

Aurora White House School

Quidenham Road, Attleborough, Norfolk NR16 2NZ

Inspection date

13 May 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)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- Pupils likely to attend the proposed school will have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school aims to provide for pupils who have experienced difficulties in mainstream settings, either as a result of specific learning needs or more complex communication and interaction difficulties.
- The curriculum policy sets out what leaders want pupils to achieve. Leaders want pupils to develop a sense of identity and understanding of the wider world. They want them to be healthy and able to communicate well.
- The curriculum is divided into 'steps', so for each subject taught, teachers can identify the key learning appropriate to each pupil's need.
- Pupils will have the opportunity to study a wide curriculum, including English, mathematics, science, history, geography, computing, music, art, physical education and religious education. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) will link into the school's work on developing pupils' emotional and social skills.
- Schemes of work will identify where individual pupils need the curriculum to be adapted so that they can make progress. These adaptations will link back to their education, health and care (EHC) plans where appropriate.
- Individual therapy plans will support pupils beyond the curriculum where specialist intervention is needed, for example occupational therapy, speech and language therapy or following trauma.
- Leaders aim to supplement the curriculum with an outdoor education programme in the school's extensive grounds. This aims to further develop pupils' confidence and their ability to work with others.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is 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)

- Teachers' plans will identify key learning for both whole classes and individuals from the steps in the overall curriculum plan.
- The proposed school is well equipped with materials to support learning, for example in mathematics. Reading areas are stocked with a good selection of appropriate books. Classrooms are light and welcoming.
- The school's behaviour policy is clear. It sets out good practice for staff working with pupils whose behaviour may be challenging at times. The school's five 'golden rules' will be a key part of each school day, linked to a positive reward system.
- Leaders have ensured that the chosen curriculum covers the British values of democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect. Leaders intend that the school should be a community itself, but will also work with other local community groups outside the school.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 4

- Teachers will check pupils' attainment and needs on entry to the school. A range of ongoing assessments will keep track of pupils' progress, and will both enable teachers to report to parents and carers, and further adapt pupils' learning as needed.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is 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), 5(d)(iii)

- The proposed school's vision is made clear to parents through both the prospectus and the school's policies. The curriculum will aim to create confident individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens.
- The chosen PSHE and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculums are likely to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. These will be enhanced by leaders' inclusion of the school's five golden rules throughout the curriculum.
- The PSHE curriculum will enable pupils to consider a wide range of views, and enable pupils to make a positive contribution to life in modern Britain.
- The different steps in the curriculum will enable pupils to be ready to move on to the next stage in their education when they leave the school. For those moving on to the secondary school on the same site, leaders propose that there will be close links between the two schools, enabling smooth transition.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy is up to date with the latest statutory guidance and takes account of the particular needs of the pupils for whom the school will provide.
- Roles and responsibilities of staff are clear. All staff have had recent relevant training. Leaders have made sure that safeguarding is a high priority. Links with external agencies providing support for vulnerable pupils are well established.
- Systems for recording any concerns are already in place, with suitable arrangements made for follow-up actions to be reviewed and evaluated, so that appropriate next steps can be determined.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

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

- There is a detailed Aurora behaviour policy. Clear annexes set out how it applies to the proposed school and pupils. The five golden rules will promote a positive ethos.
- Any poor behaviour will be recorded on an electronic system. This will be used to investigate concerns and to analyse patterns, as well as to identify triggers to inform pupils' individual risk assessments and support needs.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 10

- The anti-bullying policy is clear and covers different types of bullying, including those relating to people with protected characteristics.
- Regular anti-bullying survey information will be collected from pupils and parents. Leaders aim to use this to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle bullying and to inform any changes needed to the PSHE curriculum.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 11

- All relevant health and safety checks and policies, including those relating to fire risks and first aid, are in place. They are up to date, and the policies make clear who has responsibility for what in respect of their implementation.
- Leaders have made robust arrangements for the necessary regular premises checks to be made.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 12

- The fire safety assessment is appropriate and meets requirements. There are clearly labelled fire exits. Pupils will regularly practise fire drills using these exits.
- Staff have had training on fire safety and safe evacuation in emergencies.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 13

- The first-aid policy is appropriate. A suitable number of staff have had the relevant training. First-aid kits are appropriately equipped and kept easily accessible.
- There is an electronic recording system in place to track any incidents, actions taken and lessons learned.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 14

- Suitable arrangements are in place for supervising pupils in lessons, during outdoor activities, when they transfer between buildings, and at break- and lunchtimes. Detailed arrangements have been made for the supervision of pupils' arrival and departure at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Staff are clear about leaders' expectations around the supervision of pupils and ensuring that pupils' individual risk assessments are followed.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 15

