

# Demetae Academy

Linden House, 17a King Street, Newcastle Under Lyme ST5 1JF

**Inspection date**

21 July 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 chair of the proprietor body, who is also the headteacher, clearly articulates his vision for the proposed school.
- Through the merging of the progressive education approach and the national curriculum, the proposed school intends to support pupils to achieve their full potential. The headteacher sets out how the curriculum will develop the whole child, while at the same time underpinning and supporting academic achievement.
- Curriculum plans and documents are detailed and prescriptive in relation to what is taught. However, teachers will have flexibility in the way that they deliver curriculum content. It is intended that lessons will respond to the needs and interests of pupils in an attempt to make learning as engaging as possible. 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 headteacher says, 'The school is not solely based within these four walls.' He is determined to make sure that learning outside of the school building forms an important element of the curriculum. The headteacher has secured the use of a farmer's field, the outdoor space and tennis courts surrounding a village hall, a local yoga studio, Trentham Gardens, a local authority field and a function room in the hotel over the road from the school. Some of these facilities are in walking distance, but some will require use of the school's minibus.
- It is intended that pupils will undertake a baseline assessment in English and mathematics when they start at the school. Formal assessments and ongoing teacher assessment will inform teaching activities. Small class sizes will help to ensure that the individual needs of every pupil are likely to be met, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The proprietor body 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*

- The proprietor body has created a bright and welcoming learning environment. The three classrooms have already been partially set up. The furniture is suitable for the age of the pupils who will attend the proposed school. Teachers will be provided with curriculum plans to support the planning and delivery of lessons. The headteacher is keen to refine and improve the curriculum plans over time.
- The headteacher and the other teacher who intends to work in the school have qualified teacher status. Leaders intend that pupils will be taught by highly qualified staff, with good subject knowledge.
- The headteacher talks confidently about how he will check on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. He plans to carry out a range of formal and informal monitoring activities, including lesson visits, looking at books and interviewing pupils. The headteacher plans to use these findings to identify any staff's training that is required to improve the quality of teaching in the school.
- The proprietor body 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 headteacher provides example of how pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development will be promoted through the curriculum and special events. The school's SMSC policy states that pupils will be taught to develop a respect for their own culture and that of others.
- The progressive approach to education aims to help pupils develop a thirst for learning new things. It is intended that this will support pupils, who may have become disengaged with learning, to fully access the curriculum.
- There is no evidence in curriculum plans and wider documentation to suggest that fundamental British values will be undermined. Rather, the headteacher explains clearly how these values will be promoted through the school's curriculum and other activities. Pupils will be taught that everyone is equal, so that they are accepting of differences in the diverse community in which they live.
- The headteacher is keen to develop pupils' voice in all aspects of school life. Everyone having a say underpins the progressive education approach. It is one of the reasons why the proprietor body decided to apply to open a school. This will include making daily choices linked to the curriculum, as well as making other choices, such as what new school equipment to purchase.
- The proprietor body 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. The school's website is currently under construction. In the meantime, a paper copy of the policy would be made available to parents and carers on request.

- The headteacher, who will be the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), has undertaken suitable training in relation to this role. This training was completed in July 2021.
- The DSL demonstrates the necessary knowledge and understanding to make sure that pupils are kept as safe as possible while in school and beyond the school gate. The DSL displays a secure understanding of safeguarding pupils from harm.
- The four members of staff appointed so far are currently completing initial, online safeguarding training. The training covers noticing signs and symptoms of abuse and dealing with disclosures. It also covers specific safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty. The headteacher intends to create a record of staff's training that will also alert leaders to when renewal training is required.
- 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 working online.
- The proprietor body 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 clear and detailed behaviour policy. The intention is to create a calm environment where pupils feel safe and confident to learn. In collaboration with staff and pupils, the headteacher is keen to develop 'diamond five' rules, which will apply to all aspects of school life. The curriculum and daily routines provide opportunities to praise, reinforce and reward positive behaviour. Rewards include postcards home and 'diamond five' stickers. The headteacher explained how staff will respond to any negative behaviour. The responses will be graduated and will involve parents if required. The headteacher is aware that some pupils may require a more individual behaviour programme in relation to their needs.
- 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, including cyber bullying. If bullying occurs, staff will work with the perpetrator to unpick the reason for their behaviour in an attempt to ensure that it does not happen again. The victim of any bullying will also be supported. Parents will also be involved in this process.
- The proprietor body 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 assessment policy, are appropriate and in place.
- A fire risk assessment of the refurbished building was carried out at the start of July 2021. The six action points identified in the risk assessment are scheduled to be addressed before the end of August 2021 by the company who carried out the fire risk assessment. The headteacher outlined the timetable for the checking of fire safety equipment.
- Two members of staff completed paediatric first-aid training very recently. The headteacher intends to make sure that all staff are first-aid trained, due to the relatively small size of the school.
- The proprietor body 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 numbers of pupils and proposed levels of staffing, the school will be over staffed.
- The proprietor body 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), 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)(b), 21(5)(c) and 21(6)*

