

The Damara School

The Charles Burrell Centre, Staniforth Road, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3LH

Inspection dates

9 December 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

Paragraph 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)(f), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The school is not in operation, as pupils have not yet been admitted to the school yet. It was not possible to visit lessons.
- The school day will start at 9am and end at 3pm. Pupils in early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 will receive 26.6 hours a week of on-site education. Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 will receive 28.5 hours a week of on-site education.
- The provision will aim to meet the needs of pupils who have a diagnosis of social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). Pupils referred to the proposed school will have education, health and care (EHC) plans. However, this is not a requirement.
- There is a written curriculum policy that states the ambition to provide a curriculum to meet the requirements of pupils who have SEMH. Schemes of work are available in every learning area for early years and each key stage.
- The curriculum includes English language, mathematics, science, humanities, religious education, technology and the arts. There is a particular emphasis on personal, social and health education (PSHE), which aims to develop pupils' awareness, knowledge and skills. The key stage 4 curriculum also includes money and finance, home cooking skills, resistant materials, iCreative media, money and finance.
- Pupils will study GCSEs for English language, English speaking and listening, mathematics, design technology (resistant materials) and iCreative Media. Pupils will study functional skills courses for English (Level 1), mathematics (Level 1) and information and communication technology (ICT) (Level 1). They will study BTEC National Diplomas for money and finance, and home cooking skills. Pupils will study entry level certificate qualifications in English, mathematics, science, ICT and physical education.

- The proprietor is committed to helping prepare pupils for adult life. Every pupil will receive a weekly counselling session from a life coach. There is a dedicated subject called the world of work, which discusses the development of skills such as personal awareness. The proprietor has approached the careers adviser at Norfolk County Council and five businesses with offices in the Charles Burrell Centre to provide relevant careers support for the pupils. The proprietor plans to ensure that pupils visit the Norfolk and Suffolk careers fairs and have presentations from outside speakers and opportunities for work experience.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met by the proposed school.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j)

Paragraph 4

- The teaching methodology has been carefully considered to meet the SEMH needs of the pupils. The headteacher and the assistant headteacher are experienced at assessment and review of EHC plans.
- Teaching will take place in groups of no more than six pupils. Each group will have a teacher and a minimum of one teaching assistant.
- Pupils will have their skills assessed on entry to the school. There will be diagnostic and non-diagnostic tests in order to determine the knowledge and skill level of individual pupils.
- The assessment information will be used to inform teaching staff of what each pupil needs to learn next, with reports being sent to parents or carers termly.
- Summative assessments will be linked to external accreditation.
- These two independent school standards are likely to be met by the proposed school.
- The three independent school standards for the quality of education are likely to be met by the proposed school.

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)

- The citizenship and PSHE curriculum includes a range of activities to develop pupils' spiritual, social and cultural awareness effectively. The activities are threaded throughout different curriculum subjects, and encourage tolerance and understanding of the protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010. The activities also include opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures and traditions.
- Pastoral support will include mentoring and therapy sessions for each pupil. Mentoring will focus on discussing worries and developing strategies in order to self-manage behaviour and well-being.
- The proprietor plans to invite speakers from a range of public institutions and services.
- The proprietor is considering the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme for pupils, to

develop their confidence, their skills for the world of work and to build their resilience.

- Most pupils will arrive by taxi and the proprietor is aware that they may worry about travelling. A breakfast club will be provided to alleviate pupils' anxieties, as well as providing useful social experiences, and opportunities to educate pupils about healthy food options.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met by the proposed school.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The safeguarding policy makes reference to all relevant documentation, including 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2019).
- Staff will have suitable child protection training as soon as they start work at the school.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding leader and will be on site every day of the school week. The assistant headteacher is the deputy safeguarding lead. Both leaders have appropriate training.
- The headteacher and the chair of the board have safer recruitment training.
- Staff plan to consider the different needs of pupils, such as those with SEMH needs, as part of the admissions procedures. The curriculum and teaching methods will be tailored accordingly.
- Staff have not considered carefully enough the position of the school premises and the implications of the toilets being used by the general public. The position of two of the classrooms also poses a safeguarding risk. They are located in a part of the building where the general public have access to the walkways, away from the main school base. These arrangements are not appropriate.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met by the proposed school.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c)

