

Cornerstone Academy

Marlfields Primary Academy, Waggs Road, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4BT

Inspection date

16 July 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

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)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The proprietor has a suitable policy in place for the curriculum. Schemes of work support the policy appropriately, ensuring that pupils are likely to experience a broad range of subjects. This includes linguistic, mathematical and scientific education. The proprietor also intends for staff to teach religious education. The policies and schemes of work do not undermine fundamental British values.

Paragraphs 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii)

- The scheme of work that relates to personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education reflects the school's ethos and aims. It contains many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of equality and diversity. The school's intended equality policy supports this by placing emphasis on promoting understanding of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

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

- As the school is currently operating under a pilot arrangement with the Department for Education (DfE), there are existing staff who have experience of providing appropriate teaching activities. Evidence from the school's proposed planning documents and schemes of work indicates that teaching is likely to enable pupils to make progress according to their age and ability. Learning resources, such as online activities in English and mathematics, are already in place. There are also computers and smart boards that will support pupils' learning.

Paragraph 4

- The school's intended assessment policy reflects current practice. It shows that there is likely to be a suitable framework for evaluating pupils' performance. The policy describes the school's intended assessment processes. It includes notes that assessment will be regular and consist of formative and summative approaches.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

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 will promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through planned learning in PSHE education. Policies describing the school's intended approach to teaching PSHE education and to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are likely to support this. The school's equality policy and its statement on British values emphasise the importance of respecting people with protected characteristics. The PSHE education scheme of work contains relevant themes, such as respect and self-worth.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The school's proposed safeguarding policy is detailed and thorough. It pays regard to current guidance from the government. In creating this policy, leaders have considered a wide range of potential concerns, including online safety and the recruitment of staff.

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

- Leaders have a suitable behaviour policy in place which they intend to use. There are also separate policies on bullying and exclusion. There is already an electronic system in place to record incidents of serious misbehaviour and leaders' response to them. Staff guidelines include how staff are informed and trained in applying the behaviour and anti-bullying policies.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- There is a range of suitable policies and procedures concerning areas such as fire safety, first aid and risk assessment. These are likely to support leaders in assuring pupils' welfare, health and safety in the school, when it opens.

Paragraph 14

- Staff are likely to supervise pupils effectively. The current ratio of staff to pupils and the clear policy on managing pupils' behaviour support this. The proprietor intends to continue the current arrangements in the new school.

Paragraph 15

- There is an electronic system already in place to record pupils' admission details and their attendance. It contains all the required information. Leaders intend to continue using this system in the proposed school.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18(1), 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), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 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), 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), 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)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6)

- The proprietor has produced a document that explains the school's intended approach to checking and recording the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors. It indicates that the school will follow all appropriate procedures. There is also provision for checking the medical fitness of staff before they are appointed.
- The existing members of staff and the proprietorial body have had relevant checks made. They have all been deemed safe to work with children. The record of checks is in an electronic format and meets all requirements. The existing staff and proprietors intend to continue in their roles in the proposed school.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 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 proposed premises are on two sites; one in Congleton and one in Haslington. Each site is co-located with a 'host' primary school and makes use of some of its host's facilities. The premises on both sites are very well maintained. The proprietor is likely to be able to ensure pupils' health and safety while the premises are in use, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Toilet facilities are separate for boys and girls on each site and are in very good condition. The toilets on the site in Haslington are in the host school. There are appropriate routines and risk assessments in place for supervising pupils' use of these facilities. These will also apply to the proposed school. The water supply is adequate and there is hot and cold water for washing. The temperature of the hot water does not present a risk of scalding. Separate drinking water supplies are available for pupils throughout the day.
- The classroom areas on each site and other areas intended for use by pupils are in good condition and well furnished. There are appropriate procedures and risk assessments in place to ensure pupils' safety. The lighting and the acoustic conditions are suitable for the needs of pupils and staff. There are external lights on both sites to enable people to enter and leave the building safely.
- The room on each site for providing pupils with medical attention is suitably equipped and positioned near a toilet. In both cases, the medical room is in the host school's building. The proprietor has drawn up risk assessments to ensure the safety and

dignity of pupils if these facilities are needed. Leaders will continue to comply with these processes when the school opens.

- There is plentiful outdoor space for pupils to play or take part in physical education. This includes hard playground surfaces, grassed areas and wooded areas. Current arrangements will continue when the proposed school opens, to ensure that pupils have exclusive use of the outdoor areas at planned times of the day.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 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)

- The current school has its own website. It proposes to continue to use this, with relevant amendments, when the proposed school opens. All the required information will be available, since it is already on the existing website.
- All relevant contact information is on the existing website and will be available on the new school's website.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 32(3)(f), 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 proposed school's complaints policy follows the requirements set out in the independent school standards. For example, it is in writing and has set timescales for responses to complaints. The proprietor has made it available on the current school's website. It will continue to be available there when the new school opens.
- Leaders intend to publish on the school's website the number of complaints in the previous school year.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Leaders show good knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards and have ensured that they are all likely to be met when the school opens. The proprietor, the Youth Engagement Schools Trust, has current experience of leading and managing other schools. Leaders have ensured that all the other independent school standards are likely to be met.
- The proprietor has put appropriate strategies and policies in place that are likely to promote pupils' well-being.

- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has devised an appropriate accessibility plan. It contains details of actions that explain how leaders will ensure access for disabled pupils to the curriculum, the premises and information. For example, leaders have undertaken to adapt the content of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils as required.
- Leaders have ensured that this requirement is likely to be met when the school opens.

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	147899
DfE registration number	895/6017
Inspection number	10154552

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	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Youth Engagement Schools Trust
Chair	Tony Smith
Headteacher	Damien Sweeney
Annual fees (day pupils)	£200 to £250 per week
Telephone number	01260 633109
Website	cornerstoneap.org
Email address	admin@cornerstoneap.org
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	20
Number of pupils of compulsory school age who have an education, health and care plan, or who are looked after by a local authority	0
Total hours operating as a school per week	23
Total hours of teaching provided per week	23

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 11	5 to 11	5 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	4	30	30

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	20	30
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10	15
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	10
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	10

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	10	10
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	0

Information about this proposed school

- Cornerstone Academy is an independent school based on two sites in Congleton and Haslington in Cheshire East local authority. The proprietor, the Youth Engagement Schools Trust, operates other academies in Cheshire.
- In liaison with the DfE, the Youth Engagement Schools Trust is managing the current school, Cornerstone Alternative Provision, as part of a pilot scheme to provide education for pupils who are at risk of exclusion from primary schools across Cheshire East. The school has now applied to continue to provide for such pupils as an independent school.
- It is not proposed that the school will cater for pupils who have complex needs.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic of 2020. Some of the inspection was conducted remotely. This was to minimise the risk of infection during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The inspection was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection. It was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the DfE to consider the school's application to open an independent school registered for 30 pupils aged four to 11. After communication between the proprietor and the DfE during the inspection, it was agreed that the age range should be amended to five to 11. This is because the proprietor no longer wishes to provide for children in the early years.
- I met with the headteacher of the proposed school and the trust's director of business. I also held a discussion by means of a video link with the chair of the proprietorial body. I analysed a wide range of documents remotely, including curriculum plans and documents relating to safeguarding and matters of health and safety. I undertook a tour of the premises on both sites. This was limited to inspecting standards under Part 4 (Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors) and Part 5 (Premises of and accommodation at schools), to reduce the amount of time spent on site.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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