- The proposed school has appropriate recruitment procedures in place. This includes obtaining two references as part of the selection process. All the necessary pre-employment checks will be made before an unconditional offer of employment is made.
- The headteacher completed safer recruitment training in July 2021. He will sit on every recruitment panel.
- The proposed format of the single central record contains the full range of pre-employment checks. It will be stored centrally in an electronic format. A member of the office staff will update the record as new members of staff are recruited and it will be checked by the headteacher.
- If the school needs to use supply staff, the headteacher is clear about the checks and procedures that need to be followed. He has already identified a local supply agency that the school may use.
- The proprietor body 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 a former hotel, later the premises for an accountancy firm.
- The premises have been newly refurbished and decorated to a high standard. All rooms are well-lit and have good acoustics. There are three classrooms, a small library and an additional room for pupil interventions. There is suitable space for the proposed number of pupils to learn. The second floor of the building contains a room that will only be used by staff. Pupils will not be allowed to use this room as it is

accessible by a steep staircase. A child gate is planned to be fitted before the end of August 2021 to further restrict access for pupils.

- There is a block of unisex toilets with cubicles that can be secured from the inside. An additional toilet has been set aside for younger children. Handwashing facilities with hot and cold running water are available in both. Finishing touches to the toilets were due to be made shortly after the inspection. There is a separate toilet for staff and visitors. The medical room will be situated in the main office on the ground floor, which is near to a toilet and the kitchen. There is sufficient space for a pupil to be examined and treated. The medical room will contain a portable washbasin facility.
- There are two outdoor spaces within the school grounds. The smaller space will be used to support outdoor learning for the Reception class and younger pupils. The larger outdoor space at the front of the school is intended to be used as a playground. Currently, an exterior wall and boundary is being built around the playground at the front of the school. This work is planned to be finished before the end of August 2021 and documents were seen by the lead inspector to confirm this. The boundary will incorporate a locked external gate with an intercom that parents can use to gain access to the school. Additional work is also planned over the next couple of weeks to make better use of space in the two outdoor areas, including work to replace two steep steps in the smaller outdoor space. The playground is not big enough to cater for physical education lessons, but these are planned to take place off site.
- Drinking water will be available for pupils throughout the day. Two water dispensers have been ordered and are due to be delivered shortly.
- The proprietor body 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)(ii), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e) and 32(3)(f)*

- Currently, the proposed school does not have a live website, but one is being constructed by an external company. The headteacher shared a copy of the proposed school's brochure with the inspection team. The brochure contains a range of information, including relevant contact details, the proprietor body's vision and the main aims of the proposed setting.
- All policies, documents and information required for the pre-registration inspection were provided in a timely manner. All information has been aligned with the proposed school's progressive education approach. Paper copies of policies and documents are made available to parents on request.
- An annual report will provide parents with information about their child's achievement in each of the subjects being taught. Strengths and weaknesses will be outlined, incorporating individual pupil's targets. The report will include a general comment from the teacher. A less detailed termly report will provide information about whether pupils are on track to meet their end of year expectations. This report will be issued the week before the planned termly parents' evening.
- The proprietor body 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 need to take if they have a concern about the proposed school. The proposed school aims to resolve complaints informally where possible, but more formal steps are outlined if required, including a panel hearing. The policy 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 body 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 chair of the proprietor body is clear about why he wants to register and open an independent school. He intends to bring together what he considers to be the best parts of the progressive and mainstream approaches to education.
- The headteacher demonstrates a good understanding of the independent school standards. In addition, he has experience of being a headteacher in a mainstream primary school. His knowledge, expertise and experience were evident during the inspection and through the preparations that he had carried out prior to the inspection.
- The chair of the proprietor body is also the headteacher. As a result, a board of members has been set up. They will play a crucial role in supporting and holding the headteacher to account for different aspects of school life. So far, two members have been appointed. One member has extensive experience in education and the other member has experience in business and finance. Both board members share the headteacher's passion for opening the school. They say they will question everything and will not be afraid to challenge the headteacher to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils. Although the board members possess a lot of expertise, they both accept that their knowledge of the independent school standards is quite superficial and is something they intend to improve. The headteacher is currently in discussions with a police officer and a retired headteacher to see if they too can join the board.
- The proprietor body 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 Reception class is cross-referenced to the prime and specific areas of the early years foundation stage curriculum. There is a focus on the outcomes that children are expected to achieve.

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	148598
DfE registration number	860/6086
Inspection number	10193290

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 body	Demetae Academy Ltd
Chair	Matthew Davies
Headteacher	Matthew Davies
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,400 to £8,850
Telephone number	01782 893079
Website	None
Email address	headteacher@demetaeacademy.org.uk

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	4 to 11	4 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	40	40

## 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	40
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0

Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	10
Of which, number of pupils an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	5
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	5

### Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	7
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 is located in Newcastle Under Lyme in close proximity to Stoke-on-Trent.
- The proposed school will operate from a building that was formerly a hotel and later the premises of an accountancy firm. The building is being rented from a private landlord and the proprietor body has a 20-year lease.
- The proposed school does not have a religious ethos.
- The proposed school intends to cater for boys and girls from Reception to Year 6.
- 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 record, 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 chair of proprietor body, who is also the headteacher. The team inspector spoke with two board members via telephone calls.
- The chair of the proprietor body attended the final feedback meeting, which was conducted on site.

## Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Howes

Her Majesty's Inspector

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