

The Levels School

7 Bath Road, Ashcott, Somerset TA7 9QS

Inspection date

12 November 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, 3 and 4

- Leaders have drawn up a comprehensive curriculum plan, derived from the national curriculum. The school's curriculum enables pupils to study the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, geography, ethics and philosophy, visual communications, performing arts, food science, information communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), personal, social and health education (PSHE), and social skills. Curriculum plans and schemes of work are cohesive. They provide a framework for pupils to make sufficient progress.
- Most teachers have qualified teacher status. Teachers are suitably skilled to provide well-planned lessons, and use effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time. There are appropriate resources in place to support the school's curriculum. These are of good quality, quantity and range.
- PSHE plans are in place for all age ranges. These plans reflect the school's aims and ethos, and encourage respect for other people, paying regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- There is a clear assessment framework in place to regularly assess pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders intend to use this information to inform what pupils will learn next. Leaders will also check on pupils' progress against the school's core values of resilience and adaptability, proactivity and problem solving, communication, leadership, and creativity.
- Leaders will provide pupils with impartial careers advice. Throughout key stages 3, 4 and 5, pupils will have a pen-portrait that will be updated year on year based on their strengths. It will also capture links that pupils have made with different employers and education and training providers. These, alongside a named careers adviser, will enable pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of future options.
- Curriculum plans take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. All pupils will have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with some of these pupils also having an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There will be a

range of regular therapies on offer, including speech and language therapy and occupational therapy.

- Students in key stage 5 will receive a programme of activities appropriate to their needs.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5

- Leaders' plans make clear how they intend to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. These plans actively promote the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- The school's PSHE curriculum and the ethics and philosophy curriculum enable pupils to learn right from wrong. Planned learning also provides opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to respect the civil and criminal law of England.
- The school's ethics and philosophy curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about different faiths and beliefs. In addition, the school's PSHE curriculum helps to develop pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. The designated safeguarding leaders have completed the necessary training and know what is required of them. Leaders intend to provide all staff with a thorough induction and regular ongoing training to equip staff to safeguard pupils.
- Safeguarding policies are detailed and make clear the school's safeguarding arrangements. These consider up-to-date guidance from the Secretary of State. The policy also includes a comprehensive list of key contacts, including the local authority safeguarding contact numbers.
- There is a flowchart in place that explains the actions that staff and leaders should take if they have a concern about pupils' welfare. Staff will log any concerns electronically, and these will be addressed and monitored by leaders responsible for safeguarding pupils.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b) and 9(c)

- The behaviour policy sets out the school's behaviour expectations and sanctions for misbehaviour. The school intend to use a tier system to ensure that staff issue the most appropriate sanction, in line with the severity and/or frequency of pupils' misbehaviour.
- Leaders intend for staff to undergo an induction, which will include training on the school's behavioural approach. Staff will receive regular training updates to ensure that the policy is implemented effectively.
- Staff will record incidents of poor behaviour on the school's electronic tracking system. They will also keep a record of serious misbehaviour.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 10

- The school has an appropriate anti-bullying policy. The policy includes the following details to support staff and parents and carers: a statement of intent, definition of bullying, the school's response to bullying, signs of bullying, preventative measures, procedures for dealing with reported bullying, guidelines for teachers, and places where bullying might occur.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 11

- Leaders have an appropriate health and safety policy in place.
- Leaders have ensured that checks of the site and premises are in place. These include checks on water and electrical devices (both fixed-wire and portable appliances) to ensure they are safe to use. School leaders, governors and the proprietors will closely monitor the school's health and safety arrangements to ensure these are effective.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 12

- Leaders contracted an external company to carry out a fire risk assessment. Leaders acted on the findings, making improvements where necessary, such as replacing the fire panel.
- There are clear evacuation procedures in place. Emergency lighting and maps remind pupils, staff and visitors of the route to take, should evacuation be needed. Outside, the fire assembly point is clearly signposted and at a suitable distance from the main building.
- Leaders carry out regular checks on equipment to ensure that it is working as it should. They also carry out testing of call points for the same purpose. Leaders keep a record of these checks.
- There is appropriate equipment in place to tackle a fire, including fire extinguishers and fire blankets. Leaders have had training in how to use this equipment. The induction process for new staff includes basic fire-awareness training.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 13

