

Poplar House School

24 - 26 St Annes Road East, Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire FY8 1UR

Inspection date

23 February 2022

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)

- The proposed school will become part of a group of schools and residential care homes run by the proprietor body Care 4 Children. It will be the first school that is not aligned with a residential care home.
- The proprietor body intends to provide full-time education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All of the pupils who will attend the proposed school will have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Leaders anticipate that the EHC plans will be for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD), autism spectrum disorders (ASD), specific learning difficulties (SpLD) and moderate learning difficulties (MLD).
- The proprietor body has ensured that there is a suitable written curriculum policy in place which is in line with the national curriculum. Pupils will be able to study a broad range of subjects such as art and design and music, as well as English and mathematics. Leaders also intend to provide a range of vocational courses which will lead to appropriate qualifications.
- There are comprehensive schemes of work in place which set out what pupils will learn and when subject content will be taught. Leaders have clearly defined assessment procedures in place which will allow teachers to check what pupils know and remember. It is likely that pupils who will attend the proposed school will achieve well over time.

Paragraph 2(2)(d)–2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The proprietor body places a strong focus on the development of pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Leaders plan to follow a therapeutic and well-being curriculum approach which will weave through the planned PSHE curriculum.
- Leaders have ensured that the schemes of work, including those for PSHE, will actively promote pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. Leaders intend to provide further opportunities and experiences, such as visits to local places of

interest. Leaders intend that pupils will play an active role in the life of the local community.

- The proprietor body has a well-planned careers programme in place, supported by external and impartial providers. This will help to ensure that pupils who attend the proposed school have access to a range of options when they leave the school. Leaders plan to provide work experience through a range of vocational opportunities. They intend to ensure that pupils will be well prepared for the next stages in their education or employment.

Paragraph 2A–2A(1)(g), 2A(2)

- The proprietor body has ensured that there is a suitable policy in place for relationships and sex education. Leaders plan to consult parents and carers on the final contents of the policy when the school opens. The proprietor body has ensured that the policy pays due regard to statutory guidance.

Paragraph 3–3(g)

- The proprietor body has robust procedures in place to ensure that staff will have the experience, knowledge and understanding that they need to support the needs of pupils who will attend the proposed school.
- The proprietor body has ensured that there are suitable resources available. These resources will enable staff to deliver the planned curriculum effectively.

Paragraph 3(h), 3(i), 3(j)

- The proposed behaviour policy provides clear strategies for staff on how to help pupils understand their own emotions. The policy also provides guidance for staff on how they can help pupils to develop mutual tolerance and respect for others. In addition, it provides guidance on how staff will enable pupils to understand how their behaviour impacts others.
- Leaders intend that all staff will receive appropriate training to ensure that the behaviour policy is consistently implemented. This will form part of the induction process for new staff before they start work at the proposed school.

Paragraph 4

- The proprietor body intends to use the same format for reporting to parents as they do for the other established schools within the group. The report provides information on pupils' academic progress, as well as their personal development and wider achievements. The intended report will include the views of individual pupils. Leaders propose that these reports will also be used as part of each pupil's annual review.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b)(i)–5(b)(vii)

- The proprietor body has suitable plans in place for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The associated schemes of work are appropriate for the anticipated needs of the intended pupils. This includes positively promoting British values, encouraging tolerance and understanding and paying due regard to the protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010.

- Leaders place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' empathy and respect for others through the planned phases of their intended therapeutic and well-being curriculum.

Paragraph 5(c), 5(d)–5(d)(iii)

- There are appropriate procedures in place to ensure that staff employed at the proposed school will not promote any partisan political views while teaching at the school.
- The planned curriculum for PSHE, and associated schemes of work, place a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of other faiths, cultures and religions.
- Leaders intend to provide guidance for staff which will help them to support pupils' knowledge of right and wrong. This will include supporting pupils to understand how their actions affect others around them. Leaders anticipate that pupils will be well prepared for adulthood once they have left the school.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- Leaders know how to keep pupils safe in a variety of situations. This includes when they are out in the community and when using social media. The proprietor body has ensured that a safeguarding and child protection policy is in place. It takes account of the current guidance from the Secretary of State.
- Leaders intend that all staff will receive appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding training as part of the induction process, before starting work at the proposed school. This will include guidance on how to recognise signs of abuse and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare.

