

Study Hub

5 Old Steine, Brighton BN1 1EJ

Inspection date

22 June 2021

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g)–2(2)(i)

- The curriculum will be delivered in line with the curriculum policy submitted with the registration application. Schemes of work follow the various examination programmes available to pupils as part of their choices when applying for a place at the school.
- Pupils will attend the school for up to two years. Despite the pupil age range applied for as part of the registration, this school will to all intents and purposes be a sixth-form college, with appropriate programmes of study.
- Pupils will be able to choose a range of subjects at A level. All will be expected to study environmental science. Other options include French, Spanish and German. Pupils will also study mathematics and English at GCSE level, or at A level if appropriate.
- A wider curriculum, including physical education, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, as well as relationships and sex education (RSE) will also feature in pupils' weekly timetables.
- Class sizes will be small. Pupils will also be able to take part in additional enrichment activities facilitated by the proprietor's partnership with a local college. These might include sport, law or art and design, including photography, but will always be tailored to pupils' individual interests.
- There is appropriate provision for PSHE education delivered through a detailed scheme of work. This includes activities that encourage tolerance and respect for other people, and that aim to promote British values and equalities education.
- All pupils will receive appropriate careers education and guidance. Part of this will be facilitated through the partner college.

Paragraphs 3–4

- The school's assessment procedures set out carefully how teachers will assess pupils' learning. The proprietor already has a system in place that enables pupils to be

interviewed in their home country as part of the application process. Further baseline checks will be carried out on entry to the school to ensure that pupils are on the most suitable programme of study.

- Most key staff are already employed by the proprietor. Teachers of environmental science, mathematics and English are yet to be appointed. Leaders intend to employ well-qualified staff who have the experience and expertise to ensure that the quality of education on offer at the school is at least good and meets all the requirements of Part 1 of the independent school standards (the standards).
- School leaders have a clear vision of the values that underpin the school's culture and ethos. They will ensure that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and that fundamental British values are promoted at all times. Equalities will be actively promoted through the wider curriculum and through the delivery of the school's PSHE education programme.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- Leaders intend to address pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in a number of ways. Central to this will be weekly timetabled PSHE education sessions that will include RSE and will also focus on issues identified as important and relevant in addressing the challenges pupils face in their daily lives.
- Pupils will also benefit from regular meetings with their dedicated tutors and through a range of enrichment activities with their peers and host families. Monthly 'hub' meetings will be held at the school's main building, allowing pupils to make broader contributions to the school and the way it is run.
- 'Get together' weekends will punctuate the school year. These are designed to bring pupils and staff together in a range of activities. These will include cultural events such as trips to the theatre in support of English language work, for instance. These will also include field trips as part of the environmental science syllabus that all pupils will study.
- Pupils will also benefit from sessions that explore 'living in the wider world'. Bespoke in nature, these will depend very much on the circumstances of pupils themselves. Leaders could articulate clearly how this work will promote an understanding of democracy and the rule of law, celebrate diversity and different cultures, as well as enable pupils to learn about each other and their unique backgrounds.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- Leaders understand their duties regarding promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff. However, at the time of this inspection, the school did not have an adequate fire risk assessment. Nor were there clear records about when the fire alarm system or extinguishers had last been serviced.
- Leaders are suitably experienced, particularly in their role as facilitators of private fostering or host-family arrangements for the proposed school's pupils, most of whom will be from countries within the European Union.
- Leaders have attended appropriate safeguarding training. This includes the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and her deputy. Additional training to focus on elements of guardianship has also been undertaken as part of the deputy DSL's training.
- All staff will attend appropriate safeguarding training during their induction and then on an ongoing basis. Central to staff training will be that they are well equipped to understand and identify potential safeguarding issues on a proactive basis.
- The curriculum will support pupils to stay safe both in and out of school. It will cover such aspects as staying safe when accessing the internet and when using social media.
- The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and is compliant with current guidelines.

Paragraphs 9–10

- The school has suitable behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Leaders understand the additional challenges that come with pupils living with host families. They know that communication between school, pupils and host families needs to be strong. Staff will be expected to be vigilant when considering such risks. These include the potential for online bullying or problems with unregulated internet use that might have a negative impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school.
- The behaviour policy is tailored to the context of the school. It takes into account that most pupils will live with host families. Clear rules are evident, as are sanctions for poor behaviour. Leaders understand the implications of poor behaviour on the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Staff already employed by the proprietor are experienced at anticipating and identifying problems with pupils' conduct before they become a problem.

Paragraphs 11–16(b)

- The school has suitable health and safety and risk assessment policies. Leaders understand their duties to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the school. However, during the inspection, it became clear that the fire risk assessment was very dated, and that service records for fire extinguishers and the fire alarm system were not available.
- The school has a first-aid policy. Key staff will be suitably trained to deliver first aid if required. This includes at the college site where pupils will spend most of their study periods.

- Staff-to-pupil ratios will be high. Classes will be small. Leaders have an appropriate behaviour policy in place. Admissions and attendance registers will be kept in accordance with regulations. Leaders understand the additional problems that may manifest due to the split nature of the school's sites. Arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils attend school on time and regularly.
- The school is unlikely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards because of the shortcomings identified with fire risk assessment and other aspects of fire safety.

