

The King Alfred School

Lake Street, Lower Gornal, Dudley DY3 2AU

Inspection date

30 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

Paragraphs 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)(f), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i) and 3(i)

- The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, and the chair of the governing board clearly articulate their vision for the proposed school. Through the classical education curriculum they intend to support pupils to become 'heirs of the past, children of the present and makers of the future'. They set out how the curriculum will develop the whole child, while at the same time underpinning and supporting academic achievement. The planned curriculum, which covers the early years and primary phases, is aligned to the early years foundation stage curriculum and covers all national curriculum subjects.
- It is intended that pupils will undertake a baseline assessment when they start at the school. Termly assessments and ongoing teacher assessment will inform teaching activities. Small class sizes will also help to ensure that the individual needs of every pupil will be met, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Curriculum plans and documents are very prescriptive in relation to what is taught. They also provide clear guidance on how the subject content should be delivered. The curriculum has three distinct areas: knowledge, logic and rhetoric. The primary phase focuses heavily on knowledge, but there are opportunities for pupils to question and reason, as well as to articulate and explain what they have learned. Curriculum plans indicate that pupils are likely to access a broad range of experiences in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative education.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(j) and 4

- Leaders demonstrate the necessary knowledge and expertise to improve pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and levels of motivation. Leaders say that the curriculum will

support them in these endeavours. This combination is likely to support pupils in making good academic progress in line with their ability.

- Leaders have created a bright and welcoming learning environment. The three classrooms and early years outdoor learning environment have already been set up. Displays and resources have been chosen to support learning. The furniture is suitable for the age of the pupils who will attend the proposed school. Teachers will be provided with published schemes linked to the school's chosen curriculum to support the planning and delivery of lessons. Examples of these teaching resources were seen during the inspection.
- The headteacher and the other teachers who intend to work in the school have qualified teacher status. Leaders want pupils to be taught by highly qualified staff, with good subject knowledge.
- The headteacher talks confidently about how she will check on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The headteacher plans to carry out a range of monitoring activities, including lesson visits and interviews of pupils. These findings will be used to identify any training for staff that is required to improve the quality of teaching in the school.
- The proprietor has ensured that 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 classical education curriculum provides pupils with daily opportunities to speak publicly within the classroom and on occasions to a wider audience. It is intended that this will develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, while at the same time improving their levels of self-confidence. The chosen curriculum aims to increase pupils' thirst for learning and their appreciation of the natural beauty that exists in the world around them.
- There is no evidence in curriculum plans and wider documentation to suggest that fundamental British values will be undermined. Rather, the headteacher and the chair of the governing board explain clearly and specifically how these values will be promoted through the school's curriculum and other activities.
- Leaders are keen to develop pupils' voice in all aspects of school life. This will include making daily choices, such as playtime activities, as well as making choices linked to special events, such as deciding on the venue for the annual trip to reward positive behaviour.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b) and 32(1)(c) [Part 6. Provision of information]

- The school's safeguarding policy takes account of the most recent government guidance and is available on the school's website.
- The headteacher, who will be the designated safeguarding lead, has completed suitable training in relation to this role.

- Safeguarding training for staff has been provisionally booked for the beginning of September. The planned training, provided by Dudley local authority, will focus on noticing signs and symptoms of abuse and dealing with disclosures. It will also cover specific safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty. It is intended that members of the governing board will attend this training.
- Leaders demonstrate the necessary knowledge and understanding to make sure that pupils are kept as safe as possible throughout the school day and beyond. Leaders have carefully thought through the daily activities and considered the associated risks. They display a secure understanding of safeguarding pupils from harm.
- The planned personal, social, health and economic curriculum is likely to help pupils to learn how to keep safe in different situations, including when they are learning online.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c) and 10

- Leaders have put together a detailed behaviour policy. The school's approach to behaviour management aligns with their Christian ethos of 'love your neighbour as yourself'. This ethos underpins all the work that the proposed school intends to do. The intention is to create a purposeful environment where pupils feel safe and confident to learn. The curriculum and daily routines provide opportunities to praise, reinforce and reward positive behaviour. Rewards include silver and gold coins, as well as a school trip. The headteacher explained how staff will respond to any negative behaviour. The responses will be graduated and will involve parents if required.
- The proposed school has a suitable anti-bullying policy in place. The policy clarifies the definition of bullying and explores the different types of bullying. Once again, the close relationship with parents is at the heart of how leaders intend to deal with any incidents of bullying. The headteacher plans to use termly 'heart, soul, mind and strength' meetings to explore the well-being of pupils and unpick any issues.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- A health and safety policy and other related policies, such as a risk management policy, are in place. It is intended that all staff will be trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid where appropriate.
- A fire risk assessment of the refurbished building has been carried out. Leaders have already responded to all the action points outlined in the risk assessment. This included fitting fire safety doors and purchasing additional fire extinguishers. The headteacher outlined the timetable for the checking of fire safety equipment. Fire safety training for staff has been provisionally booked for early September and will be delivered by the company who carried out the fire risk assessment.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 14 and 15

- There are currently no pupils attending the school. The information that the proposed school plans to include on the admissions register is in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

- The staff-to-pupil ratio suggests that pupils are likely to be suitably supervised throughout the school day. Initially, based on expected pupil numbers and proposed staffing levels, the school will be over staffed.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 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), 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)(b) and 21(5)(c)