Paragraph 10

Paragraph 14

- Leaders have ensured that the policies for promoting good behaviour and anti-bullying are suitable. The policies are specific to the school's needs, reflecting the particular vulnerabilities of the pupils.
- Rewards and sanctions will be recorded electronically to allow the school's leaders to identify trends and monitor the impact of any actions taken.
- Pupils will be taught in small groups. The proprietor has appropriate plans in place to supervise pupils during lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- These three independent school standards are likely to be met by the proposed school.

Paragraph 11

- There is a suitable policy for health and safety, but procedures are not carried out thoroughly enough to identify and minimise risks.
- There are weaknesses in the arrangements for fire safety and assessment of risks, as itemised below.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met by the proposed school.

Paragraph 12

- Leaders were unable to provide documentation which demonstrates compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- It is not clear if the portable electrical equipment is safe to use. There are no up-to-date checks on the equipment. Computers are not yet in position.
- One of the fire extinguishers is not suitably maintained. It has not been checked in accordance with statutory requirements.
- One of the exit doors had no emergency exit sign. This was rectified during the inspection visit.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met by the proposed school.

Paragraph 13

- There is a suitable first aid policy.
- The proprietor has acquired new first aid boxes and the plan is to situate them in convenient locations.
- Training for first aid has been completed by the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the business support manager.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met by the proposed school.

Paragraph 15

- There are suitable arrangements for registering pupils' attendance and absence each morning and afternoon.
- The proprietor has not ensured that a suitable admissions register is in place.
- This independent standard is not likely to be met by the proposed school.

Paragraph 16

- The risk assessment policy is detailed to give sufficient guidance to staff about the needs and risks associated with the pupils.
- Individual staff are expected to consider risks for any activity prior to it taking place. Teachers will complete an off-site risk assessment proforma.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met by the proposed school.
- Four of the nine independent school standards for the welfare, health and safety of

pupils are not likely to be met by the proposed school.

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

Paragraph 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)

Paragraph 19(2), 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)

Paragraph 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)

Paragraph 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)(c), 21(6)

- All of the employment checks will be carried out prior to staff starting work and evidence of the checks will be in staff files.
- The proprietor is aware that there needs to be checks on the medical fitness of staff for the proposed school.
- Staff already appointed have appropriate experience, relevant professional qualifications and knowledge in order to support pupils with SEMH needs.
- The proprietor does not plan to use supply staff. However, leaders are aware of the necessary safeguarding precautions linked to agency staff that need to be in place.
- A single central record of employment checks is in place and shows all of the required information. Some directors are in the process of having the relevant checks completed.
- The four independent school standards for the suitability of staff and proprietors is likely to be met by the proposed school.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c)

- Toilet facilities are not available for the sole use of pupils, as the general public have access to them. There is hot and cold running water at a suitable temperature.
- There are no showers available on the proposed school premises for pupils to use after on-site physical education.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met for the proposed school.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 24(2)

- There is no medical facility.
- The school does not cater for pupils with complex medical needs.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met for the proposed school.

