

Priory Park Community School

Meadow Road, Wren's Nest Estate, Dudley DY1 3JY

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

Paragraph 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)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) and 2(2)(i)

- Leaders have a clear vision for this school. Their aim is to re-engage pupils who are likely to have had a poor experience of education in the past. They aim to achieve this by providing pupils with an individualised learning programme that meets their specific needs. Pupils will also access mentoring through a strong partnership with a local boxing club and through outdoor education activities at a local nature reserve.
- The proposed curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 is broad and balanced. It is largely based on the national curriculum. The core curriculum consists of English, mathematics, science, humanities, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, computing, design technology, art and physical education (PE). At key stage 4, leaders plan to offer a range of options to meet pupils' aspirations. Pupils will be able to access courses appropriate to their ability and needs. This will include GCSEs and vocational courses.
- Accredited courses will also be offered by the local boxing club in sports leadership and coaching. Fitness activities will aim to build pupils' resilience, confidence and self-awareness. This is likely to support pupils' mental health and well-being effectively.
- The school's proposed PSHE programme, called Learning4Life, is based on developing pupils' understanding of health and well-being, healthy relationships and living in the wider world. Topics include online grooming in Year 8 and same sex relationships in Year 10. This is likely to support pupils' understanding of protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- The school has planned a careers programme for pupils in Years 7 to 11 that will provide pupils with independent careers advice and guidance. Pupils will have access to individualised work placements throughout the year. They will have mock interviews and advice from an independent careers adviser who will devise their career action plan. This is likely to prepare pupils well for their next stage in education or employment and training.

- Leaders have 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(i), 3(j) and 4

- Leaders are clear about how they will monitor the quality of teaching and learning. This will include formal and informal lesson visits and work scrutinies. An appraisal process will be used to set individual targets for staff's development. These targets will be used to inform the whole training programme for staff, as well as individual training.
- There is an assessment policy in place. This will include both formative and summative assessment. The proposed report to parents includes details about pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement points, strengths in each subject and next steps, and attitudes to learning.
- Leaders talk confidently and expertly about how they will meet pupils' needs, including those related to social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). Each pupil will have an individual learning plan. This plan will include the pupil's intended outcomes, how external agencies may be used to support the individual, support strategies and success criteria. Feedback from pupils will be sought and the plan will be reviewed regularly. Where appropriate, it will relate to a pupil's education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
- Classrooms are currently unfurnished. Inspectors saw evidence that furniture and resources have been ordered. Staff are awaiting delivery.
- Leaders have 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 school's proposed schemes of work are likely to actively promote fundamental British values. For example, in Year 7, the English curriculum will develop pupils' understanding of empowerment by learning about women's rights and ethnic minority equalities. In Year 11, a non-fiction topic is on society and responsibility.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is likely to be supported well through pupils accessing a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include fire service workshops, police workshops and functional skills visits. Pupils are likely to learn how to become active, responsible citizens through their involvement in raising money for charity and litter picking in the local community.
- In the Learning4Life programme, pupils will have the opportunity to discuss extreme views and debate about sending foreign aid to countries. This is likely to present pupils with balanced views.
- Leaders have 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]

- Leaders demonstrate a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding. They have the relevant qualifications and experience needed. The

safeguarding policy adheres to current government guidance. It explains clearly how the school intends to meet pupils' additional vulnerabilities.

- Leaders set out clear expectations for staff's conduct in the school's policies. This includes how to report and follow up concerns about pupils, reporting health and safety issues and whistleblowing.
- The planned Learning4Life programme is likely to help pupils keep themselves safe. The proposed scheme of work includes learning how to deal with strangers, boundaries and consent and safety online.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

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

- The school's behaviour policy is based on the principle of 'iCAN'. The emphasis is on pupils feeling safe and supporting them with strategies on how to prevent the escalation of unwanted behaviours.
- The policy states that the school is committed to developing an attachment and trauma-sensitive approach. It recognises the complexities of the children and young people who are likely to be in the setting. The policy, rather than being highly punitive, focuses on restorative practices and positive rewards.
- The anti-bullying policy sets out the actions staff will take to deal with incidents of bullying. This includes cyber-bullying and prejudicial bullying. It outlines what pupils should do if they are the victims, or observers, of bullying. The policy states that one of the strategies they will use is to educate pupils about bullying, for example through the Learning4Life programme.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

