

Grace Garden School

Cherry Orchards, Canford Lane, Bristol, BS9 3PE

Inspection dates

14–15 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

Paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(i), 3–3(j) and 4

- School leaders are committed to delivering a bespoke, Steiner-inspired curriculum that meets pupils' specific needs. The range of subjects to be offered meets the requirements of the independent school standards. There is a strong curriculum focus on pupils' learning through land, animal and craft activities delivered through the practical skills therapeutic model of Ruskin Mill Trust
- In all subjects, leaders have prepared schemes of work for each key stage. Teachers will tailor these schemes to plan learning that meets individual pupils' needs and presents new ideas in a coherent sequence.
- Reading will be a priority. Pupils will have missed significant periods of their education. Therefore, leaders have trained the staff in place to support pupils where gaps are identified in their early reading to enable them to catch up quickly.
- Pupils will follow academic and vocational routes for learning. Staff will assess pupils on entry to the school to identify the most appropriate route for each pupil. Pupils will be able to study for accredited qualifications such as functional skills, alongside GCSEs.
- Pupils will learn personal skills through a carefully planned personal, social, health and economic education programme. Leaders have correctly identified the importance of building pupils' self-esteem, confidence and resilience when attending the school.
- Therapeutic provision will be carefully woven through the curriculum. Therapies available to pupils include speech and language, occupational health, colour light therapy and therapeutic art and movement. Leaders see this work as integral to the experiences of all pupils to enable them to be confident in 'being, exploring and contributing' to the world.
- Leaders have plans in place to provide impartial careers guidance and advice. Pupils will have varied opportunities for work-related learning, including work experience and on-site visits.

- The principal and trust leaders intend to monitor closely the quality of education and care which pupils receive. Induction programmes for new staff are an integral part of staff development to ensure that pupils are getting an effective education.
- The assessment policy sets out a framework to guide staff as to how pupils' learning and development will be checked. Staff will use regular reviews of pupils' work and social development to keep parents well informed about their achievements.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a)–(d)(iii)

- Leaders have given careful consideration to how to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a written policy statement that explains clearly how the school will develop this. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.
- The school will not have a religious character. Leaders are aware of the need for pupils to learn about cultures and faiths beyond their own. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to do this as part of the curriculum.
- Leaders are aware of the importance of presenting pupils with alternative views when considering political and ethical issues. This will enable pupils to gain the necessary skills to approach an argument or dilemma in a balanced and empathetic way.
- Leaders have developed curriculum resources and additional activities to help pupils better understand their world. Leaders will teach pupils how to foster tolerance and empathy for people with lifestyles and beliefs that may be different to their own.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b), 9–16(b)

- Leaders have suitable arrangements in place to safeguard pupils. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and meets current government legislation and guidance. It is jargon free and easily accessible on the website.
- Through their induction, staff will receive suitable training that will support them to take appropriate action to minimise risk and keep pupils safe. Leaders will provide staff with valuable additional training on risks that are pertinent to pupils who will attend Grace Garden School. As a result, staff are likely to have the confidence to take the right action at the right time should they spot any concerns regarding the safety or well-being of a pupil.
- The proprietor has an effective health and safety policy in place. There are written procedures in place to ensure that appropriate checks on the premises and equipment comply with requirements.
- The proprietor has systems and procedures in place to ensure that the school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Leaders ensure that all fire checks are routinely undertaken to maintain equipment. Fire risk assessments are pertinent. Regular fire drills will take place to ensure that everyone knows the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.

- The school has sufficient staff in place to ensure that pupils will be well supervised at all times.
- Admission and attendance registers are in place. They are likely to meet requirements.
- The school's risk assessments are detailed and carefully considered, including written risk assessment and first-aid policies. There are appropriate plans in place to ensure that there are bespoke risk assessments in place for each pupil. Staff will monitor these closely and amend them as required. This will ensure that risk assessments remain fit for purpose.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 18(2)–18(3), 19(2)–19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c) and 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- The single central register is in place and contains the required information on appointed staff. The full range of checks set out in the independent school standards has been completed for those staff already employed. This includes the required checks on the eight members of the proprietorial board.
- Staff have appropriate experience and qualifications to support pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The proprietor has ensured that senior leaders are well trained in safeguarding pupils. Therefore, at least one member of any interview panel will always have up-to-date safer recruitment training.
- The proprietor does not plan to use supply staff. There is a recognition by staff that pupils who attend this school need the familiarity of working with adults they already know. Nonetheless, leaders are aware of the required safeguarding checks were they to use supply staff in the future.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–29(1)(b)

