

# Tower Learning Centre

316 Church Street, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 3QE

**Inspection date**

15 April 2021

**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

*Paragraph 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)(c), 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)(h), 2(2)(i)*

- The proprietor company has a clear aim to promote pupils' academic development and nurture pupils' self-esteem to allow them to succeed. The proprietor company has developed a curriculum that reflects these aims. The range of subjects covered in the curriculum meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (ISS). These include English, mathematics and science. In addition, the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to study drama, cake decorating, computing and history.
- The proposed curriculum is designed to take account of the anticipated needs of the pupils attending the school. The curriculum design has been well considered to provide opportunity for pupils to close gaps in their knowledge brought about from any previous disengagement with education. The curriculum is suitably ambitious and provides opportunities for pupils to achieve academic qualifications that align with their abilities and interests. These qualifications include entry level qualifications, functional skills awards and GCSEs.
- The proprietor company plans to provide appropriate impartial advice and guidance that will enable pupils to make informed choices about their future education, employment or training. Leaders intend to make use of established links with external professional careers advisers. Leaders also intend to provide opportunities for pupils to visit careers fairs and safely participate in work experience with local employers. In addition, the proposed personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum includes activities which will help develop pupils' knowledge and skills of job application and interview techniques.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

- Schemes of work (SoW) for the curriculum are detailed. They contain planned sequences of activities to promote the knowledge that leaders want pupils to acquire. SoW also include examples of activities and resources that teachers may choose to

use to help pupils succeed. For example, The English SoW includes a range of storyboard resources. These relate to Shakespeare's plays and include amended vocabulary so as to provide easier access for pupils of different reading abilities. Leaders intend to personalise the delivery of the curriculum for each pupil following an initial evaluation of their knowledge, and ongoing assessments. Leaders intend that these individualised plans, known in the proposed school as 'pupil profiles', will include the next steps of knowledge that a pupil should learn, together with the strategies and support that teachers will provide to help a pupil succeed.

- The comprehensive written assessment policy promotes the use of assessment to identify pupils' needs. The policy explains that assessments will be used purposefully to inform teaching and check on pupils' progress. When implemented, it is likely that the use of assessment will be effective.
- Classrooms are equipped with a wide range of suitable high-quality resources to support the delivery of the curriculum. These resources include a wide range of textbooks, other reading materials and informative displays. Classrooms have appropriate technology to enable pupils to safely access the internet and to help teachers deliver class lessons.
- The proprietor company's director and the prospective senior leaders of the school demonstrate high expectations of the staff they propose to employ. The proprietor company intends to build on the expertise of staff who currently work for them in their alternative provision and tuition centre. Leaders intend that all teachers employed at the school will be suitably qualified and experienced to deliver the curriculum effectively. The proprietor company has appropriate safer recruitment processes established to ensure that suitable staff are employed at the school.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 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) and 5(d)(iii)*

- The planned curriculum for all subjects includes aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The comprehensive SoW for religious education contains activities to develop pupils' knowledge of different beliefs and cultures. The PSHE SoW includes activities to promote fundamental British values. As part of the PSHE curriculum, pupils will study British institutions, such as parliament, and how laws are made and enforced. Leaders intend to develop links with the local community to provide opportunities for pupils to visit places of religious and cultural interest.
- The SoW for subjects that encompass personal and social education have been designed to promote tolerance and understanding. This includes pupils' awareness and respect for those groups identified as having protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.
- The PSHE SoW includes activities to promote pupils' understanding of relationships and sex education, including specific activities to develop pupils' understanding of the concept of consent.
- The proprietor company has appropriate procedures planned to inhibit the promotion of extremist or partisan materials and views. Staff will be trained in how to identify

and act effectively on any concerns relating to radicalisation or extremism as part of their induction to working at the proposed school. Leaders have appropriate procedures planned to check the suitability of any materials shared by visiting speakers.

- These standards are likely to be met.

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

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)*

- The proposed school's safeguarding policy and procedures are fit for purpose. They pay due regard to the current guidance from the Secretary of State. The school does not currently have a website, but the safeguarding policy is available from the company office on request.
- The proprietor company has planned appropriate measures to help safeguard pupils and staff during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.
- The proprietor company director and the proposed headteacher and senior staff have appropriate knowledge and training to undertake the role of designated safeguarding leaders. The proprietor company plans to ensure that all staff receive suitable safeguarding training as part of their induction.
- Leaders have suitable plans in place to ensure that the school has an appropriately monitored and filtered internet connection to help keep pupils safe.
- This standard is likely to be met.

