

The Copper Academy

Holsworthy Business and Training Centre, Western Road, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 6DH

Inspection date

15 June 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(2)(i), 3–3(j), 4

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, is passionate and visionary. She has utilised lessons learned in running the proposed school as alternative provision for pupils struggling within mainstream education or who have been home educated. As a result, the headteacher has developed plans that balance the need to provide an academic curriculum with capturing pupils' interests and engagement. At the same time, there are bespoke opportunities built into the proposed curriculum for pupils to access provision that meets their individual needs, such as speech and language therapy.
- Curriculum planning is well considered. There are detailed plans for the delivery of health and beauty, personal, social and health education (PSHE), literacy, numeracy, science, art and design, and information and communication technology. These plans demonstrate that pupils will explore the humanities in their English and PSHE studies. Plans are adequately adapted to allow bespoke pathways that meet pupils' age and aptitudes. Therefore, the curriculum is likely to meet the independent school standards (the standards) in terms of breadth and depth of learning. The headteacher intends to work alongside staff at the local secondary school to ensure that careers education is suitably current and impartial.
- Leaders' plans for pupil assessment are rooted in the key aims of the proposed school. All learners will be expected to work towards qualifications as part of their studies. At the same time, the curriculum is built around promoting pupils' independence and readiness for the world of work. Leaders will assess pupils' progress towards meeting intended milestones at the end of each term. At these points, leaders will meet with pupils and their parents and carers to review progress and plan next steps. This will allow parents to stay informed about how well their children are doing. At the same time, leaders intend to utilise long-term outcomes within pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans, if they have them, to consider and assess pupils' wider progress and whether the provision remains right for the pupils who attend.

- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5(a)–5(d)(iii)

- The PSHE curriculum is central to the proposed school. PSHE planning is detailed and well considered. Leaders have utilised their experience so far to sharpen and improve how the curriculum will prepare pupils for adulthood. Discrete lessons around appropriate social interaction, working with other people and customer service all make up elements of the health and beauty course. Pupils will experience spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities. For example, within art and design, pupils will look at different cultures and how they influence the way we live in modern Britain.
- Curriculum plans, including for PSHE, assemblies and events, exemplify a commitment to promote British values and equality. The intended curriculum will blend opportunities for pupils to learn individually and in groups. Group sessions will promote social development, as well as allowing pupils to look at key moral questions.
- The headteacher's vision for the school is inclusive. All reviewed policies refer to promoting key values, such as those within the Equality Act 2010, and the special educational needs and disability code of practice. Schemes of work demonstrate regular and timely opportunities for pupils to study multiculturalism and fundamental British values.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 9–16(b)

- The headteacher is highly committed to creating a strong safeguarding culture. She has completed relevant safeguarding training at the appropriate level. The headteacher plans to act as the designated safeguarding lead. She will deliver training to staff. This will inform staff about their responsibilities, the school's systems and how to respond when concerned about the welfare of a child.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance. There is direct reference to local authority processes. Plans are in place for a member of the recently formed governing body to have an overview of the policy and to check that it is implemented effectively.
- The school's behaviour policy is likely to meet requirements. The policy reflects the inclusive vision of the headteacher. It details how positive behaviour will be promoted. There is guidance in relation to how incidents of misbehaviour and bullying will be dealt with. All sanctions imposed, if necessary, will be logged and reviewed.
- Arrangements for the provision of first aid are likely to meet requirements. All staff will complete first-aid training. There are appropriately stocked first-aid kits accessible across the proposed school site. Processes for managing and recording accidents and the provision of first aid are likely to be fit for purpose.

- The school is likely to be compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. All aspects of fire safety (emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, and smoke detection and fire alarms) are already in place. There is useful collaboration between the headteacher and leaders of the local community school that owns the building. Both complete regular checks that are logged. Fire alarm tests will be completed weekly, and emergency evacuation practices will be completed termly with pupils.
- The school's health and safety and risk assessment policies are likely to meet the required aspects of health and safety in reducing identified risks. Each pupil will have an individual risk assessment that covers all elements of the intended school's curriculum, as well as considering their individual needs. Similarly, leaders will ensure that each child has a personalised emergency evacuation plan.
- Admissions and attendance registers will be kept and are likely to meet requirements.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is sound. It covers all types of 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.
- The proposed school site belongs to the local community school. The buildings are in good repair. Safety management of the site is already well established.
- 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), 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- The headteacher has established processes to check the suitability of staff. The systems for making checks on new staff, volunteers and governors are appropriate. Staff files are used to log key information in relation to the checks that have been made and the outcome. A newly introduced single central register will ensure that there is one place where checks are recorded, by who and when.
- Safer recruitment processes will be managed through robust policies and procedures. Leaders follow clear procedures when checking the suitability of staff. This includes making requests for references from previous employers. The headteacher has completed safer recruitment training. Her plans to involve governors in the appointment of new staff are appropriate.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–29(1)(b)

