

Abbot's Way School

St Marys Road, Meare, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9SR

Inspection date

22 July 2020

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

Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4

- Leaders have ensured that plans for the quality of education are likely to meet the independent school standards in Part 1. The proposed curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils will have access to the same range of subjects as included in the national curriculum. Leaders intend to appoint specialist teachers for English, mathematics and science.
- The curriculum policy, proposed organisation of the school, teaching arrangements and curriculum plans are well placed to ensure provision is likely to meet the needs of pupils who have dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and mild autism spectrum disorders. Class sizes are proposed to be small. The school site is well designed with access to a well-resourced therapy room, sensory space, a food technology room and plentiful outdoor learning spaces.
- Key Stage 3 planning details what will be taught across individual year groups. However, leaders have rightly acknowledged that some plans in Key Stage 2 need improvement. This is because some subject planning in Key Stage 2 is set out across the whole key stage. Consequently, there is a risk that pupils could revisit topics annually without any clear sense of progression.
- Leaders plan to appoint their own speech and language therapist and occupational therapist. A template for individual education plans links well to the desired curriculum, while maintaining an emphasis on overcoming pupils' barriers to learning in a considered way.
- Leaders' plans for pupil assessment are adequate. Long-, medium- and short-term assessment is detailed within the curriculum policy. Leaders have considered how they will use assessment to adapt learning to meet pupils' individual needs. However, as with curriculum plans, more work is needed to ensure that assessments are used effectively to allow pupils to build on what they have already learned in a systematic way.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5

- The school is likely to meet all the requirements in relation to Part 2. Documentary evidence and discussions with the co-headteachers indicate that the planned curriculum will provide for pupils' personal and social development so that they can contribute to modern British society effectively. The curriculum has been planned to include opportunities to learn in bespoke ways. Due to the needs of the pupils that the school is planning to serve, the planned curriculum is particularly focused on giving pupils a range of useful experiences for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- All policies reflect the promotion of fundamental British values. This includes ensuring that pupils are not exposed to partisan political views in teaching or any other activities. Leaders have also ensured that the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.
- Leaders are committed to providing for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities to learn about artists and musicians when studying art and design and music are evident in planning. Other elements of curriculum planning, such as opportunities to learn outdoors to develop a sense of awe in the natural world, should provide for pupils' spiritual and social needs effectively.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a)–7(b)

- Leaders have not demonstrated sufficient understanding of 'Keeping children safe in Education', 2019. They have not completed all of the necessary checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.
- Leaders have made arrangements to manage concerns relating to pupils' welfare. They have suitable training in place that will enable staff to take the right actions if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders have produced a safeguarding policy that meets current requirements.
- The standards in this paragraph are not likely to be met.

Paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16

- The proposed school's behaviour policy is suitable. There are clear expectations included for rewards and sanctions. The policy details how leaders intend to keep records of sanctions using an online record-keeping tool.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is sound. It covers all types of bullying, including cyber, homophobic and racially motivated bullying. It gives appropriate guidance to staff on how to respond to concerns and disclosures, as well as the expectations around working with children and their families.
- There is an overarching health and safety policy which covers how the school will manage first aid and risk assessments. The arrangements for first aid, health and safety and risk assessments are suitable for the proposed school.

- Leaders have appropriate plans in place to ensure the effective supervision of pupils.
- The proprietor has suitable arrangements in place to maintain admissions and attendance registers in accordance with the regulations. These standards are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are not likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21

- Leaders have not ensured that all required checks have been completed to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. There have been no checks to ensure that leaders and directors are not prohibited from undertaking management work in a school.
- Enhanced criminal record checks have not been completed for all staff, although they are under way.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff.
- The school's single central register is missing information related to the incomplete checks on leaders, directors and staff.
- The standards in this part are not likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The proprietor has been given the premises that the proposed school will use. As a former boarding house, there are features that are fit for purpose. For example, there are already adequate fire safety features, including smoke alarms, emergency alarm panels, fire doors and emergency lighting. Nevertheless, leaders have not yet secured planning permission to use the building as a school. Planned work to improve the building has not started. Although some of the features of the building indicate that the premises standards are likely to be met, there is no guarantee that the site and buildings seen will be the setting for the proposed school. Therefore, none of the standards in part 5 are likely to be met.
- The proposed classrooms are of reasonable size, well lit and have appropriate acoustics. Leaders have already organised these spaces into specialist areas, including for English, mathematics, science, food technology, music, art and design.
- As a large Georgian property, there are plentiful grounds surrounding the building. Leaders have rightly identified that the spaces to the back of the property can be used for play and for physical education. Currently, the garden spaces are nearly all lawned, meaning there is limited hard floor space for play when there is inclement weather.
- At the time of the inspection, the proposed school's grounds remain open and insecure. Leaders demonstrated to the inspector they have commissioned works to rectify this by installing fencing to key areas. Works to convert the front lawns into parking and a bus turning circle are also in process.