- The proposed school has a comprehensive system in place to record admissions and attendance. Records contain all of the required information.
- Attendance and admission policies are clear. There are procedures in place for following up on pupils who do not attend.
- Leaders understand the procedures to follow if they need to remove a pupil from the school's roll.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

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

- The proposed school has a wide range of risk assessments in place for activities, locations and individuals where needed. These assess the likelihood and impact of different risks appropriately. Arrangements are in place to ensure that risk assessments are regularly reviewed to inform any further action needed.
- The risk assessments are appropriate to ensure that pupils are kept safe, for example in the forest school area.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 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), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 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), 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(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c), 21(6)

- Leaders have made sure that all necessary checks on staff are completed before new appointments are made.
- The single central register will cover both schools on the site, as pupils will access some shared facilities.
- Medical fitness checks have been completed.
- Leaders have ensured that 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(2)

- The proposed school is to be situated in a large country house and associated buildings. The areas to be used by the school have recently been refurbished to a high standard.
- Specialist therapy spaces and intervention rooms are also provided.
- There are extensive grounds. Pupils will have access to large playing fields, woodlands, play areas and a multi-use, hard-surface games area. They will access the swimming pool shared between the two schools on the site.
- There are separate toilets for boys, girls and staff. The supply of hot and cold running water is maintained at an appropriate temperature.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- The medical room has two sinks, with hot and cold running water. It is located next to a toilet, with shower facilities if needed. There are lockable cupboards for the storage of medical equipment.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 25

- The entry to the site is through the grounds of the other school that will share the site. There are clear procedures that will ensure the safety and supervision of pupils at all times. Staff have a good understanding of these.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 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)

- Classrooms and shared spaces are well lit. There is external lighting in place. Leaders have put in additional acoustic provision to lower noise in dining areas.
- Cold taps can provide drinking water to pupils, although leaders are proposing to provide each classroom with a regular supply of bottled water.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 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), 32(3)(g)

- The proposed school will have a website to provide the required information to parents and other stakeholders.
- Pupils who attend the school will be funded by a local authority. The proprietor already has systems in place to inform them with income and expenditure statements.
- Leaders are aware of their responsibilities to implement and review EHC plans both on a regular basis and annually.
- The nature of the provision that leaders will arrange for education to take place remotely, should pupils have to learn from home as a result of COVID-19 (coronavirus), is clearly laid out for parents in a leaflet.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is 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 complaints policy is clear. It sets out in detail the procedures to be followed in the event of both informal and formal complaints.
- Complaints will be dealt with appropriately, including by persons not involved in the original complaint where needed. Written records will be maintained.
- Leaders have ensured that 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)

- Those acting on behalf of the proprietor, and the leaders of the school, have an appropriate understanding of the independent school standards. They have used this effectively to ensure that all of the independent school standards are likely to be met when the proposed school opens.
- Leaders have relevant experience in both primary and SEND education, which will support them in fulfilling their roles effectively.
- The aims of the school and the curriculum in place will actively support the well-being of pupils.
- Policies and procedures make lines of accountability clear. Leaders understand their role in keeping pupils, including those who are particularly vulnerable, safe.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The accessibility and equality plans provide details of how pupils will access the premises and the curriculum. Other relevant policies describe the measures to ensure equality.
- All the requirements 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	148360
DfE registration number	926/6031
Inspection number	10177886

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	Aurora Care and Education Opco Ltd
Chair	Mark Costello
Headteacher	David Clarke
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,209 – £48,001
Telephone number	01953 887217
Website	www.the-aurora-group.com
Email address	david.clarke@the-aurora-goup.com
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 to 11	6 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	80	80

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	80

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	80
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	80
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	80

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	9
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	30

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is seeking to register as an independent special school to admit up to 80 pupils with SEND, between the ages of six and 11.
- All pupils likely to attend the school will have an EHC plan and be funded by the local authority.
- The school is being formed out of a reorganisation of the existing Aurora Eccles School, which is currently registered to provide education from age three to 19. The proposed Aurora White House School will occupy a separate primary site within the larger Aurora Eccles School site. The White House School will also potentially occupy a second separate building on site as the roll expands.
- Pupils at the proposed White House School will also access a range of facilities shared with Aurora Eccles School, such as the swimming pool and a therapy room.

Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was carried out to establish whether the school was likely to meet all the independent school standards and other statutory requirements.

- The inspectors visited the site of the proposed school. They conducted a tour of the proposed school site and those facilities that will be shared with Aurora Eccles School.
- An inspector reviewed the single central register and a range of risk assessments. Inspectors looked at premises safety checks and school policies relating to the independent school standards. They also considered documents related to child protection, safeguarding, curriculum planning, checks on pupils' learning, and reporting to parents and local authorities.
- The inspectors met the director, who is the local representative of the proprietor, and proposed school staff and senior leaders.
- The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone with a representative from the school commissioning team at Norfolk County Council.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Dick

Her Majesty's Inspector

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