

Neptune School

24 Poplar Road, Warmley, South Gloucestershire, BS30 5JU

Inspection dates

1 December 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, 4

- The proprietor is seeking to establish a small specialist school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and/or autism spectrum disorder. The aim is to match the company's motto, 'nurture, flourish, grow'. Leaders at the school have developed plans to promote pupils' academic achievement and personal development in line with these values.
- The curriculum policy sets out to provide pupils with a broad and balanced range of subjects. Leaders want pupils to enjoy their lessons and have adopted a topic approach to achieve this. Schemes of work show what leaders intend pupils to learn in each subject through each topic. These take into account pupils' likely ages and aptitudes. More detail is currently available for pupils in key stages 2 and 3 as leaders do not intend to admit pupils in key stage 4 yet. Subject plans provide some detail to show what they want pupils to know, but leaders have not yet specified how they expect pupils' knowledge to increase in each subject as they move through the school.
- Leaders have determined how they will support teachers to cater for pupils' individual needs, considering pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. Regular reviews of pupils' personal plans will enable teachers to check that pupils are acquiring key skills.
- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education plans reflect leaders' aim for pupils to be well equipped for future life. Staff, including therapists, will incorporate this important learning in all that they do so that pupils' self-esteem and social skills are developed effectively. Plans for the teaching of PSHE education pay regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Policies and curriculum plans show that fundamental British values will be actively promoted.
- The PSHE education curriculum and topic schemes of work include opportunities for pupils to learn about careers from key stage 2 onwards. Leaders have started to detail their plans to provide careers guidance that is impartial and enables pupils to make informed choices.
- Leaders have published a relationships and sex education policy on their website. They have clear intentions to provide pupils with this important learning. The policy

states that parents will be consulted if it is revised and sets out the conditions for parents seeking to excuse their child from sex education.

- Suitable plans are in place to provide pupils' parents with a progress report twice each year. These will show how well pupils are achieving against the school's expectations.

Paragraph 3

- Teaching staff are already employed at the school. Leaders are supporting them to develop well-planned lessons that enable all pupils to make good progress and utilise suitable resources effectively. There is a system to assess pupils' learning and teachers are expected to use this to plan pupils' next steps.
- Leaders have high expectations for teachers. Plans are in place to check regularly that teaching meets pupils' needs and promotes pupils' independence and to ensure that staff manage pupils' behaviour well.
- Staff are suitably qualified, and many have experience in working with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have provided staff with a wide range of extra, appropriate training since September 2021.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5

- Leaders have plans to show how they will provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Schemes of work include opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures, how to distinguish between right and wrong, and how they can contribute to the local community. PSHE education and individual plans will seek to develop pupils' self-confidence and support them to accept responsibility for their behaviour.
- Documents demonstrate how staff will actively promote British values. Learning about respect for other people, including those with protected characteristics, and about institutions and services in England are also set out in schemes of work.
- Leaders have demonstrated in policies and plans that they will ensure pupils are not exposed to partisan political views in teaching or any other activities.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 9–16

- Leaders have published a safeguarding policy that follows the guidance in 'Keeping children safe in education, 2021'. The designated safeguarding leaders have had suitable training and can explain the steps that they will take to keep pupils safe from harm. Staff already employed have received appropriate training. There are arrangements in place so that leaders can keep records of concerns and any actions that they take as a result. Leaders have already started to build relationships with other agencies to support pupils at risk and promote their welfare.
- The behaviour policy sets out the school's approach to support pupils to manage their behaviour effectively. This includes likely sanctions and explains that exclusion will be

a last resort. Staff have received training so they can help reduce pupils' anxiety and minimise challenging behaviour.

- There is an anti-bullying strategy that describes leaders' aim to prevent bullying as much as possible.
- The health and safety and risk assessment policies set out how pupils and staff will be safeguarded from risks both on and off site. Detailed records show that checks are already in place to identify possible harm and that mitigating action has been taken.
- The proprietor has ensured compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. For example, the premises have suitable signage, equipment and fittings to promote fire safety.
- Leaders have ensured that staff have received first aid training, so they are ready to implement the school's policy in the event of accident or illness.
- Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils are properly supervised. In each class no more than four pupils will be supported by at least two members of staff.
- The proprietor has provided a system that will ensure leaders keep admissions and attendance registers that meet government regulations.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18–21