Paragraph 25

- The proposed premises for the school occupy the former changing rooms of the de-commissioned building, Charles Burrell High School.
- The proposed premises are owned by the Charles Burrell Centre Limited. The former classrooms and offices are let and are now home to over 40 organisations which include commercial businesses and local charities. The general public have access to the corridor areas of the building and the toilets.
- The proprietor has a license to occupy part of the building for the proposed school site until the end of October 2020. The proprietor intends to use this site as temporary accommodation before locating to a larger site, within the year. The proprietor has not finalised an agreement for the lease of longer-term premises. The proprietor has the option of extending the lease of the temporary site accommodation at The Charles Burrell Centre.
- Entrance to the proposed school site is to the right side of the Charles Burrell Centre, where the former tennis courts were situated. There is ample car parking space.
- The proposed accommodation is unsuitable for the proposed number of pupils and the needs of the proposed pupils. There is not enough space for teaching. The classrooms have no natural light. The location of some teaching areas poses safeguarding concerns.
- There is a small reception area consisting of a table, two chairs, a locker for pupils to store items, one notice board, one whiteboard and a radiator. The lino and this area need a deep clean.
- There is a staffroom that consists of a fridge, a freezer, a microwave, coffee and tea making facilities, and a storage cupboard. This area needs tidying and a deep clean.
- There is a leadership office that is not currently functional. Desk surfaces are not clear. Boxes are on work surfaces. This area is not tidy and needs a deep clean. The room stores a number of computers and computer screens that are not operational. The portable appliance testing for the electrical equipment is out of date.
- There is one classroom to be used for teaching key stage 2 pupils. The room is not suitable for teaching. This room has a key code for entry. There are no windows. It consists of two large tables and an appropriate number of chairs. The whiteboard has not been fixed to the wall. The room has a new carpet. The classroom requires a deep clean and tidy up.
- There is a room to be used for teaching pupils in key stages 3 and 4. The room is not suitable for teaching. There are no windows. There are tables that can be pushed together to produce one large table. There is a whiteboard. The room contains a small lockable COSHH (The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) cupboard. This cupboard does not contain chemicals. The chemicals are being stored off-site and were not seen during this inspection. The room has new carpet. The room requires a deep clean and tidy up.
- There is no classroom available within the school base for teaching children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1.
- The toilets are not for the sole use of pupils. They are shared with the general public.

These arrangements are not suitable.

- There is a proposed examination room, where examination papers will be stored. It is a lockable room but is not inside the proposed school area. The examination room door opens onto the corridor accessed by the general public.
- There is a large space known as the library room. This area is not furnished to teach in. To access this area, pupils have to leave the main proposed school space and walk along the corridor, which the general public have access to. Given the vulnerability of the proposed pupils, these arrangements present a safeguarding issue. These arrangements are not suitable.
- There is a room available on the second floor of the building. This is presently not furnished to teach in. To access this room, pupils have to leave the main proposed school space, walk along the corridor and up a flight of stairs which the general public have access to. Given the vulnerability of the proposed pupils, these arrangements present a safeguarding issue. These arrangements are not suitable.
- Apart from the two teaching rooms in the main part of the school site, there are no other rooms available for pupils to use. The teaching space available is too limited for the number of proposed pupils.
- The proprietor accepts that there are safeguarding concerns due to the age and vulnerability of the pupils if the proposed school was to use the toilets and the two rooms outside of the main school area. The proprietor is considering whether the space for the proposed school is suitable.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met for the proposed school.

Paragraph 26

- The acoustics are suitable for the intended purpose of the classrooms.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met for the proposed school.

Paragraph 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- The classrooms in the main teaching area have no windows. The classrooms have ample lighting.
- The external lighting near the proposed school entrance does not work.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met for the proposed school.

Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- Suitable drinking water facilities are provided and are readily accessible at all times.
- Cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are not clearly marked as such.
- The temperature of the hot water does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- Toilets and urinals that are in the Charles Burrell Centre have an adequate supply of cold water. Washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water, but they are not for the sole use of pupils.

- This independent school standard is not likely to be met for the proposed school.

Paragraph 29, 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- Pupils will participate in physical education activities in The Charles Burrell Centre main hall which is available to rent. There is ample outdoor space for pupils to engage in outdoor activities, under the close supervision of staff.
- The proprietor intends for pupils to use the local swimming pool.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met for the proposed school.
- Five of the seven independent school standards for the premises and accommodation are not likely to be met by the proposed school.