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

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3)–21(3)(b), 21(5)–21(6), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(4), 21(7)(a)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders know about the checks that need to be made on adults working with children in regulated activities. These include all of the required verifications such as medical fitness and qualification checks. Leaders are clear that staff will not begin work at the school without the necessary checks and references being in place.
- The single central register (SCR) of staff checks is already established, is sound, and is administered competently. Minor adjustments were made to the SCR during this inspection to make it entirely compliant with current guidelines.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- The proposed school will occupy two sites. The main building will be mostly used for administrative purposes, although it does contain teaching spaces that the proprietor will use on occasion. The proprietor sees the main site as a meeting point and a place where pupils will attend activities such as one-to-one meetings with their tutors, for instance.
- The main building is fit for purpose. It includes a medical room and suitable toilet facilities for pupils and for staff. Lighting and acoustics are adequate. Drinking water is available and clearly marked as such.
- The proprietor will also lease accommodation from a local college. This arrangement will include classroom and communal facilities, including areas for pupils to take breaks. It will also include the use of the college's medical room and dining facilities.
- The college is the sixth form of a voluntary-aided Catholic secondary school. The lead inspector visited the college premises and met with the head of college as part of this pre-registration inspection. The facilities at the college meet the requirements of Part 5 of the independent school standards.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(d), 32(1)(f)–32(1)(g), 32(1)(j)–32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(d)–32(3)(a), 32(3)(c)–32(4)(c)

- Leaders are aware of the requirement to provide specified information detailed within Part 6. They also know that they need to publish certain reports and other information as necessary on the school's website, particularly information required by parents and carers.
- The school plans to provide regular written reports to parents and carers.
- The website includes all of the required information such as policies, contact details, and information about the school's education provision. This includes the school's safeguarding and complaints policies.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33–33(k)

- Leaders understand the requirements of Part 7. They also understand that it is equally important to tackle any worries or minor concerns expressed by parents or pupils in a timely manner, when the context of the school is taken into account.
- The complaints policy and procedures are clear to understand. They are published on the school's website and available in paper form on request. They set out clear timescales for the management of any complaint.
- Leaders plan to keep any copies of complaints confidentially and available for inspection on the school premises.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- Leaders, including both directors, have a good understanding of the independent school standards. Although this will be a small school, leaders and managers have a wide range of appropriate experience. This is particularly the case as far as providing for foreign national pupils on short- or medium-term placements.
- The school will be run by a staff board, which will answer to the principal. The principal is also the chair and one of two co-directors of the proprietor.
- Members of the board are directly responsible for well-being, academic achievement, curriculum leadership and the safeguarding of pupils, including liaison with host families.
- The proprietor does not intend the school to have a governing body in the first instance, although may see this as appropriate if the school is approved by The

Secretary of State, and after the school has been in operation for an appropriate amount of time.

- Leaders have a clear understanding of their duties to actively promote the well-being of pupils.
- The school is unlikely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the independent school standards due mainly to the shortcomings identified at Part 3.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have compiled a suitable accessibility plan to improve access to the premises. Leaders intend to update the plan at appropriate intervals. The school is likely to meet paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	148591
DfE registration number	846/6030
Inspection number	10193291

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 school
Proprietor	South England Exchange Ltd
Chair	Juliet Cassells
Principal	Juliet Cassels
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,000
Telephone number	07796 997 780
Website	https://southenglandexchange.org/
Email address	info@southenglandexchange.org
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	15–17	15–17
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	50	24

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- In discussions with the chair (who is also the principal), it was clear that the original application had overestimated the number of pupils the proposed school will actually cater for. This is especially the case in the first instance. The proprietor predicts that the school will open in February 2022 with approximately 16 pupils. There is no intention to have 50 pupils in the first year or so of the school's opening. Moreover, although the school's premises would accommodate 50 pupils, the proposed level of staffing would

not be safe for up to 50 pupils. A sensible compromise is to allow up to 24 pupils if the proposed school is approved.

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	Up to 50
Number of part-time pupils	N/A	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	0
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	0
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	0

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	N/A

Information about this proposed school

- The administrative headquarters of the proposed school will be situated on a site leased by the proprietor in the centre of Brighton. This site will also serve as a pastoral hub where students will meet with mentors and attend other gatherings with staff and/or their peers.
- The school will also lease classrooms and other facilities from Newman College, part of Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Sixth Form College, situated in Brighton.

- The school will operate on a similar basis to a sixth-form college and provide a range of short- and medium-term programmes for mainly international students.
- Students attending the school will live with private foster carers (host families). South England Exchange Ltd facilitates these arrangements, refers the arrangements to the relevant authorities and monitors the welfare of students.
- The school will be led and managed by the principal, who is also the chair of South England Exchange Ltd, a company with one other director.
- The school will not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.
- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school. The purpose of the inspection was to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Schools must comply with the independent school standards to be registered.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the independent school standards, safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector toured both sites of the proposed school's facilities. He reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the SCR, policies, and curriculum and assessment information.
- The inspector met with the principal, who represented the proprietor, and who was accompanied by the school's office manager. The inspector also met with the head of college of Newman College.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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