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

- The written behaviour policy takes account of the anticipated needs of the intended pupils. The policy provides guidance for staff on how to promote pupils' positive behaviour. The policy also provides guidance for staff on how to manage pupils' behaviour effectively so that pupils can begin to regulate their emotions independently.
- The written policy for the prevention of bullying links closely to the behaviour policy. It provides information for staff on the different forms that bullying may take. There is also detailed guidance on the procedures to follow should bullying occur.
- The proprietor body has ensured that there is an appropriate record-keeping system to record any incidents of unacceptable behaviour, should they occur when the school opens. These records will be part of the individual records for each pupil. They will also be used by leaders and staff to determine the most appropriate therapeutic phase of the planned well-being curriculum that each pupil should study. All pupils' records will be stored securely.

Paragraphs 11, 12

- There is a detailed health and safety policy for the proposed school. Leaders intend that all staff will receive appropriate and up-to-date training relating to health and

safety as part of the induction process and before starting work at the proposed school.

- The proprietor body has ensured that the building is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 regulations. Fire evacuation procedures are clearly displayed throughout the building. All fire exits are in good working order and free from clutter. The fire alarm system and emergency lighting have been recently installed as part of the refurbishment of the building in readiness for the premises to open as a school.

Paragraphs 13, 14, 15

- The proprietor body has ensured that there is a first-aid policy in place. Leaders are up to date with their knowledge of first aid. Leaders intend that all staff will receive appropriate first-aid training as part of the induction process and before starting work at the proposed school.
- The proprietor body has proposed a suitable pupil-to-staff ratio. This proposal is appropriate for the anticipated needs and aptitudes of the pupils who will attend the proposed school.
- The proprietor body anticipates that pupils who attend the proposed school will be placed through the commissioning process of local authorities in the neighbouring geographical area. The admissions policy for the proposed school complies with the Education (Pupils Registration) Regulations 2006.

Paragraph 16

- The proprietor body has ensured that there is a detailed risk assessment policy in place. The policy provides guidance for leaders and staff on how to assess and mitigate risk to pupils. This is especially for when pupils are off site, for example when volunteering in the community.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18(1)–18(2)(e)

- The proprietor body intends that all staff employed by the school will be qualified teachers who are competent to work with pupils with SEND.
- The proprietor body has ensured that there are suitable systems in place to check the suitability of all proposed staff. These checks include enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks, the right to work in the United Kingdom and references from previous employers.

Paragraph 19(1)–19(2)(d)(ii)

- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff due to the anticipated needs of the pupils who will attend the proposed school. However, in the event that they do need additional staff, leaders understand the necessary checks that need to be completed before staff begin to work at the school. Leaders intend to use a reputable supply agency and to ensure that any supply staff will have the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding to be able to support the anticipated needs of pupils.

Paragraphs 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- All of the required prohibition checks for the proprietor body and leaders have been completed. These include all safeguarding checks and checks under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(2), 25, 26, 27–27(b), 28(1)–28(2)(b), 29(1)–29(1)(b)