#### *Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c)*

- The written behaviour policy reflects leaders' high expectations of staff and pupils. The policy contains information about the strategies, rewards and sanctions that staff may use to promote positive behaviour. The policy is fit for purpose.
- Leaders intend to record incidents of serious misbehaviour using a secure online system. This system, if implemented effectively, will enable leaders to record incidents in detail and support the proprietor company to evaluate any emerging trends in behaviour.
- This standard is likely to be met.

#### *Paragraph 10*

- The written anti-bullying policy is fit for purpose. The policy includes definitions of a range of different types of bullying that pupils may encounter. These include those that relate to the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and those online. The policy refers to the expected response of staff and pupils to any incidents of bullying. The policy makes clear references to other appropriate policies.
- This standard is likely to be met.

#### *Paragraphs 11, 12*

- The proprietor company has appropriate health and safety policies and procedures in place to ensure that it complies with relevant legislation. Leaders have detailed records of health and safety checks, including those on fire detection and firefighting equipment. Electrical safety and gas safety checks will be completed by a suitably

qualified and competent person on a regular cycle. These checks are currently up to date.

- The proposed school site is covered by a comprehensive CCTV system. The proprietor company has appropriate policies in place to ensure that the system meets relevant regulations. This includes clear data retention policies and the provision of appropriate signage to inform pupils, staff and visitors about the presence of CCTV and the purpose for which it is used.
- The proprietor company has ensured that an appropriate fire risk assessment has been carried out by a competent person. The local fire and rescue service recently inspected the proposed school site and found it to be a suitable environment in which a school could operate. The proprietor company has completed the suggested action that was identified in the fire service report.
- The proprietor company has ensured that the proposed school fire protection systems are suitably maintained and operational. Emergency exits are clear of clutter, and fire doors are easily opened by staff or pupils in case of emergency.
- These standards are likely to be met.

*Paragraph 13, 14, 15*

- The proprietor company has a written first aid policy in place that, if implemented, will ensure that pupils receive the care they need in the event of illness or accident. The proprietor company intends that sufficient staff will have appropriate first aid training when appointed or receive the training they need as part of the induction process. The proprietor company has appropriate systems ready to record any illness or injury. These records will be held securely using electronic means and will enable the proprietor company to evaluate any emerging trends.
- The proprietor company has carefully considered the numbers of staff required. The proposed number of staff and plans for their deployment will, if implemented, allow for pupils to be safely supervised.
- The proprietor company has established appropriate systems to record admissions and attendance at the school that comply with current legislation.
- These standards are likely to be met.

*Paragraph 16(a), 16(b)*

- The written risk assessment policy is fit for purpose. The proprietor company has compiled detailed risk assessments for the proposed school activities. These assessments include well-considered control measures that, if implemented, will mitigate identified risks to pupils and staff.
- This standard is likely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 18, 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)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 19(4), 20(2), 20(3), 20(3)(a), 20(3)(a)(i), 20(3)(a)(ii), 20(5), 20(5)(a)*

*20(5)(a)(i), 20(5)(a)(ii), 20(5)(b), 20(5)(b)(i), 20(5)(b)(ii), 20(5)(b)(iii), 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)*

- The chair of the proprietor company has a secure knowledge of the need to carry out the required prohibition checks on leaders and members of the proposed school's advisory board before they begin their roles. These checks are currently in the process of being completed for those staff who have been offered leadership roles.
- The proprietor company has ensured that systems are in place to ensure that all the necessary checks on staff will be completed before they begin their employment in the proposed school. These checks include any additional checks for staff who have worked or lived abroad.
- The proprietor company has suitably trained staff and systems in place to ensure that safer recruitment procedures can be followed when appointing staff.
- Leaders of the proposed school demonstrate a secure understanding of the required suitability checks that must be completed before using any supply or agency staff in the future.
- This standard is likely to be met.

*Paragraph 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(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)*

- The proposed school's single central record of the requisite suitability checks that need to be carried out on members of staff contains all the required information.
- This standard is likely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 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)*

- Suitable separate toilet facilities are available for male and female pupils. Staff toilets are separate from those used by pupils. Toilets have appropriate access to hand washing facilities that are supplied with hot and cold water. The water supplied to taps does not pose a scalding risk.
- Pupils attending the proposed school will have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day from an appropriately labelled tap that is located within the ground floor kitchen area. Additionally, the proprietor company intends to supply pupils with free access to bottled drinking water.
- The proprietor company intends to deliver the physical education curriculum offsite, using a nearby well-equipped sports centre. Pupils using this provision will have access to shower facilities. The proprietor company has appropriate risk assessments and procedures in place that, if implemented, will allow pupils to use these facilities safely.