- As a former boarding house, the premises already benefit from individual lockable toilets which leaders have ensured are either dedicated for male or female pupils or staff. The staff toilets are sensibly on the same level of the premises as the proposed staffroom. Some of the toilet areas also benefit from showers and these can reasonably be used as changing rooms. There is no disabled toilet on the proposed school site.
- Leaders have identified a space which will be used as a medical room near the proposed entrance of the school. The space includes a sink and a walled-off toilet. A bed could reasonably fit in the space, but it would be snug.
- Suitable drinking facilities exist in the kitchen space that is proposed to be used for food technology lessons. Most classrooms also have sinks in them which have access to drinking water. Leaders are installing signs to indicate the location of drinking water.
- The standards in this part are not likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32

- The school is likely to meet all of the standards in this part. Leaders aspire to run the school openly and transparently. All relevant policies are available to parents on request and many are on the live website. Information that is available is generally easy to access and find on the website.
- Leaders have plans to provide a written report on pupils' progress and attainment to parents on an annual basis.
- Leaders also have plans in place to show how the provision will meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and to show how any funding will be spent.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- There is an appropriate complaints policy in place, which is in writing. Leaders have made the policy available to parents on the website. The policy sets out clear timescales for the management of a complaint.
- The policy allows the complainant to initially make an informal complaint. Should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the school's response, they can escalate their complaint to a formal, written stage. If the complaint is not resolved at this stage, a complaints panel will be assembled. The panel will consist of three people who were not directly involved in the earlier consideration of the complaint, including one person independent of the management and running of the proposed school. The policy makes clear a friend or relative can accompany the complainant at a panel hearing. The panel will make findings and recommendations which they will provide to the complainant and make available for inspection on the school premises.

- Leaders have made provision to keep a written record of all complaints, including whether they were resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing. The record will also include the action taken by the proposed school because of those complaints. Leaders will keep records confidential but will ensure that these are made available for the purposes of an inspection.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Leaders and managers of the proposed school have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are likely to be met. There is more to do to ensure that the school has everything in place to open successfully and meet the independent school standards.
- Leaders have not completed all of the required checks to ensure that staff and the proprietors are suitable to work with children. They cannot yet demonstrate that they can promote the welfare of pupils well enough.
- The co-directors, who are also co-headteachers, show determination to make the proposed school work and meet the needs of the pupils they intend to admit. The recently formed governing body is appropriately skilled. For example, one governor is a former national leader of governance.
- Leaders demonstrated a secure knowledge of current national expectations around curriculum planning and age-related expectations. Their plans for the overall provision at the school are appropriate. However, the proposed fees for pupils remain much lower than typical, and raise questions about the long-term viability of leaders' plans. Leaders acknowledged this during the inspection and plan to look for external support in developing a more robust business model.
- The standards in this part are not likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have created a suitable accessibility plan.

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	148006
DfE registration number	933/6015
Inspection number	10154449

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	Special
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Abbot's Way Ltd
Chair	Not yet appointed
Co-Headteachers	Miss Hellen Lush and Mr Gareth Wright
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,327–£6,527
Telephone number	07400 242054
Website	www.abbotswayschool.co.uk
Email address	office@abbotsway.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	6–14	6–14
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	40	40

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	40
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	40

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this proposed school

- Abbot's Way School proposes to provide education for up to 40 pupils aged 6–14. The school site sits approximately four miles outside of the town of Glastonbury in Somerset. The proposed premises were formerly a boarding house and part of the estates of the Shapwick School that liquidated in March 2020. It is anticipated that pupils will either be allocated by local authorities or privately funded.
- The proprietor is Abbot's Way School Ltd. There are currently two directors of the company, both of whom intend to act as co-headteachers of the school. The proprietor does not run any other school.
- Fees per year will vary depending on the age and needs of the pupil. The basic fees for pupils in Years 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are proposed to be £6,327. For pupils in Year 9, the proposed fee will be £6,527. Access to occupational or speech and language therapies are intended to be charged as an extra. For example, leaders would charge £1,504 for one therapy session per week or £2,909 for two.
- The proposed school is not currently operating.
- The proposed school intends to provide education for pupils with an education, health and care plan, specifically for those with speech, language and communication needs. The proposed school does not have any religious character.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the Secretary of State for Education. It was carried out 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. Some of the inspection was conducted remotely. This was due to restrictions placed on non-essential travel during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with both directors, who are also the co-headteachers, the designated safeguarding leads and responsible for curriculum design. The inspector undertook a tour of the proposed school's premises and grounds.
- The inspector considered documentation related to the proposed school curriculum, including the curriculum policy, schemes of work, templates for individual pupil's planning and proposed assessment information, to judge whether Part 1 and Part 2 of the independent school standards are likely to be met.
- The inspector considered documentation such as policies, safeguarding records, and plans in place to maintain pupils' safety while on site. These included behaviour and health and safety policies and supporting evidence to confirm effective implementation. He also checked safer recruitment practice and how checks are being recorded on the school's single central register. This, among other activity, helped to determine if standards within Part 3 and Part 4 of the independent school standards are likely to be met.
- The inspector evaluated the complaints policy to determine whether standards in Part 7 of the independent school standards are likely to be met.
- The inspector toured the site and premises, both internally and externally, to determine if Part 5 of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, 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; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if-
 - 20(6)(a) MB-
 - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether-
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
- 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation each member ("MB") of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May

2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

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; and
- 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.
- 26 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the acoustic conditions and sound insulation of each room or other space are suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 27(a) the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein; and
 - 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)(a) suitable drinking water facilities are provided;
- 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; and
- 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- 28(2) The facilities provided under sub-paragraph (1)(a) will be suitable only if-
 - 28(2)(a) they are readily accessible at all times when the premises are in use; and
 - 28(2)(b) they are in a separate area from the toilet facilities.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable-
 - 29(1)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and
 - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

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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