

Phoenix Bay School

The Acorn Centre, Lummaton Cross, Barton, Torquay, Devon, TQ2 8ET

Inspection dates

26 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

Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4

- Leaders have a clear vision for the school. The proposed curriculum has been carefully designed to ensure breadth and capture the interest of pupils, as well as promote pupils' progress. Leaders plan to give pupils access to the same range of subjects as included in the national curriculum.
- The curriculum policy, proposed organisation of the school and curriculum plans are likely to meet the needs of pupils with social, emotional and mental health concerns. Class sizes are proposed to be small and no more than six. The proposed school site will allow for the delivery of the curriculum. Curriculum planning is suitably flexible to allow leaders to adjust provision to meet the individual needs of pupils.
- Leaders intend that all pupils admitted to the school will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Curriculum planning is built around six distinct elements, one of which will be pupils' personal, social and health education. Leaders rightly recognise that securing such pupils' emotional well-being and reintegration into education is likely to need extra attention.
- Leaders' plans for the assessment of pupils are appropriate. Leaders have considered how they will use assessment to adapt learning to meet pupils' individual needs. Careers advice will be a key part of the design of the curriculum and its implementation. For example, learning mentors will support pupils to identify areas of strength and interest and how this can be translated into long-term aspirations and pathways. At the same time, leaders intend to deliver careers advice and careers events collaboratively with other schools in the area when needed.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5

- Developing pupils' personal and social development in preparation to contribute to modern British society underpins the intended curriculum. Due to the needs of the pupils that the school is planning to serve, the curriculum is particularly focused on

giving pupils a range of useful experiences to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The school's policies incorporate the promotion of fundamental British values. Leaders recognise the challenge in ensuring that pupils continue to integrate and socialise within their local community. As such, curriculum planning includes opportunities for pupils to learn socially. Leaders intend to deliver regular assemblies and allow pupils to celebrate success. Leaders are also looking to secure partnerships with local provision so that pupils gain opportunities to learn alongside peers who do not attend the school.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16

- Policies and procedures for the proposed school relating to this area are well considered. They reflect the setting and the intended provision well. For example, the health and safety policy includes how leaders intend to work with the local council, who own and maintain the buildings. Policies and procedures for health, safety (including fire safety), risk assessment, first aid and safeguarding are at least sound, and in some cases strong.
- The school's anti-bullying policy meets expectations. It covers all types of bullying. It gives appropriate guidance to staff on how to respond to concerns and reports of bullying, as well as the expectations around working with children and their families.
- Safer recruitment processes are secure. Safeguarding policies reflect leaders' expectations for appointing new staff, including the appropriate checks that will be made on suitability. Both directors are level-three trained in safeguarding. They intend to act as the designated and deputy designated safeguarding leads. There are useful plans in place to form a governing body, one member of which will have an overview of safeguarding policy and practice.
- The proposed school's behaviour policy is strong. It reflects an understanding of trauma-informed practice and the needs of pupils that leaders intend the school to serve. The policy details how leaders intend to keep records of sanctions using an online record-keeping tool.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18, 19, 20 and 21

- Leaders have ensured that all the required checks have been made for their roles as directors and school leaders. For example, section 128 checks have been completed, as have Disclosure and Barring Service checks. These are recorded appropriately on a detailed, electronic single central record. Systems for making checks for new staff, recording on the register and leaders' monitoring of the single central record are all robust.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 31

- The directors have secured a former youth centre owned by Torbay Council to use as the premises for the school. As well as having appropriate space for classrooms, an office, a medical room and a canteen, the site will give access to a large sports hall with changing rooms and plentiful outside space for breaks and for physical education.
- Due to the premises being maintained by the local council, much of the elements relating to maintenance and health and safety are already well managed. For example, there are already adequate fire safety features, including fire extinguishers, fire doors and emergency lighting. The proposed classrooms are of reasonable size, well-lit and with appropriate acoustics.
- The intended school site will have individual lockable toilets for pupils and separate toilets for staff. All toilets have hot and cold running water. The hot water supply does not present a scalding risk. Drinking water will be appropriately labelled and accessed from the central canteen and dining area.
- Leaders have identified a space which will be used as a medical room near the proposed entrance of the school. The space includes a sink and spaces for the care of pupils who are sick or who need first aid.
- Leaders are in the process of installing appropriate signage to demonstrate how pupils and staff will need to use the areas once adaptations have been made to make it a school. Leaders have also identified appropriate ways to ensure that the site will be secure, as well as safe if there is a need for evacuation.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met once commissioned work has been completed.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32