- There is an appropriate first-aid policy in place, which makes clear how the school intends to fulfil its first-aid responsibilities.
- There are adequate first-aid arrangements in place, including staff trained in first aid, equipment and a medical room for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. There are several first-aid posters around the premises, making clear which staff are trained to administer first aid.
- There is an online first-aid incident log in place, which will allow leaders to closely monitor the nature and frequency of incidents. If there is an increase in minor incidents, near misses and accidents, it will automatically inform leaders that further measures, such as risk assessments or an increase in supervision, may be needed to prevent future recurrence.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 14

- There is a supervision policy in place that details the arrangements for the supervision of pupils.
- Leaders have plans in place to ensure that pupils are well supervised throughout and beyond the school day. These plans detail specific arrangements for the beginning and end of the school day, breaktimes and lunchtimes, after-school clubs, and medical supervision.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 15

- Leaders have an electronic admissions register, which meets the requirements set out in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016.
- Leaders intend to operate a suitable electronic system for logging pupils' attendance twice daily at school.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- The risk assessment policy accurately details how leaders will manage and minimise risks.
- There is a suite of risk assessments in place for the school site. These are highly detailed and consider the school's unique setting. Risk assessments are completed online and monitored by leaders and an external company for effectiveness.
- If a risk is identified and requires immediate action, the live risk assessment informs the director of operations. He can then ensure that action is taken before an activity is carried out.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18 and 19

- Leaders have ensured that staff recruitment checks are complete, including barred from regulated activity checks, prohibition order on teaching staff, section 128 checks on those in leadership positions, the person's right to work in the United Kingdom, checks on the person's identity, medical fitness and qualifications, and checks on those who have lived and worked abroad.
- Leaders have also ensured that enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on staff have been completed before or as soon after appointment as possible.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff but they know the checks they need to make if they use them.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 20

- The Secretary of State has completed checks on the named person of the body of proprietors.
- The named person has ensured that all of the required checks on members of the body of proprietors are in place.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 21

- The single central register is complete for all staff and members of the body of proprietors, showing the completed checks contained within paragraphs 18 and 20.
- Leaders store and maintain the single central register electronically.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23

- There are suitable toilet and washing facilities on site for the sole use of pupils. While toilet facilities are not allocated to boys or girls, the intended use is for one pupil at a time. Cubicles can be secured from the inside.
- There is suitable changing accommodation and showers for pupils aged 11 years or over who receive physical education.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 24

- The school's medical room provides suitable accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. It includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility. The medical room will not be used for other purposes and is readily available.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 25

- The school premises and facilities are well maintained and decorated to a high standard. Leaders will carry out regular checks on the site to ensure that pupils' safety is not compromised. They will carry out needed works in a timely manner. Leaders have a range of site-specific risk assessments in place, which seek to minimise the risk to pupils' health, safety and welfare.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 26

- The acoustic conditions and sound insulation of each room or other spaces are suitable for their intended use.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 27

- The site and premises are appropriately lit. Inside, the lighting is suitable for the nature of activities that will take place. Outside, lighting ensures safe access to and from the school, including extensive lighting along the main thoroughfare from the entrance gate to the main building.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 28

- There are suitable drinking water facilities provided, which are clearly marked as such. These facilities are readily accessible when the premises are in use, and in a separate area from the toilet facilities.
- Toilets have an adequate supply of cold water, and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. Leaders have measures in place to ensure that the temperature of hot water does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 29

- The site boasts large and varied outdoor space, including a large field and a multi-use area, which consists of a basketball court and tennis court. These facilities will be used to support the school's PE curriculum.
- There is suitable space for pupils to play outside.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32

- The school's website provides access to the following required information: complaints policy and procedures, behaviour and exclusion policies, anti-bullying policy, health and safety policy, first-aid policy, curriculum policy, and admissions policy.
- The website also provides specific information about the school, including the school's address and telephone number, the name of the headteacher, the contact details for

members of the body of proprietors, and the contact details for the chair of the governing body.

