

Silver Bridge School

54 Silver Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 3DL

Inspection date

18 June 2020

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

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a)–(b), 2(2), 2(2)(a)–(i)

- The proprietor is proposing a school to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils will have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). The headteacher is experienced in teaching pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. The school's curriculum policy describes a structure that takes appropriate account of pupils' individual interests. It proposes a project-based approach that incorporates academic learning with therapeutic support for pupils.
- Leaders have prepared schemes of work for each key stage and in each 'pillar' of learning across a suitably broad range of study. Teachers will use these schemes to plan learning that meets pupils' needs and present new ideas in a coherent sequence.
- Key stage 4 pupils will have the option of taking GCSE, BTEC or functional skills qualifications in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. All secondary-aged pupils will have access to a careers education programme. Leaders are planning to provide post-16 students with specific guidance on how to make successful transitions into further education or training when they leave.
- Pupils will learn personal skills through a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. Leaders have planned 'life-skills' sessions that will prepare pupils for adult life in Britain. For example, this may involve pupils learning how to use public transport. Leaders intend these sessions to build pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.
- This standard is likely to be met.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a)–(g), 4

- The headteacher intends to monitor closely the quality of education pupils receive. He plans to provide staff with rigorous feedback on their work. He has suitable experience of ensuring appropriate teaching methods for pupils with SEMH needs.
- The headteacher is working closely with Somerset County Council, and other local authorities, to ensure that prospective pupils' needs are clearly understood before any

placement is agreed. When pupils join the school, staff will assess their skills and consider their aspirations and interests. This initial assessment will be used to plan personalised projects that will form a major element of their curriculum. Pupils' projects will take account of the targets in their EHC plans.

- The assessment policy sets out a framework to guide staff as to how pupils' learning will be checked. The policy describes how this information will be used to adapt and improve pupils' learning. Staff will use regular reviews of pupils' work to keep parents well informed about their achievements.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a)–(d)

- Leaders have made suitable plans to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's curriculum plans place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Helping all pupils to self-manage their behaviour and well-being is a central aim of the school.
- The headteacher has made sure that experiences of different cultural traditions and tolerance of others' views are integrated in curriculum plans. For example, the school intends to develop international links by building on Taunton's relationship with a twin town in France.
- The school will invite local people, such as representatives of the police and local politicians, to work with pupils and educate them about public institutions. Leaders have made explicit plans to ensure that pupils understand the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and develop respect for all people.
- The headteacher is clear that pupils should always receive a balanced presentation of views. Staff and visitors will be carefully checked to ensure that they support the school's inclusive values.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The proprietor has ensured that the school's safeguarding policy is compliant with the latest government requirements. It is available for parents on the school's website.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding leader. He, and another leader who acts as his deputy, are suitably qualified for their roles. The headteacher has planned for all staff to have regular safeguarding training from the moment that they start work. This includes training about what to look for to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm.
- The headteacher understands how to establish a strong safeguarding culture. He intends to keep a close track on pupils' well-being so that any vulnerabilities can be identified early and suitable help provided for them at times of greatest need.
- This standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 10

- Leaders have prepared a suitable behaviour policy and an anti-bullying strategy. These policies take into account the particular vulnerabilities of the pupils the school will admit.
- The school has an electronic system for tracking patterns in pupils' behaviour and keeping records of any sanctions that are necessary. As a result, leaders will be able to monitor closely the impact of their actions.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 11, 13

- The school has an appropriate health and safety policy. Leaders propose to carry out regular monitoring processes to ensure that the policy is followed by staff in practice.
- Leaders have prepared a first-aid policy. This provides appropriate guidance for staff to administer first aid. It identifies the training staff will receive when they are appointed.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 14, 15

- The proprietor has developed an electronic system to record the necessary information in an admission register when pupils join the school. This system is already operational. It will also be used to record details of pupils' attendance. It will provide senior leaders with the ability to cross reference attendance, behaviour and welfare information.
- The school is in the process of recruiting staff. Senior leaders have a credible strategy for increasing the number of staff as the school grows. This strategy includes the recruitment of specialist staff, such as occupational therapists and educational psychologists. This will ensure that pupils are appropriately supervised by staff with the necessary skills. The planned staff-to-pupil ratio allows for teaching in small groups. However, this will only be possible if there is a reduction in the maximum number of pupils admitted to 35.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 12, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The proprietor has installed a comprehensive fire-protection system as a part of the recent refurbishment of the school building. Leaders will make sure that appropriate and timely checks are carried out on fire alarms, fire extinguishers and fire escapes. Regular fire drills will take place to make sure that staff and pupils know how to leave the building and where to gather in an emergency.
- The school's risk assessment policy describes a rigorous approach towards ensuring that risks are managed effectively. It describes the steps that staff will be expected to follow to consider, evaluate and mitigate risks.
- This inspection was conducted without visiting the school site due to COVID-19 (coronavirus). Owing to this, I am not able to provide the full level of assurance to judge that these standards would be likely to be met should the school open.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a)–(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a)–(d), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a)–(b), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(c), 21(6)

- The school has established a single central record of pre-employment checks. The full range of checks, set out in the independent school standards (ISS), have been completed for those staff already employed. This includes the required checks on the three members of the proprietorial board. Staff already appointed have appropriate experience and the relevant professional qualifications to support pupils with SEMH needs.
- The proprietor has ensured that senior leaders are well trained in safeguarding pupils. Consequently, at least one member of any interview panel will always have up-to-date safer recruitment training.
- The proprietor does not plan to use supply staff. Even so, leaders are aware of the required safeguarding checks linked to agency staff that need to be in place.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a)–(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a)–(c), 25, 26, 27, 27(a)–(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a)–(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a)–(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a)–(b)

