

# The Evolution Centre

Holyhead Road, Bicton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 8EQ

**Inspection date**

16 July 2020

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented**

## 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) and 2(2)(i)*

- Leaders have devised an appropriate curriculum policy and associated schemes of work. The policy outlines clearly how leaders have adapted their curriculum to meet the specific needs of the pupils they plan to admit from ages five to 19. All pupils are likely to have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and many will have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
- Leaders have made the decision to develop a bespoke curriculum for every pupil, taking pupils' individual circumstances and experiences into account. The proposed tailored learning programmes are likely to help pupils to acquire the skills and knowledge they need for their next steps in education.
- Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. The proposed curriculum is broad and balanced and likely to provide pupils with opportunities to experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, creative and aesthetic and physical activities. Core subjects, such as English, mathematics and science, will be taught alongside subjects such as modern foreign languages, technology, physical education (PE) and music. The proposed curriculum is likely to support pupils' personal development. It covers a range of areas such as living in Britain today, family, relationships and money. All topics have been carefully adapted and are likely to meet the age ranges and aptitudes of the pupils leaders want to admit.
- Leaders have developed a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education scheme of work, including careers information, advice and guidance. The PSHE education programme is closely linked to, and is likely to support, the promotion of fundamental British values. For example, pupils will learn about themselves and people who are different to them in Year 1. The relationships and sex education programme is also likely to support pupils' understanding of the protected

characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, including different forms of relationships. The proposed curriculum is likely to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

*Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), and 4*

- Leaders have developed a teaching and learning policy that outlines their expectations for all teachers. The policy details how leaders propose to monitor the quality of teaching. There is a clear focus on individual child-centred teaching. For this purpose, leaders have decided to keep class sizes to a maximum of eight pupils in the primary phase and four pupils in the secondary phase so that teachers are likely to provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils and promote strong, positive relationships. The behaviour policy details the proposed expectations of pupils' behaviour and the sanctions staff should apply if needed.
- Leaders have an assessment policy that is likely to help them check and evaluate pupils' progress. It outlines a range of proposed assessments that teachers will undertake to enable them to track pupils' progress. Leaders envisage that most pupils will join the school with large gaps in their learning. Upon joining the school, leaders propose that pupils will complete a series of baseline assessments so that all teachers know what pupils can and cannot do. The assessment policy is likely to inform leaders and teachers about what pupils already know and what they need to catch up on, as well as what progress they are making.
- The school is likely to be equipped with appropriate resources to enable teachers to deliver the proposed curriculum. For example, almost all classrooms on the new school site will have an interactive whiteboard and computers. Other resources such as reading books and writing resources have been ordered.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

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

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b), and 32(1)(c) [Part 6 provision of information]*

- There is a safeguarding policy in place that adheres to current government guidance. It is available on the school's website. Leaders are also likely to provide parents with a copy of the policy on request.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and is suitably trained and knowledgeable in all safeguarding matters. There are clear protocols in place for staff recruitment and staff induction.
- It is proposed that all staff will complete safeguarding training prior to starting work. The headteacher and proprietor provided evidence to show that physical restraint training will also be provided for all staff. The staff code of conduct sets out leaders' expectations for staff's behaviour, including their use of language, whistle blowing and health and safety.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

*Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c) and 10*

- The behaviour policy sets out the proposed sanctions for misbehaviour. It also details examples of serious misdemeanours and how incidents are likely to be reported and recorded. The policy clearly outlines the procedures staff should follow if needed.
- The anti-bullying policy details the school's proposed anti-bullying strategies. It includes the signs and symptoms of bullying that staff should be alert to, and also staff's responsibilities in tackling any bullying incidents.
- Leaders have made the decision to train all staff in 'reflective therapeutic intervention' techniques. This is because leaders understand that pupils are likely to have specific social and emotional needs. The additional training is likely to ensure that all interventions taking place follow set rules and protocols. All incidents, positive and negative, are recorded afterwards so that discussions with pupils and staff can take place to address any identified issues and stop them from reoccurring.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met

*Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- There is suitable provision for first aid on site. There are named first aiders and it is proposed that this information is displayed in the school once the construction is complete. The school's policy on medical conditions states how pupils with additional medical needs will be supported.
- Leaders have suitable health and safety and risk assessment policies. They have carried out several risk assessments to ensure that risks to pupils and staff are likely to be reduced. For example, there is a detailed risk assessment policy in place for the off-site visit to the local gym, used for PE activities.
- Arrangements for recording admissions of pupils are in place. The school's attendance policy and register use the appropriate Department for Education (DfE) codes when recording pupils' absence from school.
- The supervision policy details the proposed arrangements from the start of the school day to the end. It also includes supervision arrangements for trips, breaktimes and lunchtimes. It is proposed that all pupils will be accompanied to school by their care worker/key person, and day students will be supported by teaching assistants.
- Leaders have commissioned an initial fire risk assessment of the new proposed school site. They have acted to address some of the issues. Leaders plan on having this assessment repeated as soon as the building work on the site is complete.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The following standards were reviewed through an on-site visit to the school. The building work at the school site had suffered severe delays owing to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Therefore, the school site was still under construction. I am not able to provide the full level of assurance to judge that the standards in Part 5 are likely to be met.