- Leaders plan to provide a written report on pupils' progress and attainment to parents annually. Leaders are aware that they must provide the appropriate local authority with information about pupils with an EHC plan for the purpose of the annual review.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The school has a written complaints policy. The policy is available on the school's website. The policy sets out clear timescales, at both informal and formal stages, 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.
- Should the complainant remain dissatisfied after the formal 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 who is independent of the management and running of the school. The complainant can be accompanied at the panel hearing by a friend or relative. The panel will make findings and recommendations, which they will provide to the complainant.
- Leaders will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they were resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing. The record will also make clear any actions taken by the school because of those complaints. Leaders will keep complaints records confidential, but leaders will make these available for the purposes of an inspection.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Leaders at all levels are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The proprietors have established an effective governing body and scheme of delegation. The governing body has responsibilities that it is well equipped to fulfil. The proprietors also have arrangements in place to ensure that school leaders are clear about their individual and collective responsibilities. This clarity has resulted in leaders at all levels demonstrating clear focus and purpose.
- The governing body and its committees plan to keep a watchful eye on the school's compliance with the independent school standards. Where actions are required, governors will follow these up in a timely manner.

- Leaders have a secure understanding of the independent school standards. They have taken effective action to rectify the shortcomings at the first pre-registration. Going forward, they are well placed to monitor the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The standards in this paragraph are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- There is an appropriate accessibility plan in place. The plan makes clear how leaders intend to increase the extent to which pupils can participate in the school's curriculum, improve access to the physical environment, and improve the delivery of information to pupils with disabilities.
- Leaders have set clear actions that include realistic timescales and required resources. Leaders are already on track to meet the deadlines for completed works and are making progress toward future deadlines.

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	147989
DfE registration number	933/6014
Inspection number	10168868

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	The Levels School Ltd
Chair	Bradley Middleton and Giancarlo Floris
Headteacher	Caroline Cook
Annual fees (day pupils)	From £19,500
Telephone number	01458 258190
Website	www.thelevelsschool.co.uk
Email address	office@thelevelsschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	14
Number of pupils of compulsory school age for whom a statement is maintained under section 324, or who is looked after by a local authority	0
Total hours operating as a school per week	28
Total hours of teaching provided per week	Up to 18

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	8–18	8–18	8–18
Number of pupils on the school roll	14	65	65

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	65
Number of part-time pupils	14	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	14	65
Of which, number of pupils an education, health and care plan	7	TBC
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	5	TBC

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	0	13
Number of part-time teaching staff	10	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	N/A	N/A

Information about this proposed school

- The Levels School intends to provide education for up to 65 pupils aged from eight to 18 years. Pupils will be allocated a place by local authorities or will be privately funded.

- The proprietor is The Levels School Ltd. The proprietor does not run any other schools.
- Fees will vary from pupil to pupil depending on the age of the pupil and whether they require additional support.
- The Levels School is currently operating, providing part-time provision for 14 pupils. These pupils are currently at school for fewer than 18 hours a week.
- The Levels School intends to provide education for pupils with SEND, including those with an EHC plan, specifically those with cognitive and learning needs, specific learning difficulties, communication and interaction needs, speech, language and communication needs, autism spectrum disorder, sensory and/or physical needs, visual impairment, and hearing impairment.
- The 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 was the second pre-registration inspection for The Levels School.
- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic of 2020. The pre-registration took place on site, with social distancing measures in place.
- The lead inspector held discussions with members of the body of proprietors, the headteacher, the leaders responsible for safeguarding, curriculum leaders, and the special needs coordinator. The inspector also had a telephone discussion with the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector toured the site and premises, both internally and externally, to determine whether Part 5 of the independent school standards is likely to be met.
- The lead inspector met with curriculum leaders and considered leaders' curriculum documentation and schemes of work to determine whether Part 1 of the independent school standards is likely to be met.
- The lead inspector met with senior leaders and considered leaders' plans, policies and schemes of work to promote pupils' SMSC development to determine whether Part 2 of the independent school standards is likely to be met.
- The lead inspector met with senior leaders and considered documentation such as policies, plans and checks in place to maintain pupils' safety while on site. This helped to determine whether Part 3 of the independent school standards is likely to be met.
- The lead inspector evaluated the complaints policy to determine whether Part 7 of the independent school standards is likely to be met.
- The lead inspector checked the single central register and personnel files to determine whether Part 4 and several standards contained within Parts 3 and 8 of the independent school standards are likely to be met.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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