

Burstow Park School

Antlands Lane, Burstow, Shipley Bridge RH6 9TF

Inspection date

10 August 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)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h)–2(2)(i)

- Leaders are experienced in working with pupils who have often had an unsettled and disjointed education and so have significant gaps in learning. They plan to deliver a curriculum which will support pupils' academic, social, physical and emotional needs.
- Leaders will identify pupils' starting points when they join the school and will tailor the curriculum accordingly. Curriculum plans, which are closely aligned with the national curriculum, will be adjusted to support pupils' individual needs.
- Teachers intend to focus on teaching English, mathematics and science when pupils first join the school. However, pupils will study an adequate breadth of subjects over time, including art, physical education (PE) and relationships and sex education. The school plans to provide pupils with access to a range of academic options, including GCSE courses.
- Assemblies, debating sessions, reading times and 'personal interest sessions' will also be regular features of the school timetable. Opportunities to learn about subjects such as history and geography will be woven into the curriculum wherever relevant and meaningful.
- All pupils will benefit from appropriate careers guidance. The school will also support pupils to develop valuable life skills which will prepare them to live independently, such as how to complete an application form, open a bank account, or use a washing machine.
- Leaders have commissioned a specialist company to deliver the PE curriculum. Pupils will also have regular opportunities for physical activities in the school grounds and in the local community, such as swimming at a local swimming pool and using local leisure centre facilities.

Paragraphs 3–3(j), 4

- The school's assessment policy clearly describes how teachers will assess pupils' learning. Leaders have identified key principles which will underpin the completion of assessments so that they are fair, meaningful and transparent. Their intention is that

teachers will use ongoing assessments as an everyday part of their practice, as well as more formal assessments.

- The school has made appropriate provision for the teaching of personal, social and health education which will be delivered through a detailed scheme of work. The school's curriculum encourages tolerance and respect for others and aims to promote fundamental British values.
- Leaders' intention is that all staff will be experienced in teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have taken care to recruit staff who have the subject knowledge and skills to deliver the curriculum successfully.
- The school is likely to meet all 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 embed opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the curriculum. For example, the art curriculum will include opportunities for pupils to learn about the work of professional artists and to visit galleries, while the religious education curriculum will provide opportunities for pupils to learn about world religions and religious festivals. The school's curriculum and ethos will ensure that pupils learn about British values.
- The school aims to put 'learning to learn' and 'learning to question' at the core of learning. Pupils will have regular opportunities to debate topical issues. They will be encouraged to consider different opinions, ask questions and develop their own viewpoints, while respecting the views of others. Pupils will also learn how to express their views appropriately.
- Often pupils will have had negative experiences of school prior to joining Burstow Place. The school will aim to develop a sense of belonging, build self-esteem and re-establish pupils' trust in the education system. The school intends to help pupils gain confidence by developing new skills. For example, the school plans to deliver The Prince's Trust Award.
- One-to-one work with teachers and teaching assistants will be central in supporting pupils' social and emotional development. Adults will aim to develop positive and trusting relationships with pupils and will treat pupils with respect.
- Leaders are mindful of the difficulties some pupils are likely to experience in making and sustaining friendships due to their additional needs. The school's aim is that pupils 'feel a sense of belonging, of being safe, wanted and cared for'. The school's behaviour policy focuses on 'nurture through structure', with the aim that pupils will learn and achieve 'in partnership with staff and peers'.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- The school's safeguarding policy meets current requirements. The policy provides key information clearly, including direct contact details with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the designated officer. The school plans to adopt an 'it could happen here' approach to safeguarding. The policy is available on request until the school's website is completed.
- The headteacher is the DSL. She is well qualified and suitably experienced.

Paragraphs 9–9(c), 10

- The school has suitable behaviour and anti-bullying policies which are likely to meet the requirements of Part 3. Leaders plan to develop a whole-staff approach to behaviour management. All staff will be involved in monitoring and discussing implementation of the policies to ensure consistency. The policies set out clear procedures, with an emphasis on the use of preventative and de-escalation strategies.
- The school's health and safety and risk assessment policies are fit for purpose. The policies specify staff's roles and responsibilities. Risk assessments already completed are detailed and comprehensive, with carefully considered mitigating actions identified.
- Leaders give fire safety an appropriately high priority. They have been working with a fire specialist company to ensure that the school complies with all fire safety regulations.
- Fire safety audits have been completed and leaders have taken action to address each recommendation. For example, fire doors have been fitted to all first-floor rooms, with the final fire door installed during the inspection. Leaders plan to include fire safety for staff as part of induction training, with annual refresher training. All staff will be 'fire marshals' during emergency evacuations.
- The school has an appropriate first-aid policy in place. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are trained first aiders. All staff will have the opportunity to complete first-aid training.
- The recruitment of staff is nearly complete. The proprietor intends to recruit sufficient staff to provide adequate supervision of pupils.
- Leaders plan to establish suitable procedures to ensure that admissions and attendance registers will be maintained in accordance with paragraph 15.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

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

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(3), 19(2)–19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders have completed safer recruitment training. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of the importance of following appropriate recruitment procedures to ensure staff's suitability. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that staff complete safeguarding training on joining the school.