- Pupils attending the proposed school will have access to a self-contained yard area for recreation. The yard is of an appropriate size for the number of pupils proposed to attend the school.
- The proprietor company has ensured that the school building and outside recreation area is clean and well maintained. Rooms, internal spaces and exits have appropriate lighting for their intended use. Emergency lighting is operational and regularly maintained to ensure safety during an emergency evaluation. External lights on all exits provide illumination for safe entry and exit from the building during the hours of darkness.
- The acoustic conditions in classrooms in the proposed school provide a suitable environment in which pupils can learn.
- The proposed school has an appropriate space identified for a medical room that incorporates direct access to a toilet and handwashing facilities. The room is located on the ground floor and is suitably equipped for the immediate care of any pupils or members of staff who become ill or suffer an injury.
- These standards are likely to be met.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(1)(k), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f)*

- Although the proprietor company has a website for its tuition service, it does not currently have a specific website for the proposed school. The chair of the proprietor company has a secure understanding of what must be published on an independent school's website and intends to create one if registration is granted by the regulator. The proprietor company has ensured that all the information for parents, carers and other agencies detailed in the ISS, including the school's safeguarding policy, is available on request.
- Appropriate procedures are in place to enable leaders and teachers to report on pupils' progress and attainment to parents. Similarly, procedures are in place to allow the proprietor company to meet their statutory duty to provide financial information to local authorities who place pupils in the school.
- Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of their duty to provide appropriate information to support the annual review of a pupil's education, health and care plan (EHC) plan. They intend to use the systems already in place within the company's other education organisations to continue to provide such support.
- These standards are likely to be met.

#### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraph 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 proprietor company's written complaints procedures comply with all the requirements set out in the ISS. They include clear information about the steps and timescales of leaders' actions following a complaint. The procedures also include

information about a complainant's right of appeal. The procedures explain that the membership of the panel who would consider any appeal includes one person who is independent of the leadership and day-to-day management of the school. The procedures also explain that the school will record, retain and may share the outcomes of any complaint with others as appropriate.

- If implemented, the proposed school's complaints procedures will ensure that any complaint is dealt with appropriately within acceptable timescales.
- This standard is likely to be met.

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

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor company director and leaders of the proposed school demonstrate a secure understanding of the ISS. They have acted to ensure that all the ISS are likely to be met.
- The proprietor company has clear aims and ambitions to provide high-quality education for pupils attending the school. The school's curriculum is suitably ambitious for all pupils and takes account of their expected needs.
- The proprietor company has appointed a suitably qualified and experienced headteacher to lead and oversee the day-to-day running of the school. She has drawn on her experience of working in other education establishments within the company and in other schools to support the design of the proposed school's policies and curriculum. These are likely to meet the anticipated needs of pupils.
- The proprietor company intends to appoint an advisory board that is made up of experienced education professionals. The intended purpose of the advisory board is to provide independent oversight, advice and challenge to support the proprietor company director to hold school leaders to account for their actions.
- The proprietor company demonstrates clear commitment to promoting the well-being of pupils. Safeguarding knowledge and procedures are appropriate, as too is the proposed provision of first aid support for pupils.
- This standard is likely to be met.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has in place an appropriate accessibility plan. Consequently, the requirements under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are likely to be met.

## **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	148568
DfE registration number	890/6010
Inspection number	10182173

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	Independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Tower Learning Centre Ltd.
Chair	Kathryn Towers
Headteacher	Kim McCormack
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,000–£25,000
Telephone number	01253 290 949
Website	None
Email address	admin@tower-learning.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>	<b>Inspector's recommendation</b>
Age range of pupils	0	14–16	14–16
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	20	20

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>
Gender of pupils	Not Applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not Applicable	20
Number of part-time pupils	Not Applicable	As required
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not Applicable	As required
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not Applicable	As required
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not Applicable	As required

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	1	6.5
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	2

## Information about this proposed school

- Tower Learning Centre is proposed to be established in Blackpool. The proprietor company also uses the proposed school's premises to run an after-school tuition service. This service is registered with Ofsted as childcare on non-domestic premises.
- The school's aims are to provide opportunities for all pupils to thrive in a nurturing learning environment.
- The proposed school does not intend to use any additional alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine if the school is likely to meet the independent school standards prior to opening as a registered school.
- This was the first pre-registration inspection of Tower Learning Centre.
- During the inspection, meetings were held with the chair and sole director of the proprietor company. The inspector also held meetings with the headteacher, appointed to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, and the business development manager for the proposed school.
- The inspector checked documentary evidence relating to the curriculum, including schemes of work and the curriculum policy, which were supplied by the school's leadership.
- The inspector reviewed the proprietor company's policies in relation to welfare, health and safety. A scrutiny of the safeguarding procedures, including recruitment processes and checks, was also undertaken.
- The inspector toured the school's premises with the headteacher and business development manager.

## Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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