- Leaders aspire to run the school openly and transparently. All relevant policies are available to parents on request and many feature on the school website, which is in the final stages of development.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The complaints policy meets all expectations of the independent school standards. Appropriate timescales and information about how the process of complaints will be handled are included. The proposed formation of a governing body will ensure that there is a process for complaints, should they be about the headteacher. The policy will appear on the school's website.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Leaders of the proposed school are ensuring that all the relevant standards are likely to be met. Directors, one of whom will also act as the headteacher and the other as the school business manager, demonstrate sound knowledge and experience of school management and running independent schools that cater for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have worked collaboratively with the local council to understand the needs of the area and ensure that their intended provision will be appropriate and viable. Their plans for a governing body sensibly include appropriately skilled people, such as a chief executive officer of a local multi-academy trust.
- Leaders demonstrate a secure knowledge of current national expectations around curriculum planning. Their plans for the overall provision at the school are well-conceived because of the collaboration with local area leaders. Policies and procedures also demonstrate a strong understanding of statutory expectations. For example, policies relating to safeguarding are underpinned by the expectations of 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- All of the proposed school policies and procedures reflect leaders' commitment to meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010. There is an appropriate accessibility plan. This is to be included on the school's website when it goes live.

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 | 148761 |
| DfE registration number | 880/6009 |
| Inspection number | 10204700 |

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 | Independent school |
| School status | Independent special school |
| Proprietor | Phoenix Bay Limited |
| Headteacher | Ross Banks |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £52,000 |
| Telephone number | 07934 857011 |
| Website | Not yet live |
| Email address | r.banks@phoenixbay.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 | 5 to 16 | 5 to 16 | 5 to 16 |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 0 | 15 | 12 |

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- The proposed school setting has two spaces that can be used as classrooms. Leaders intend to have no more than six pupils in a class. Therefore, it is recommended the school admit no more than 12 pupils.

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 | 15 |
| Number of part-time pupils | Not applicable | 0 |
| Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities | Not applicable | 15 |
| Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan | Not applicable | 15 |
| Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan | Not applicable | 15 |

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 | 0 |
| Number of staff in the welfare provision | Not applicable | 10 |

Information about this proposed school

- Phoenix Bay School proposes to provide education for up to 12 pupils aged five to 16. The school site is on the outskirts of Torquay, in Torbay. The proposed premises were formally a youth centre and are owned and maintained by Torbay Council. It is anticipated that pupils will be allocated by local authorities.
- The proprietor is Phoenix Bay Ltd. There are currently two directors of the company; both intend to hold leadership positions when the school first opens. The proprietor does not run any other school.
- The proposed fees will be the same for all pupils admitted to the school. Fees will cover access to teaching, therapy, board and accommodation, as well as other planned enhancements to the intended curriculum.
- The proposed school is not currently operating.
- The proposed school intends to provide education for pupils with an EHC plan, specifically those with social, emotional and mental health needs. The proposed school does not have any religious character.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the Secretary of State for Education. It was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with both directors, one of whom will act as headteacher and the other as the school business manager when the school opens. Both directors will act as designated safeguarding leads. The inspector undertook a tour of the proposed school's premises and grounds.
- The inspector considered documentation related to the proposed school curriculum, including the curriculum policy, schemes of work, templates for individual pupils' planning and proposed assessment information to judge whether Part 1 and Part 2 of the independent school standards are likely to be met.
- The lead inspector considered documentation such as policies, safeguarding records, and plans in place to maintain pupils' safety while on site. These included behaviour and health and safety policies and supporting evidence to confirm effective implementation. He also checked safer recruitment practice and how checks are being recorded on the school's single central record. This, among other activity, helped to determine if standards within Part 3 and Part 4 of the independent school standards are likely to be met.
- The lead inspector evaluated the complaints policy to determine whether standards in Part 7 of the independent school standards are likely to be met.
- The lead inspector toured the site and premises, both internally and externally, to determine if Part 5 of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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