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

- A tour of the premises shows that it is of sound structure and meets the school's requirements in terms of the planned curriculum and the pastoral care it intends to provide for pupils. However, the premises have not been occupied for a number of months. As a result, it is in need of cleaning and decoration. Dudley local authority have conducted the necessary health and safety checks on the premises. However, leaders are aware that they need to have their own checks done. During the inspection, they shared with inspectors detailed plans of when the appropriate checks and the necessary work will be completed. Planned completion dates are before the proposed date for opening. If completed as planned, these standards are likely to be met.
- There is a health and safety policy that covers all aspects of keeping individuals safe while in school. For example, it includes the planned procedures for dealing with accidents, first aid and the administering of medication.
- The welfare of pupils will be promoted by the implementation of risk assessments for facilities, activities and individual pupils. The risk assessments, when complete, will include the identification of risk, a rating of the risk, control measures to be used and when and by whom actions will be taken.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 14 and 15

- The school's proposed admissions and attendance registers adhere to government guidelines. For example, the attendance register will record morning and afternoon sessions. The admissions register will record at least two emergency contacts for each pupil.
- Planned levels of supervision for pupils, including during off-site visits, are likely to ensure that pupils are kept free from harm.
- Leaders have 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), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)

- The single central record is well organised. It includes the full range of checks, including checks on staff's physical and mental fitness. Relevant leaders are safer recruitment trained. They have planned a robust recruitment process. This includes checking unexplained gaps in applicants' employment histories and seeking appropriate references prior to staff starting.
- Leaders are clear about the checks and procedures required prior to supply staff working in the school.
- Leaders have 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)

- Currently, the premises are largely unfurnished. There is a designated space for the medical care and short-term care of sick pupils. The area contains a washbasin but not a suitable bed. There is adequate outdoor space for pupils to play that is currently overgrown. There is no supply of drinking water. During the inspection, leaders shared with inspectors their detailed plans of how they will action the above. If completed by the planned timescales, the premises of and accommodation at the school is likely to meet the independent school standards for the proposed opening date.
- All rooms in the building are well-lit and have good acoustics. There are suitable toilet facilities, with hot and cold water. The temperature of the water is suitably regulated.
- Pupils will access PE off site.
- Leaders have 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)(c), 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)(b)(ii), 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 has a website. It provides a range of information. This includes the school's ethos and vision and relevant contact information. All relevant documents or policies required under Part 6 of the independent school standards were available for inspectors to view on the website, provided by leaders electronically or seen during the on-site visit.
- Leaders have 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 school's complaints policy details its procedures for handling complaints. It adheres to the relevant guidance. For example, it includes both formal and informal processes and timescales in which complaints should be dealt with.
- Leaders have 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, senior leaders and governors have a wealth of experience of leading provisions similar to the proposed school. This experience is likely to support the varied needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), particularly SEMH, well. Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to actively promoting pupils' mental health and well-being and are aspirational for what pupils could achieve.
- Leaders have an understanding of the independent school standards. They know what they need to do to ensure that they are consistently met.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. There is an appropriate accessibility policy and plan in place.

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	148642
DfE registration number	332/6012
Inspection number	10194024

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	Priory Park Community School CIC
Chair	Paul Gough
Headteacher	Stuart Playford
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,188 to £35,000
Telephone number	07801 959280
Website	www.prioryparkschool.co.uk
Email address	office@prioryparkschool.co.uk

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	35	35

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	35
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0

Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	35
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 an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	15

Staff

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

Information about this proposed school

- The premises are leased through Dudley local authority. The premises consist of a reception area, three learning spaces, an intervention room, a dining room and a meeting room on the ground floor. On the second floor, there are a further three learning spaces, a staffroom, including a kitchen area, and an office for senior leaders.
- The school originally proposed to open in September 2021. This has now been changed to January 2022.
- During the inspection the school made an application to the Department for Education (DfE) to reduce its number on roll from 48 to 35. This has been agreed by the DfE.
- The school will cater for 35 pupils from Years 7 to 11. They are likely to be pupils who are at the risk of exclusion. Some pupils will have an EHC plan or are undergoing an assessment. All pupils will have SEND linked to SEMH.
- It is proposed that local authorities will place pupils at the school or the pupil's current school may commission a place at the school.
- The proposed school does not intend to use alternative provision. However, it does intend to use a local boxing club.
- The school does not have a religious character.

Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the DfE to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet all the independent school standards if it is registered. This is the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The lead inspector conducted a tour of the premises with leaders. Inspectors met with the proprietor who is also the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of the governing body, including the chair. Safeguarding and welfare arrangements were discussed as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation and policies submitted by the proprietor and on the school website. Documents were also reviewed during the inspection.
- There were no pupils attending the school during the inspection.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ian Tustian

Her Majesty's Inspector

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