- The single central record is in place and is likely to meet requirements. Systems are in place to ensure that recruitment and suitability checks are likely to be maintained properly.
- The school is likely to meet all 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 a large, period building within substantial, well-kept grounds. The building comprises a large number of rooms over four floors. Leaders plan to allocate the ground and first floors for classroom use. The third floor will be reserved for staff's use. The room on the fourth floor will be used as the headteacher's office.
- The completed ground floor of the building has been renovated and refurbished to a high standard. All rooms are clean, lit well and are acoustically sound. The accommodation includes bright, airy classrooms and a medical room, as well as space for offices, a staff room, meeting areas and kitchens. Newly installed water fountains will ensure that pupils have ready access to drinking water. The ground floor rooms would accommodate 20 pupils safely and comfortably.
- Refurbishment work on the first floor had not been completed fully at the time of the inspection. For example, plaster work had not been finished around the newly fitted fire doors, some of the internet cabling in the classroom ceilings had not been capped off and there was broken plaster on one of the walls at the base of the stairs leading to the first floor. Leaders are confident that this work will be completed in the next few days. The building will provide ample space for the proposed number of pupils once the remaining refurbishment work has been completed on the first floor.
- The attractive and extensive grounds provide plenty of scope for outdoor learning, socialising and PE activities. Leaders have decided to fence a large section of the ground for normal use during the school day so that pupils can learn and socialise safely while supervised appropriately.
- The building has appropriate toilet and shower facilities for pupils and staff, with hot and cold running water.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part of the independent school standards if the school is registered for 20 pupils.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(4)(c)

- The school's proposed website is currently under construction but is nearing completion. Leaders are clear about the information they will need to include on the website to ensure that it meets requirements.
- Leaders plan to provide full, annual reports for parents which will detail pupils' attainment, progress and attendance.

- Annual reviews will take place for those pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Leaders are currently in the process of recruiting a special educational needs coordinator who will oversee this process.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33–33(k)

- The school has a suitable written complaints policy which they plan to publish on its website. In the meantime, the policy is available in paper form on request.
- The complaints policy is informed by guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE) and includes the opportunity to consider any complaints informally initially. The policy also sets out suitable arrangements and timescales for formal complaint procedures.
- The policy indicates a positive culture around responding to complaints and advocates consideration of any concerns raised 'at the earliest possible stage'. The policy states that complaints will be regarded as 'an opportunity to review and improve our provision; a learning opportunity'.
- The school is likely to meet all 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)

- Both the headteacher and the proprietor have extensive experience of running registered provision for vulnerable pupils. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards. Leaders have ensured that all requirements are likely to be met should the DfE agree the proposed school.
- Systems and structures for the leadership, management and governance of the school are likely to support it to fulfil statutory requirements and achieve its aims.
- The proprietor does not intend the school to have a governing body in the first instance but is considering the possibility of establishing a parent board in the future, which would provide additional accountability for school leaders.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part of the independent school standards.

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 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	148736
DfE registration number	936/6055
Inspection number	10202616

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 special school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Burstow Park School Ltd
Chair	Vivienne Spence
Headteacher	Emma Slaughter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,500
Telephone number	01293 226940
Website	www.burstowparkschool.org
Email address	emmaslaughter@cornerways.org

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	11 to 18	11 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	50	20

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- Improvements to the school's first floor accommodation had not been completed at the time of the inspection. This means that the school would be unable to accommodate the proposed 50 pupils. The headteacher intends to admit 17 pupils in September 2021 in the first instance. Renovations to the school's ground floor accommodation have been completed to a high standard and this would provide suitable accommodation for up to 20 pupils. A sensible way forward would be to allow the school to admit up to 20 pupils who would be taught on the ground floor if the proposed school is approved.

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	Up to 50
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	50
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	50

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this proposed school

- The school intends to cater wholly for pupils with SEND. Leaders intend that the school will specialise in providing education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils may well have associated conditions such as autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Most will have an EHC plan and their places will be funded by a local authority.
- The proposed school's mission statement states that the school is 'dedicated to improving the education, achievements and life chances of vulnerable or excluded children'.

- The school will be led and managed by the headteacher. The headteacher also leads and manages a similar school in Reigate, Surrey, which is run by Cornerways Children's Services Ltd.
- The proposed school will be situated in a large, period building set in extensive grounds in a rural location in Burstow, Surrey.

Information about this inspection

- 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. This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school.
- 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 the school and discussed proposals and plans for the new school with the headteacher, a representative of the proprietor and the project manager for the building work. She reviewed a wide range of documentation before and during the on-site visit, including the single central record, policies and curriculum and assessment information.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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