- The proposed school building is a large three-storey town house with grounds. The proprietor has refurbished the building and so all internal spaces, including the entrance area, offices, teaching spaces, and dining facilities, are finished to a high standard. For example, all meeting rooms and teaching rooms are equipped with large display screens.
- There are suitable toilet facilities for the sole use of pupils on the ground and first floors. Each of the four unisex toilet cubicles is lockable and adjacent to handbasins with hot- and cold-water supplies. Pupils have access to drinking water from the ground-floor kitchen area. These facilities could not be checked on the virtual tour of the school.
- A suitable room with a well-equipped first-aid box is set aside on the ground floor for the treatment of sick or injured pupils. This room is fitted with water supply for washing and is near the ground-floor toilet. These facilities could not be checked on the virtual tour of the school.
- Leaders have made plans to provide physical education lessons at a nearby leisure centre. This sports facility has changing and shower facilities for pupils to use. These facilities could not be checked during the inspection.
- The building appears to be well maintained. Fire notices are displayed throughout the building and fire escape routes are clearly marked. Central heating radiators provide heating for each room. These could not be tested in the virtual tour.
- All teaching rooms and meeting rooms have external windows that provide natural light and suitable electric lighting. The acoustic conditions could not be tested on the virtual tour. External lighting is provided at the access points to the building.
- The school grounds contain gardens and a small playground that is suitable as a play area for younger pupils. The school has some play equipment, such as mobile football goals and basketball nets. These facilities could not be tested on the virtual tour.

- This inspection was conducted without visiting the school site due to COVID-19 (coronavirus). Owing to this, I am not able to provide the full level of assurance to judge that these standards would be likely to be met should the school open.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a)–(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a)–(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a)–(g)

- The school's website is readily accessible and contains a description of the aims and ethos of the school. All the details required by the ISS, such as the school's address and the name of the headteacher, are available. Details about the backgrounds of the three members of the proprietorial board, one of whom is the headteacher, are provided in a separate section of the website.
- The proprietor is open and transparent about the purpose of setting up this school. The headteacher is in regular communication with officers of Somerset County Council. He also works closely with a local charity that supports pupils with autistic spectrum condition and their families. As a result, the proprietor has ensured that the proposed provision has been designed to match the local needs.
- The policies and procedures that the school are required to provide to parents are all available, including the behaviour policy and details of the admissions process. The headteacher has prepared a suitable format for reporting to parents about pupils' achievements while at the school.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–(k)

- The school's complaints policy describes the actions that parents should take if they have a complaint about the school's work. It is readily available to parents. It sets suitable time scales for the management of a complaint. There are appropriate guidelines to ensure that any complaints panel has at least one member who is independent of the management of the school.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)–(c)

- The chair of the proprietorial board has wide experience of education for pupils with SEND. Consequently, he has the necessary knowledge to provide effective challenge and support for leaders. The headteacher, who is also a member of the proprietorial board, demonstrates the understanding necessary to ensure that all of the ISS will be met consistently over time.
- The headteacher is well aware of the safeguarding requirements set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2019). The board is committed to promoting the well-being of pupils with SEMH needs. This is the fundamental reason behind its efforts to set this school up.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The headteacher has considered how pupils with SEND can access the premises and the curriculum effectively. The school has prepared an accessibility plan that meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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	147705
DfE registration number	933/6012
Inspection number	10145691

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
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Spaghetti Bridge Ltd
Chair	Stephen Bradshaw
Headteacher	Dan Alipaz
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000–£65,000
Telephone number	07964955090
Website	www.spaghettribridge.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@spbridge.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	6–19	6–19
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	45	35

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- The proposed school building is finished to a high standard with new decoration, carpets and fittings. It has five main teaching rooms and other rooms that can be used for individual work, such as counselling or one-to-one therapy. The main teaching rooms may be able to accommodate an average of nine pupils at one time. However, non-teaching spaces, such as the dining area, corridors and the outdoor area, are not large enough to accommodate the school's proposed maximum number of pupils. A

reduction in the maximum number of pupils to 35 is recommended to reduce the risk of overcrowding.

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	45
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	Not yet determined
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	45
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	45
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	45

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	21
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	7

Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor, Spaghetti Bridge Ltd, has three directors. One of these is the chair of the proprietorial board, another is the headteacher of the school. The third director is employed by the school to lead business development and quality control.

- The proprietor intends to admit pupils by following a phased growth strategy starting with four pupils. During the first year of operation, leaders expect numbers to rise to approximately 20 pupils.
- Several local authorities are already seeking to place pupils at the school. Pupils have been referred to the school predominantly from Somerset County Council. Other pupils have been referred from North Somerset, Devon and Dorset local authority commissioning services.
- The proposed school is to be established in a large town house in central Taunton. Access is available for vehicles at the rear of the house, allowing suitable space for dropping off and picking up pupils at the start and end of the school day.
- The proprietor has made a significant investment to refurbish the main building. Other outbuildings are located on the site. However, currently these have not been redeveloped and are not part of this application.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic of 2020. The inspection was conducted remotely.
- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection. The proposed school is not yet operating.
- The lead inspector met online with the chair of the proprietorial body and the two other directors. Meetings were held with the headteacher, business and quality assurance manager and one other leader currently employed by the school.
- The lead inspector took a virtual tour of the school, provided by the headteacher using a mobile device.
- The inspection took place at three-days' notice. The lead inspector scrutinised documents provided by the proprietor prior to the inspection and further documents provided on the day of the inspection. Information included curriculum plans, school policies and documents related to keeping pupils safe.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of Somerset County Council.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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