*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) and 29(1)(b)*

- The proposed school, which is currently still under construction, comprises of four buildings within ample grounds. The premises, once completed, are likely to be decorated to a good standard with modern equipment. There are numerous classrooms and specialist teaching rooms, including a science laboratory, food technology room and an art studio. The classrooms are likely to provide a suitable space for the number of pupils proposed.
- There are separate toilet facilities throughout the school site on both the ground and first floors for girls and boys.
- Although the outdoor area is likely to be suitable for PE activities, leaders have made alternative provision for PE at a local facility, which has been risk assessed. The gym provides pupils with access to shower facilities.
- There is a medical room on the proposed school site in the main building. It is likely to provide a suitable space for the administration of first aid and for pupils to lie down if they are unwell. The medical room has an adjacent toilet, much like an en-suite toilet.
- Although not in situ, leaders provided plans that show where fire extinguishers, fire alarms and signage will be located. If completed as planned, it is likely that health and safety requirements will be met.
- All toilet facilities will have handwash basins with hot and cold water supplies. Leaders were able to provide evidence that they have already taken steps to ensure that any hot water will not cause any scalding risks.
- As the tour of the premises was conducted while the site was still under construction, it was not possible to assess the quality of the lighting, whether the external lighting was functioning, the acoustic conditions and appropriate labelling of drinking water. However, these are marked on the construction plans.

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

### *Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- The school is part of the wider New Reflexions company and directors recognise the need for more specialised SEND provision for primary-aged pupils.
- The proprietary representative, who is also a director of The New Reflexions Limited, expresses a strong commitment to making the school a success. Along with the headteacher, they demonstrate suitable knowledge, skills and expertise and high ambitions for the education they are planning to provide. They are unwavering in their drive to achieve excellence. They are committed to providing the quality of education and pastoral care to younger vulnerable and disadvantaged children, many of whom are in care.
- Proprietary representatives and the headteacher have secure knowledge of the independent school standards and how to meet them consistently and continually over time. They are using their skills and knowledge to propose this expansion to include primary-aged pupils in their school. Together, they have devised clear plans and policies for this expansion and have employed specialist staff to support its proposed opening.

- Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is suitably planned to meet the aptitudes and needs of the pupils they plan to admit. They have adapted policies to include younger pupils.
- Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to actively promote pupils' well-being and welfare as well as their safety.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. There is a proposed accessibility policy and plan in place. The policy sets out the school's commitment to ensure that the school site and curriculum will be accessible to all pupils.

## **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 that are relevant to the material change.

## School details

Unique reference number	135511
DfE registration number	893/6107
Inspection number	10154567

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Reflexions Care Group Limited
Chair	Amanda Clarke
Headteacher	Mrs Jacqui Brooks
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,600 to £46,800 per annum
Telephone number	01743 850517
Website	<a href="http://www.evolution-centre.co.uk">www.evolution-centre.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:jacqui.brooks@evolution-centre.co.uk">jacqui.brooks@evolution-centre.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	26–28 March 2019

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	12	68	68

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	12	68
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	12	68
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	7	68
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	7	68

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	9	18
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	3	5

## Information about this school

- The Evolution Centre is a small independent day school located near to Shrewsbury in Shropshire. It is housed in a former village school. The school is part of the New Reflexions Group and offers places to pupils aged 11 to 18 years. The school admits pupils who have complex social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have missed long periods of formal education and have a history of poor school attendance.
- The school is registered for up to 28 pupils. Pupils are placed at the school from a variety of local authorities, including Shropshire, Manchester and St Helens. Most

pupils are children looked after in care homes belonging to the New Reflexions Group Limited. Most pupils have an EHC plan, and all pupils have gaps in their learning.

- Pupils access external education opportunities within the local and wider community to enhance their learning experiences. These include outdoor education, visits, trips and excursions.
- The school rarely offers places to post-16 students. The school arranges for pupils to remain on roll at the school where possible if they are not yet ready to move on to further education. The school offers appropriate courses and qualifications for such learners. At the point of this inspection, the number of post-16 students was extremely low.
- The school was last inspected in March 2019 when it was judged to be outstanding in all areas.
- The school does not use any alternative provision. Pupils take part in physical education at a local leisure centre.

## Information about this inspection

- This material change inspection was commissioned by the DfE during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, to determine whether or not the proposed school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if it is given permission to open.
- This inspection was conducted remotely with an on-site element to assess the suitability of the premises. This was due to restrictions placed on non-essential travel during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- I conducted a tour of the premises with the proprietor and headteacher.
- I reviewed a wide range of documents and policies, submitted electronically by leaders.
- During the on-site visit, I met with the proprietor and headteacher and discussed safeguarding and welfare arrangements as well as some of the school's documentation and policies.

## Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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