

Infiniti School

The Street, Doddington, Kent ME9 0BG

Inspection date

28 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 1 and 2

- The curriculum will be delivered in line with the curriculum policy and schemes submitted with the registration application. It will be bespoke and tailored to individual pupils' needs, with a strong emphasis on vocational education for older pupils.
- Although the headteacher's aspiration is to provide a distinct and personalised curriculum to each pupil, the wider offer has adequate breadth to meet the requirements of Part 1. This is particularly the case in consolidating and further developing pupils' mathematics and English skills, which will be given a high priority.
- Written subject schemes and plans take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils at the school, most of whom are likely to have education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- The planned curriculum provides appropriate provision for personal, social, health and economic education. Much of this will be covered by the school's personal, social and health education scheme of work. This includes encouraging tolerance and respect for other people and aims to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- All pupils of secondary-school age will receive appropriate and bespoke careers education and guidance. Older pupils will benefit from 'employability' sessions. Again, this aspect of the school's curriculum will be personalised in nature, according to individual pupils' needs, interests and aspirations.

Paragraphs 3 and 4

- The school's assessment procedures set out how teachers will assess pupils' learning. Appropriate academic baseline checks will be carried out as pupils start at the school. The headteacher understands that this aspect of provision needs to be strong if pupils are to become successful learners while at the school.
- Systems to gather information about pupils' social and emotional development are clearly rooted in the school's induction process. The headteacher is clear that pupils

will need to enjoy their time at school in order to gain confidence in their own ability and to develop successful relationships with staff and with their peers.

- It is intended that pupils will acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their abilities and their individual needs. Assessment information will be used to provide parents, carers and/or local authorities with regular updates on the progress of pupils.
- It is likely that some of the pupils attending the school will have been out of education for extended periods of time prior to joining. Expectations of behaviour will be high. All staff will undertake appropriate training to ensure that there is a common approach to managing daily routines, as well as the behaviour and attitudes to school of all pupils who attend.
- The headteacher, who is also the sole director of the proprietorial body, has a clear vision of the values that will underpin the school's culture. He is keen to ensure that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and that fundamental British values are promoted. Equalities will also be actively developed through the wider curriculum, the school's extra-curricular offer, and through opportunities to gain accreditation with a national charity that works in this area.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

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

Paragraph 5

- Leaders and staff will promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development effectively through the taught curriculum and through establishing a culture of tolerance and respect between staff and pupils alike.
- Curriculum plans ensure that pupils will learn about British values, as well as actively encouraging the development of pupils' sense of self-worth.
- Both the headteacher and the chair of governors can clearly articulate a sense of the ethos of the school. Both have extensive experience in working to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They understand that the development of pupils' social and emotional well-being needs to be an important focus for staff if pupils are to thrive during their time at the school.
- Opportunities for pupils to take ownership of their own learning will be given a high priority, as will activities that promote understanding of the cultures, faiths and beliefs of others. Much of this will be covered in daily tutor time sessions, in group and phase assemblies, or in special events held throughout the school year.
- The headteacher has high expectations of the quality of provision to develop pupils' SMSC education. Systems are already in place to monitor this work. The staff code of conduct has been written to embrace and support this, including aspects such as ensuring that pupils are not exposed to partisan political or religious opinions.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 6 and 7

- The school's policies, written guidance and procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are appropriate. The headteacher is currently the designated safeguarding lead and has already completed appropriate training to carry out this role.
- Key staff will undertake safeguarding training appropriate to their levels of responsibility prior to the school opening. However, due to the impact of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, staff have not yet been appointed.
- Recruitment and induction training for new staff will be comprehensive. This will include all aspects of promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including training to ensure that staff are aware of the school's wider policies and procedures to keep children safe.
- The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. The published policy meets current requirements.

Paragraphs 9 and 10

- The behaviour policy is suitable for the ages and the needs of the proposed school's pupils. The school also has an anti-bullying policy, which has close links to the behaviour policy. The behaviour policy sets out clear aims and lists the consequences of poor behaviour. Leaders will keep records of sanctions imposed for any serious misbehaviour.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16

- The school has a clear policy to comply with relevant health and safety legislation. Key checks on facilities and equipment, and procedures for fire safety are already in place. A preliminary health and safety audit was completed and actioned earlier this year. A fire risk assessment has also been completed and actioned by a specialist independent company. The headteacher is fully aware of his responsibilities to ensure that the school is a safe environment for pupils, staff and visitors alike.
- The first-aid policy is suitable and makes provision for effective first aid. Key staff will be trained at an appropriate level once appointed and prior to the proposed school opening.
- The admissions and attendance registers will contain all of the information required once the school is open. Because the school is not yet open, pupils have not yet been accepted onto the school roll. Plans for the effective supervision of pupils are in place.
- The school's risk assessment policy states clearly how risks are to be managed. Some key risk assessments are already in place, such as for fire safety. Others will follow prior to the proposed school opening. These include those for the premises, use of resources and equipment, and off-site visits. Risk assessments will include appropriate actions to reduce risk.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21