- The proposed school will be situated in a large, three-storey, double-fronted, end-of-terrace, Victorian property. Over time, the premises has had a number of different uses. Most recently, it has been a doctor's surgery. In the last few months, the property has been completely refurbished to a high standard. The premises for the proposed school now comprises a number of dedicated teaching rooms, including a music room and facilities for food technology. There is also dedicated office space and a well-planned social area where pupils can have their meals.
- The property has a designated parking area and a secure perimeter fence of an appropriate height. There is suitable external lighting above the main entrance and above the fire escape exit.
- The outdoor provision comprises two distinct areas. The larger of the two has an artificial grassed surface and will be the main play area and used for physical education. Plans are in place to develop the smaller area for horticulture.
- Within the building, all corridors and stairwells are well-lit and free from clutter. The windows in the rooms on the upper floors have secure fastenings to ensure the safety of pupils. Throughout the building, all windows have been fitted with frosted film for the added safety and privacy of the intended pupils and staff. All rooms throughout the building benefit from suitable heating, lighting, acoustics and ventilation appropriate for the proposed use of each room. For example, the intended sensory room has muted lighting.
- The furniture in each of the designated teaching rooms is appropriate for the intended pupils. Most rooms have a selection of suitable resources for the intended use of the room. For example, the music room has a range of instruments, including drum kits, electronic keyboards and guitars.
- There is a dedicated medical room on the ground floor. It is appropriately furnished with a bed, blanket and pillow. There is a sink with hot and cold running water, and the room is in close proximity to a toilet. There is direct access to the parking area from the room if required.
- There are individual toilet facilities on each floor for the sole use of the intended pupils. Each contains a sink with hot and cold running water. The hot water is at a suitable temperature and does not pose a risk of scalding. Drinking water is clearly labelled and will be available for the intended pupils throughout the day.
- There are separate toilets for the use of staff and visitors which are also suitable for the use of disabled people.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(j), 32(2)–32(2)(d), 32(3)–32(3)(g)

- The proposed school does not currently have its own website. Contact details for the proposed school, and the proprietor body, are available on the Care 4 Children website.
- A separate website for the proposed school, and other schools within the group, is under construction. Once completed, each school, including the proposed school, will have a link to a dedicated webpage via the group's main website.
- The proprietor body has ensured that there is a range of information available for parents and others on request. This information includes admission arrangements for the proposed school, the safeguarding policy and the complaints policy.
- It is anticipated that all pupils will have an EHC plan. The proprietor body understands the duty to report the expenditure of funds for pupils placed in the school to the commissioning authorities. The proprietor body intends to use the same format used in other schools within the group when reporting to these authorities.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33–33(k)

- There is a suitable written policy in place for the handling of complaints. The policy is in line with other settings within the proprietor group. The policy is available for parents, staff and pupils on request.
- The policy clearly sets out the three-stage process to be followed should there be a complaint. This includes appropriate timescales for the handling of the complaint and the right of the complainant to attend the stage three panel hearing. The policy also references the need for the inclusion of an independent member at the stage three panel.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor body demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards. This should help to ensure that the standards will be consistently met.
- The proprietor body has ensured that there is a planned curriculum in place to meet the academic and emotional developmental needs of the pupils who will attend the proposed school.
- The proprietor body has ensured that suitable resources and schemes of work are in place ready for the school to open. There are appropriate arrangements in place so that leaders and staff can check what the intended pupils will know and be able to do. The proposed pupils are likely to achieve well and be well prepared for the next stages in their education, employment or training.

- The proprietor body has ensured that all standards relating to the safety and welfare of the proposed pupils and staff are likely to be met
- All standards in this part are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- There is a suitable accessibility plan in place that meets the requirements 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	148838
DfE registration number	888/6127
Inspection number	10213443

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	Care 4 Children Ltd
Chair	Virginia Perkins
Headteacher	Monica Bugg
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000 to £55,000
Telephone number	01614831505/01253 372221
Website	www.educ8.org.uk
Email address	info@care4children.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	Not applicable	11 to 18	11 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	18	18

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	18

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	18
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	18
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	18

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	2	11
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	1	1

Information about this proposed school

- This is the first pre-registration inspection of Poplar House School.
- The proposed school will cater for 18 pupils from 11 to 18 years of age.
- The school will be part of the Care 4 Children group.
- It is likely that pupils who will attend the proposed school will have an EHC plan. These will predominantly be for BESD, ASD, SpLD and MLD.
- The route for a place at the school will be via a referral from the commissioning local authority.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine if the school is likely to meet the independent school standards prior to opening as a registered school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with a representative of the proprietor body, the head of education for the Care 4 Children group, the head of premises for the group and the headteacher for the proposed school.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation relating to the independent school standards. This included the policies relating to safeguarding and the procedures in place for the recruitment of staff at the proposed school.
- The inspector completed a tour of the premises for the proposed school. Documentation about the suitability of the school's welfare, health and safety procedures were reviewed, as well as documentation relating to the reduction of risk.
- The inspector checked a range of evidence relating to the proposed curriculum, including schemes of work and assessment arrangements.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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