- The proprietor has ensured that checks take place to ensure that adults at the school are suitable to work with children. These include all staff employed at the school, volunteers and staff who visit, including board members.
- Leaders know the checks that they need to make should they employ supply staff.
- There is a single central record of suitability checks. The proprietor checks this regularly to ensure that it is up to date and complete.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23–29

- The layout of the premises has been redesigned and the accommodation refurbished to meet the needs of the proposed school.
- Classrooms are of sufficient size, well-lit and have appropriate acoustics. There are enough rooms to educate up to 25 pupils.
- There are several individual toilets for pupils' use only. There is also a shower, in a lockable room, available for pupils. There are rooms that pupils can use for changing for physical education (PE).
- There is adequate water supply to all toilet and washing facilities and hot water is at a safe temperature.
- Leaders have identified a space which will be used as a medical room when required. This is in a room close to the pupils' toilet. The space includes a portable sink.

- A clearly labelled water dispenser is available for pupils in the centre of the premises, away from the toilet.
- The garden has enough space for play and for some small-scale PE activities. Leaders have arranged to use the grounds of a neighbouring primary school for most PE lessons.
- The premises are accessible for wheelchair users.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32

- The proposed school has a detailed website that includes most of the required information already. The proprietor knows that they will need to publish inspection reports and provide a copy to parents of each registered pupil.
- The proprietor has systems in place for schools already in operation to provide details of income and expenditure in respect of a pupil funded by the local authority, public funds or with an EHC plan. They provide this information at pupils' annual review meetings.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The complaints policy is published on the school's website. The policy sets out clear timescales and the stages for handling a complaint. This includes ensuring that complaints can be considered initially on an informal basis.
- Complaints can also be considered on a formal basis. This includes a panel hearing if a parent is not satisfied. The procedure states that one member of any panel hearing a complaint must be independent of the management of the school. It also sets out that a parent can be accompanied at a panel hearing.
- Leaders will keep records of complaints securely. They will contain details of how complaints were resolved, and any actions taken.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The proprietor intends to open a nurturing special school that matches their aim to provide small settings tailored to pupils' individual needs. Leaders are strongly committed to the company's values and have recruited a well-qualified team to support them in their work to prepare for pupils. Leaders have ensured that all necessary leadership, policies, procedures and curriculum documents are in place. This has included ensuring that staff can be flexible to adjust their approach to provide the right help to each pupil so they can reach ambitious goals.
- The company provides effective oversight of leaders' work. As a result, leaders have ensured that the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards. Arrangements are in place to hold leaders and staff to account for their work. The

proprietor intends to make regular checks on aspects of leaders' work such as the management of complaints and pupils' behaviour. The company also makes use of external support to check the quality of its own work.

- Leaders have established effective systems to actively promote pupils' welfare. They have ensured that staff know their responsibilities and how to report concerns promptly. A member of the company board will act as a safeguarding 'governor' to oversee this important work.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- A suitable accessibility plan is in place and available on the school's website.

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	148843
DfE registration number	803/6011
Inspection number	10210307

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	Special
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Phoenix Learning and Care Ltd
Chair	Jon Pain
Headteacher	Rachel Lynch
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,728.19
Telephone number	0330 135 8 202
Website	www.phoenixschools.org.uk/neptune/
Email address	neptune@phoenixschools.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	0	8–16	8–16
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	25	25

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	N/A	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	25
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	25
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	25
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	25

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	10	12
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor, Phoenix Learning and Care Ltd, has applied to provide education for up to 25 pupils aged eight to 16.
- The site of the proposed school is in south Gloucestershire, in the village of Warmley. Warmley is situated between Bristol and Bath. The premises are a converted residential building with an additional building that was previously used as a children's nursery.
- The proposed school will be for pupils with SEMH needs and/or autism spectrum disorder. It is anticipated that all pupils will be allocated by local authorities and will have an EHC plan.
- Phoenix Learning and Care Ltd has four directors and employs staff who will oversee the leadership of the school. The proprietor owns three other registered schools in England. The company is proposing to open a fifth school in Wales.

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 about all parts of the independent school standards with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the company's director of education.
- The inspector considered documentation related to the proposed school curriculum, including the curriculum policy and schemes of work. The inspector also evaluated the complaints policy.
- The inspector considered documentation such as policies, safeguarding records and plans in place to maintain pupils' safety. The inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader, and the deputy headteacher to discuss arrangements to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector also 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

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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