- The headteacher is knowledgeable about the checks that need to be made on adults working with children in regulated activities at the school. These include all of the required verifications, such as medical fitness and qualification checks. He fully understands that staff should not begin work at the school without the necessary checks being in place.
- The single central record of staff checks is already established, is sound, and administered competently. The headteacher and chair of governors are aware of their duties to carry out appropriate checks on those in positions of governance, trustees or directors, supply teachers, teaching and support staff and other adults who will come into contact with pupils at the school.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 31

- The proposed school occupies the former site of a local authority primary school, which closed some years ago. Some of the accommodation has been redecorated in recent months since the proprietor obtained the premises. The accommodation presents as spacious and fit for purpose for its intended use.
- The proprietor has begun a system of maintenance checks and has already completed refurbishments to key requirements such as the fire alarm system and aspects of the school grounds. Remedial work has been carried out on trees after a health and safety audit identified potential problems. Electrical systems have been checked. A new gas safety certificate has been obtained.
- Classrooms and other learning spaces are of a suitable size and appropriately furnished to meet the needs of the pupils likely to attend the school. The school hall will also provide flexible meeting and teaching spaces.
- The outdoor area is extensive and will provide excellent space for pupils to play and take breaks from learning. Physical education will be provided off site at a range of leisure or sports amenities and registered outdoor learning facilities.
- The lighting, heating and acoustics are all suitable for the pupils likely to be at the school. Outside, there is sufficient lighting around the buildings and in the grounds to ensure safe passage in the dark.
- There are adequate toilets and washing facilities for both pupils and staff. All facilities have sufficient water supplies, and the temperature of hot water is regulated appropriately.
- Drinking water is available and labelled as such.
- There is a dedicated medical room for the examination and treatment of pupils, as well as the short-term care of those who are sick or injured.

- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32

- The headteacher and the chair of governors are aware of the requirement to provide specified information detailed within Part 6. This includes when pupils are funded or partly funded by a local authority.
- The headteacher also knows about the need to publish certain reports and other information as necessary on the school's website, particularly information required by parents or carers.
- Regular written reports will be provided to parents or carers, as well as local authorities placing pupils at the school.
- The website includes all of the required information, such as policies, contact details and information about the school's education provision. This includes the school's safeguarding policy.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The complaints policy and procedures are published on the school's website. They set out clear timescales for the management of a complaint. There is provision for formal complaints to be heard by a panel of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the complaint. The policy rightly stipulates that one of the members of the panel must be independent of the management and running of the school. It also states that complainants have the right to be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish. The policy makes clear that any findings of a panel must be available to a complainant, and where relevant, the person complained about.
- The headteacher is aware of the requirement to keep any copies of complaints confidentially and available for inspection on the school premises.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The headteacher, who is also the sole director of the limited company registered as the proprietor, demonstrates a clear understanding of the requirements within the independent school standards. Together with the chair of governors, he has placed the proposed school in a sound position if the application to register it is successful.
- Despite the restrictions caused by the present COVID-19 situation, appropriate policies and systems are already in place at the school. Much work has gone into

preparing the school. Importantly, the headteacher has a clear plan not to rush the opening of the school should the application be successful.

- A proposed staffing structure, including teaching, support and suitably qualified therapeutic staff, has been carefully thought through. Timescales for recruiting staff are sensible. Uncertainty around local authorities being able to place pupils has also been taken into account and will dictate the pace of growth as the school opens and slowly expands towards its full capacity.
- The headteacher and chair of governors have ensured that the school is likely to meet all of the independent school standards when it opens. They are committed to ensuring that these requirements will continue to be met. This includes their responsibility to actively promote the welfare of pupils.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

Leaders have compiled a suitable accessibility plan to improve access to the premises. Leaders intend to update the plan at appropriate intervals. The school is likely to meet paragraph 3 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	147635
DfE registration number	886/6159
Inspection number	10132919

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 special school
Proprietor	NR Education Ltd
Chair	Nicholas Rogers
Headteacher	Nicholas Rogers
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,000
Telephone number	01795 342280
Website	www.infinitischool.co.uk
Email address	nick@nrededucation.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	11 to 19	11 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	Up to 32	Up to 32

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	Up to 32
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	Up to 32
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 32
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 32

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	16
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	6

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school occupies the site of a former local authority primary school in the village of Doddington, Kent.
- The proprietor is a private limited company with one named director. The director will also be the headteacher of the proposed school.
- The proposed school will have a governing body, which will be responsible for all aspects of governance and oversight of the school, including the performance management of the headteacher.
- The proposed school will offer specialised provision for up to 32 pupils aged 11 to 19 years. It is expected that pupils will have a wide range of complex needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils will be placed by local authorities. Most will have EHC plans.
- It is not proposed that the school will use alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.
- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school. The purpose of the inspection was to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Schools must comply with the independent school standards to be registered.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the independent school standards, safeguarding procedures and Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector had a tour of the school's premises and grounds. He reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, safeguarding information, policies, and curriculum and assessment information.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the sole director of the proprietorial company. The inspector also met with the designated chair of the governing body.
- At the time of the inspection, no other teaching or support staff had been appointed and the proposed governing body had not been formed. This is because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The proprietor does not intend to open the school until an appropriate range of staff and a governing body are in place.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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