- The proposed school building is spacious and has been refurbished to a high standard.
- There are toilets available for the sole use of pupils within the school and for when working outside. There are changing rooms and shower facilities available for pupils which are well maintained.
- The medical room is well stocked, clean and fresh. It has a bed and wash basin and is next door to a toilet.
- There are several classrooms, which are bright and airy. There is suitable furniture made from natural materials. There are external windows that provide natural light. Radiators and wood-burning stoves will provide suitable heating. The acoustic conditions in the building are appropriate for use within a school.
- There is adequate external lighting to all the outside paths. The security at the school entrance is enhanced by electric gates with a buzzer system.

- The proprietor has ensured that taps for drinking water are clearly labelled and can always be accessed by pupils.
- The water from taps in the toilet, medical room and kitchen did not pose a scalding risk when checked during the inspection.
- The school sits within extensive grounds, which leaders will use for growing fruit and vegetables, caring for animals, and recreation and physical exercise for pupils. There is a range of buildings to accommodate a wide variety of activities such as green woodwork, food preservation and textiles.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a)–(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a)–(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a)–(g)

- The principal has ensured that there is an up-to-date safeguarding policy, which meets current government guidance and legislation, published on the website.
- The school website is informative and easy to navigate. The proprietor has ensured that all the required policies are available to parents from the school's website or upon request.
- Leaders have designed a template for an annual report for parents and referrers.
- The proprietor and school leaders understand the requirement to publish any future inspection report.
- Full contact information for the principal and proprietor is available on the school's website.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–(k)

- The school's complaints policy is easily accessible to parents. The policy is jargon free and describes the actions that parents should take if they have a complaint about the school's work. It sets suitable timescales for the management of the complaint. There are appropriate guidelines to ensure that any complaints panel has at least one member who is independent of the management of the school. The policy is clear that parents can be accompanied at a panel if they wish.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)(a)–(c)

- The chair of the proprietorial board, along with other trust leaders, including the director of schools, has wide experience of education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Therefore, she has the necessary knowledge to provide effective challenge and support for leaders.
- The principal demonstrates the understanding necessary to ensure that all the independent school standards will be met consistently over time.

- Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the safeguarding requirements for vulnerable pupils. The board is committed to promoting the well-being of pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. This is the fundamental reason behind their determination to set this school up.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have prepared an accessibility plan that meets the requirements 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	148394
DfE registration number	801/6040
Inspection number	10177461

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 special school
Proprietor	Catherine Grace Trust
Chair	Helen Kippax
Headteacher	Francesca Meynell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000
Telephone number	01172 033722
Website	www.rmt.org/grace-garden
Email address	info@grace.rmt.org
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	9–16	9–16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	20	20

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	20
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	20
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	20

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	8

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school will be part of the Ruskin Mill Trust. This is a national charitable trust.
- The school proposes to cater for a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities including autism spectrum disorder, moderate learning difficulties and SEMH needs.
- Pupils will be referred from local authorities and will require an education, health and care plan for admission to the school.
- The proposed school is set in extensive, well-kept grounds which are suitable for the learning activities that the school intends to offer to pupils. It is in a spacious location with woodland, orchards and fields, but is in close proximity to the city of Bristol.
- The proposed school does not intend to use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 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.
- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- A wide range of documentation sent electronically by the chair of the proprietary board was considered off site. This included information relating to the curriculum, welfare, health and safety of pupils, and leadership and management.
- Meetings were conducted on site with the founder and executive chair, chair of the proprietary board, the director of schools, the principal and the deputy provision lead.
- The inspector had a tour of the premises to check that they were compliant with the independent school standards. The inspector checked the single central register and sampled other safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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