- The proposed school has appropriate recruitment procedures in place. This includes obtaining two references prior to interview. All the necessary pre-employment checks will be made before an unconditional offer of employment is made.
- The headteacher and the chair of the governing board completed safer recruitment training in May 2021. They will sit on every recruitment panel.
- The proposed format of the single central register contains the full range of pre-employment checks. It will be stored centrally in an electronic format. The headteacher will update the register as new members of staff are recruited and it will be checked by the chair of the governing board.
- If the school needs to use supply staff, the headteacher is clear about the checks and procedures that would need to be followed. She has already contacted a supply agency to establish a partnership.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2), 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) and 29(1)(b)

- The proposed school is located in what used to be a Sunday school building adjacent to a church. There is internal access between the two buildings, but this is secured by a locked door.
- The premises have been newly refurbished and decorated to a high standard. All rooms are well-lit and have good acoustics. There are two larger classrooms and one smaller classroom. There is a large hall that can be used for indoor physical education lessons, assemblies, lunchtimes and other community activities. Leaders are considering using part of the hall as an additional classroom if required. There is suitable space for the proposed number of pupils to learn.
- There are separate boys' and girls' toilets with hot and cold running water and handwashing facilities. Both are in close proximity to the medical room. The medical room is situated in the main office and there is sufficient space for a pupil to be examined and treated. It will contain a portable washbasin facility. There is a separate toilet for staff and visitors.

- There is an outdoor area that is secured by an external fence and a coded gate. The outdoor area has been set up into two distinct sections. One has been developed to support outdoor learning in the early years and the other is an area for older pupils to play and socialise. The outdoor area is large enough to cater for some aspects of the physical education curriculum. There is a car park adjacent to the building that parents can use when dropping off and collecting their children.
- Drinking water is available in the classrooms for pupils throughout the day. Water jugs will be filled from taps in the staff's kitchen, but it is not anticipated that pupils will enter the kitchen.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d) and 32(3)(f)

- The school's website provides a range of information, including relevant contact details and the main aims of the proposed setting. All required policies are available through the website. Leaders shared the format of the school's prospectus, which contains a range of useful information for parents.
- All policies, documents and information required for the pre-registration inspection were provided in a timely manner. All information has been dovetailed with the proposed school's Christian ethos and the classical education curriculum.
- Termly written reports will provide parents with information about their child's achievement in each of the subjects being taught. For each subject, two grades will be awarded linked to attainment and effort. Pupils' individual targets will also be included in the report. The report will include comments from the teacher and the headteacher. The headteacher's comment will be formulated after the termly 'heart, soul, mind and strength' meetings that she proposes to hold with every pupil. A more detailed annual report will be provided at the end of each academic year.
- The proprietor has ensured that 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) and 33(k)

- The complaints procedure sets out the steps that parents and carers need to take if they have a concern about the proposed school. The aim is to resolve complaints informally where possible, but more formal steps are outlined if required, including a panel hearing. It sets out a suitable timeframe for dealing with complaints. There was no evidence of how previous complaints have been handled, due to the fact that the school is not currently operating.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor and the chair of the governing board are clear about why they want to register as an independent school. They have a passion for the classical education curriculum, which they are keen to develop. Their intention is to educate well-rounded pupils who can contribute to society both today and in the future. This aligns closely with the school's Christian ethos.
- The proprietor is also the headteacher. As a result, the board of governors will play a crucial role in supporting and holding the headteacher to account. The chair of the board of governors has experience of sitting on a governing body in another school. He is also the chair of the Association of Christian Teachers. The chair has experience of working in schools, linked to his position as a reverend, delivering assemblies and other activities. The governing board will be made up of members with different specialisms that will be utilised to support and hold school leaders to account. The chair of the governing board and the headteacher have already agreed systems and protocols that will be followed so that the governing board can monitor different aspects of school life.
- Leaders demonstrate a good understanding of the independent school standards. The proprietor plans to employ the skills of a compliance officer who will check that the school continues to meet the independent school standards over time. This information will then be passed on to the governing board who will use this information to monitor specific aspects of the school.
- The proprietor has ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have ensured that they have a suitable accessibility plan in place that meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proposed school considers and plans for the needs of pupils with SEND.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

- The proposed school's curriculum for children in the early years is aligned to the prime and specific areas of the early years foundation stage curriculum. Curriculum plans indicate that children's learning and development requirements will be met.
- It is likely that all safeguarding and welfare requirements for the early years will 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	148564
DfE registration number	332/6011
Inspection number	10184876

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	Hayley Bowen
Headteacher	Hayley Bowen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,000
Telephone number	01902 920404
Website	www.thekingalfredschoo.co.uk
Email address	kingalfredschoo@outlook.com

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	3 to 11	3 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	47	47

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	47
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0

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

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school will operate from a site that was formerly a Sunday school building. The building is being rented from Lake Street Methodist Church that is next door.
- The proposed school will have a Christian ethos, but it will not be linked to a particular denomination. While it is anticipated that pupils may come from Christian families, leaders expect to admit pupils of a different faith, or no faith, providing parents support the ethos and aims of the school.
- The proposed school intends to cater for boys and girls from Nursery to Year 6.
- The proposed school intends to admit children in the early years phase initially. As these pupils move up through the school, leaders anticipate that pupil numbers will increase.
- The school does not intend to make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the DfE during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards if it is given permission to open. This is the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many documents were submitted electronically and were reviewed remotely by the lead inspector prior to the inspection. Several additional documents, including the format of the school's single central register, were scrutinised on site.
- As the inspection included a full-day, on-site visit, a tour of the premises was possible.
- Social distancing was maintained throughout the inspection. This was aided by the fact that the proposed school currently has no pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher. He also met with the chair of the governing board and a teacher who plans to work in the proposed school.
- The proprietor, the chair of the governing board and the teacher attended the final feedback meeting, which was conducted on site.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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