- The proposed site for the school is within buildings that are shared with a local school and a multi-academy trust. As such, classroom spaces are already designed for lessons, and are appropriately lit, with good acoustics. There is a purpose-built salon that makes up the main room of the school. This is very well resourced and gives value to the planned curriculum.
- Outside space is limited. However, the proposed school is opposite the local leisure centre. The headteacher plans to utilise this to deliver physical education lessons. A

local park is within walking distance of the school. The local community school's playing areas are also easily accessible to allow for outdoor play.

- The main reception is beside the secure entrance to the proposed school. There are separate toilets for staff and pupils. Pupils' toilets include washbasins for which water temperature is safely regulated. The main office is adjacent to a small kitchenette, which doubles as a suitable medical room.
- The site benefits from a small lift where the only steps on the proposed school site exist. There is a large shower and washroom, which will cater for pupils with physical needs. The site is fully accessible.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(c), 32(1)(f)–32(3)(f)

- A website for The Copper Academy already exists. The website includes access to a range of information, policies and contact information. Plans are in place to include a section where external reports can be accessed. The headteacher is also in the process of developing a section about governance, and information about the proprietor.
- The school's safeguarding policy is on the proposed school's website.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The headteacher has drawn together a robust complaints policy. There are clear stages to follow for parents when raising concerns. The policy rightly looks to resolve complaints at an informal stage. However, there are clear steps and appropriate timescales should formal complaints need to be escalated. Processes for recording and responding to formal complaints are detailed in the policy.
- 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 headteacher has a strong drive to make a difference for vulnerable pupils, who often have a history of disjointed and poor experiences of education. She has made good use of the expertise of others to develop a growing understanding of the regulatory requirements needed to set up an independent special school. The headteacher has sensibly built on the successes she has already had to plan and develop a well-conceived provision for children and young people with specific interests and needs.
- The headteacher is implementing sensible plans to set up a governing body. She has approached suitably skilled people who can bring useful experience and expertise to

the running of the proposed school. Defined roles across the planned governing body will ensure that governors have an overview of safeguarding, the curriculum and how well the provision is meeting the individual needs of pupils.

- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school's plans, policies and procedures reflect the headteacher's commitment to meeting the proposed school's duties under the Equality Act 2010. The school has an acceptable accessibility plan.

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	148630
DfE registration number	878/6087
Inspection number	10193360

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	Day school for secondary-aged pupils
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Emma Hosie
Headteacher	Emma Hosie
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,750
Telephone number	077797 68661
Website	www.thecopperacademy.co.uk
Email address	emma@thecopperacademy.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	N/A	14–18	14–18
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	12	12

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	N/A	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	N/A	12
Number of part-time pupils	N/A	0

Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	12
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	8
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority an education, health and care plan	N/A	12

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	N/A	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	N/A	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	N/A	2

Information about this proposed school

- The Copper Academy intends to register as an independent special day school in Devon. The site is near the centre of Holsworthy and is shared with Holsworthy Community College and offices of The Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust. Leaders intend to admit pupils from Devon and Cornwall.
- The school will cater predominantly for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties or autism spectrum disorder.
- The proprietor is also the proposed school's headteacher. The setting has been running as an alternative provision for pupils who attend local colleges, are home schooled or who have previously been missing education. The proposed school will become the named school for the majority of these pupils should it open.

Information about this inspection

- 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 inspection took place on 15 June 2021. The inspection took place on site. Social distancing and other measures were applied due to COVID-19 (coronavirus). The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including policies for the proposed school, schemes of work, and information on the school's website. He met with the headteacher, who is also the proprietor, to discuss plans for opening the school, whom the school will provide for and how leaders intend to meet the range of needs of the pupils they are planning to admit. The inspector reviewed evidence against the independent school standards, including looking at the appropriateness of the planned curriculum, the quality of the proposed school site, policies and processes relating to safeguarding and health and safety, and the appropriateness of leaders to start a school.
- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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