an appropriate anti-bullying policy. It states a definition of bullying that includes the different types such as cyber bullying and homophobic bullying. The policy serves as a useful guide for staff on what to do if an incident of bullying occurs.
- The proprietor has taken all necessary steps to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The building is in very good condition and free from any hazards. The proposed school has an appropriate health and safety policy that makes clear that it is everyone's responsibility to maintain a safe working environment. Each day a member of staff conducts a 'daily walk around' to identify and address any health and safety matters such as trip hazards.
- The proposed school has taken action to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. A private company has completed a fire risk assessment and the proprietor has already acted on many of recommendations from the report. The proprietor has taken measures to reduce the risk of fire by installing smoke detectors and fire extinguishers and ensuring the necessary fire signage.
- The proposed school has set up an electronic admissions register and purchased paper attendance registers. Leaders intend to record the correct information on the school's admission register and use the coding for absence in accordance with the Department for Education's (DfE) regulations.
- 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(3), 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)

- The proposed school has established an appropriate single central register to record all vetting checks for new staff, volunteers and contractors. Leaders collect, as a minimum, information in line with the requirements of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019'. The single central register is kept in electronic form.
- The proprietor does not intend to employ supply staff.
- Leaders plan to recruit further staff, adopting safer recruitment practices to reduce the risk of unsuitable people working with children. They expect to receive two positive references and satisfactory medical clearance.
- 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 proprietor moved into the proposed school's recently modernised premises at the start of September 2019. The former Victorian school building has been sympathetically renovated to a high standard. Most classrooms are carpeted; other rooms have a new non-slip hard surface floor. The building and all rooms are wheelchair accessible. The proposed school has a disabled toilet with a shower facility.
- The accommodation offers appropriate, ample space for the proposed 20 pupils. The five classrooms vary in size. In addition to these rooms, there is a room dedicated to housing the proposed school's library and another room that leaders plan to change into a science laboratory. There is a large hall area that leaders call the common room. This can be used for dining, physical education (PE) and whole-school assemblies.
- The whole building has a light and airy feel. All rooms are very well insulated, with new radiators. The heating system was being commissioned on the day of the inspection. Levels of light are good, with a mix of natural and artificial light. There is extensive external lighting outside to allow for safer passage on dark evenings.
- Drinking water is readily available in the kitchen, although the proprietor is waiting for the drinking water sign to arrive. This will be put into position imminently. Leaders are also exploring the installation of a water dispenser to make drinking water even more easily available.
- The proposed school has a small outdoor space, with both hard surface and grassed area, available for pupils to use in their free time. There is space for a climbing frame – leaders are awaiting the installation of rubberised flooring before the frame is erected. Outdoor PE will mostly be taught off-site as the grassed area is not large enough. Leaders have already made contact with the new council-run sports centre as well as a nearby independent school about using their sports facilities. They have considered the necessary risk assessments.
- There are separate toilet facilities for boys and girls, with hot and cold running water available in both. They are solely for the use of pupils. Thermostatic mixing valves have been fitted to taps to control the temperature of the water and ensure it does not present as a scalding risk.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the independent school standards for this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 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)

- The proposed school has a website that already includes several of the documents that must be made available to parents on request. Leaders anticipate that this site will contain all relevant documents if the proposed school is registered by the DfE. The proposed school has all other required documents available in either paper or electronic form. This includes a range of policies that cover matters such as provision for SEND, English as an additional language and admissions.

- The school's website is parent-friendly and provides users with the relevant contact details for the school. Leaders share the proposed school's vision and values on the school website.
- Leaders have developed a report format to share information with parents annually about their children's achievement. The format focuses largely on the academic subjects of English and mathematics. Leaders are currently reviewing their approach to reporting to parents to make reports even more accessible for parents.
- 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

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 proprietor has developed a suitable complaints policy that includes all the requirements of the independent school standards. It is straightforward for a parent to follow. The policy includes appropriate timescales and the option for parents to progress their complaint on to a formal procedure if necessary.
- Leaders plan to maintain confidential records of any complaints and use the information to reflect on the school's practice and make changes where 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

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

- The proprietor, who will also be the school's executive headteacher, has a meaningful rationale for establishing the proposed school. The proprietor has identified the need for a setting that can provide a blend of education and therapeutic care for pupils, many of whom are likely to suffer with social, emotional or mental health difficulties.
- The proprietor has a business background, and has drawn on her professional skills to set up the school, its systems and practices. She has appointed a head of education (assistant headteacher) with substantial experience in teaching and learning, both at primary level and further education.
- The proprietor demonstrates a strong knowledge of the independent school standards. They have given careful consideration to the needs of pupils and their particular challenges when setting up the proposed school. All those involved in the school are passionate about providing vulnerable pupils with a nurturing environment where they feel safe to learn. They show a drive and commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils. Staff demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to provide pupils with a good-quality education.
- The school will not have a governing body. However, the proprietor expects that leaders will work with an advisory board to improve the overall provision for pupils. This board will include experts in the field of clinical psychology and occupational therapy.
- 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

- The proprietor has devised an accessibility plan. This reflects the proposed school's intentions to increase curriculum participation, make improvements to the school's physical environment and to improve access to information for those with disabilities. While the plan is overall sufficient, some of the completion dates on the plan are not specific.

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	147465
DfE registration number	885/6056
Inspection number	10122622

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	Ethical Influence Ltd
Chair	Sarah Fernihough
Headteacher	Sarah Fernihough
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,000
Telephone number	01562 515068
Website	www.nuturelearning.co.uk
Email address	sarah@nuturelearning.co.uk
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	5–16	5–16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	20	20

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	15
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	15

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	3, plus 9 teaching assistants
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	1, plus 4 teaching assistants
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	2 therapy staff

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located in Kidderminster, Worcestershire. It is situated in a former school that was converted to county council offices. It has recently been extensively renovated.
- The proposed school plans to cater for pupils aged five to 16. Some pupils are likely to be looked after or previously looked after. Pupils are likely to have social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils may have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences. They may have anxiety issues, executive functioning or sensory processing difficulties.
- All pupils are likely to have special educational needs; most will have an EHC plan. Some are likely to have missed substantial amounts of schooling and/or have significant gaps in their learning. Pupils are likely to be referred by local authorities.
- 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 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 if it is registered.
- The inspection was conducted with two working days' notice.
- The inspector held meetings with one of the directors from Ethical Influence Ltd and two assistant headteachers. The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents including school policies, curriculum planning, schemes of work, annual report to parents, risk assessments and the single central register of checks on the backgrounds of staff and volunteers.
- The inspector carried out a tour of the school premises and grounds.

Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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