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)(c), 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), 32(4), 32(4)(a), 32(4)(b), 32(4)(c)

- The proposed school does not have a school website. All of the required school policies have been produced and will be made available to parents on request.
- The proprietor intends to have a school website and is aware of the requirement to publish a suitable safeguarding policy on the website.
- The proprietor intends to report on pupils' progress to parents regularly. The proprietor is aware of the responsibilities to provide local authorities and others with information when required.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met by the proposed school.

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)

- A written complaints policy is in place. Suitable timescales for dealing with each stage of complaints are included in the policy.
- The complaints policy does not ensure that when there is a panel hearing one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school.
- The school intends to maintain records for all complaints and actions taken.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met by the proposed school.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor, directors and governors are clear about what they want to provide to pupils and what they would like them to achieve.
- The proprietor accepts that there is work to do in order to meet the independent school standards. The proprietor has no previous experience of running an independent school.
- The directors and governors do not have a sufficiently detailed knowledge of the independent school standards. The directors and governors have suitable experience

in the business and education sectors.

- The proprietor has not thought through the proposed premises of the school sufficiently to make sure that pupils' safety and welfare needs are met.
- The school's policies are written clearly and reflect the vulnerabilities of the pupils who will attend the school site. The headteacher and the chair of the board of members have significant experience of supporting pupils with SEMH.
- Local authority officers have not committed to placing pupils at this stage.
- This independent school standard is not likely to be met by the proposed school.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The accessibility plan provides details of how pupils can access the premises and the curriculum effectively.
- All requirements are likely to be met by the proposed school.

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	147596
DfE registration number	926/6023
Inspection number	10129625

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
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	The Lotus Academy Trust
Chair	Cathleen Catt
Headteacher	Sandra Govender
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,000 to £41,000
Telephone number	07860 537119
Website	No website
Email address	ceo@lotustrust.org.uk

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	N/A	5 to 16	None
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	48	None

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- The school is unlikely to meet a large number of the independent school standards.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	N/A	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	N/A	48
Number of part-time pupils	N/A	None
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	Not yet determined
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	Not yet determined
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	Not yet determined

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	N/A	3
Number of part-time teaching staff	N/A	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	N/A	N/A

Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor seeks registration with the Department for Education as an independent school to admit pupils with predominantly SEMH needs.
- The proposed proprietorial body is The Lotus Academy Trust.
- The trust has appointed a headteacher, an assistant headteacher, a business support manager, a teacher of English, a teacher of mathematics, a mindfulness therapist and a psychotherapist. The proposed school has the equivalent of 1.5 teaching assistants.
- The proposed accommodation and premises for the school is the former changing rooms of the de-commissioned building, Charles Burrell High School. The proposed premises are owned by Charles Burrell Centre Limited. The premises are situated at The Charles Burrell Centre, Staniforth Road, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3LH.
- It is likely that pupils will each have an EHC plan, but this is not a requirement of the proposed school.
- The proprietor is seeking to establish the school for up to 48 pupils. The proprietor plans to have a phased entry as part of a three-year growth plan. In the first year, the school plans to admit 18 pupils.
- The proprietor proposes to admit pupils from Norfolk local authority and Suffolk local authority.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first pre-registration inspection for the proposed school.
- The proposed school is not yet operating.
- I met the chief executive officer of the trust, who is also the headteacher; the assistant headteacher; the chair of the board of directors and the chair of the board of members.
- I held a telephone conversation with a representative of Norfolk local authority. I telephoned Suffolk local authority but was unable to speak to a representative on the day of the pre-registration inspection or the following day. I received email correspondence from Suffolk local authority in relation to the proposed school.
- I conducted a tour of the premises with the headteacher.
- I scrutinised documents sent by the prospective proprietor to the Department for Education and the documents provided on-site. Information included curriculum information, school policies and documents relating to keeping pupils safe.
- I scrutinised the pre-employment checks for the prospective staff.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils
 - 23(1)(b) separate toilet facilities for boys and girls aged 8 years or over are provided except where the toilet facility is provided in a room that can be secured from the inside and that is intended for use by one pupil at a time; and
 - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 27(b) external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 28(1)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water
 - 28(1)(c) cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which–
 - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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