

King's Reach Education

St Hilary's House, Reculver Walk, Senacre, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8SW

Inspection date

21 April 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), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g)–2A(1), 2A(1)(b)–2(a)(2)

- The school's curriculum is designed to meet the needs of each individual pupil. Leaders fully understand the need to adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- All pupils who attend the school will have an education, health and care plan. Some pupils may not have attended school for extensive periods prior to joining. Many will have struggled with mainstream education or in their previous specialist provisions. Because of this, leaders intend for the curriculum to be bespoke in order to meet both the academic and social and emotional needs of pupils.
- A curriculum policy and suitable schemes of work are in place. These will be further adapted once leaders are more aware of the specific requirements of individual pupils that will attend the proposed school. This includes for students who might attend the school's post-16 provision or beyond.
- Pupils will follow programmes of study that include mathematics and English, ranging from functional skills level through to GCSE qualifications if appropriate. Leaders intend to offer a suitable breadth of other curriculum subjects tailored to meet the interests and needs of individuals. These will include science and religious and physical education, for instance, but also extend to forestry work and learning in the outside environment.
- Although some lessons might include small groups of pupils, most of the curriculum will be delivered by tutors (who are qualified teachers) on a one-to-one basis. Each pupil will also have a dedicated personal mentor, who will support them academically both in and outside the classroom.
- Leaders have already developed a unique 'creative enrichment' programme which all pupils will access. This will follow weekly themes which will be explored throughout the school day and be delivered by all staff and enriched by visits out of school into the local community or further afield.

- Other aspects of the curriculum, such as personal, social and health education (PSHE), and sex and relationships education, will also be delivered through timetabled lessons. Visiting expert professionals will also support pupils in this area, including facilitating healthy relationships courses or focused work on sexual health. Additionally, because pupils will have their own dedicated mentor, much of the work to promote pupils' personal development will be ongoing and personalised in order to suitably address the needs of each pupil.
- Leaders are aware of the requirement to provide secondary-aged pupils with good-quality careers guidance. The school's ethos and PSHE programme will ensure that fundamental British values are promoted.

Paragraphs 3–4

- The proprietor has already appointed key leaders. This includes an education manager who has suitable leadership experience in working with pupils with SEND.
- Most of the formal curriculum will be delivered by suitably qualified specialist subject tutors. Leaders intend to make the breadth of the curriculum as wide as possible, but recognise the restrictions imposed by small numbers of pupils. Nevertheless, it is intended that additional specialist teachers will be employed on a part-time basis to teach languages or other specialised qualifications if required.
- Leaders know that the initial period of integrating pupils into school, which will include assessing pupils' prior learning across the curriculum, is key to pupils' future success. Plans are already in place to support this work. This will include an introductory period where mentors will work closely with new pupils to establish positive relationships and identify barriers to learning. Systems are already in place to track and assess pupils' academic and social and emotional development side by side.
- Leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in Part 1 are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- Leaders and staff will promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively through the taught curriculum and through establishing a strong and caring ethos at the school. Additionally, much of this aspect of the school's provision will be promoted by a personal mentor for each pupil. Personal mentors' responsibilities will be far reaching, including picking pupils up and returning them to their homes each day.
- Curriculum plans ensure that pupils will learn about British values, as well as actively promoting an understanding of equalities at an age-appropriate level. A range of extra-curricular activities will also promote pupils' understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain. The school's unique creative enrichment programme is tailored to promote and help pupils understand aspects of British life such as democracy, and national institutions such as the monarchy and parliament.
- Leaders understand the importance of developing pupils' social skills, building their self-esteem and resilience. Pupils will benefit from a culture that promotes respect for others and for themselves. They will be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and develop positive attitudes to their work.

- All staff will be expected to provide positive role models for pupils. This includes ensuring that pupils are not exposed to partisan political or religious opinions.
- Leaders have ensured that all standards in Part 2 are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b), 9–16(b)

- The school's policies, written guidance and procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are sound. The safeguarding policy meets current requirements, is understood by staff, and is available on request.
- Key staff have already undertaken some elements of safeguarding training appropriate to their levels of responsibility. This includes safer recruitment training for leaders. Update training for the school's designated safeguarding leads has been booked with the local authority and will take place in the very near future.
- Induction training for new staff will be comprehensive. This will cover safeguarding and training to ensure that staff are aware of the school's wider policies and procedures to keep children safe.
- Leaders are aware of the additional risks faced by pupils who will attend the school. Close relationships have already been forged with professionals from outside the school who will offer support and training for staff.
- The behaviour policy is suitable for the needs of the proposed school's pupils. Expectations of pupils' behaviour will be high. Each pupil's personal mentor will be expected to act as a positive role model, as well as supporting pupils to be successful in achieving leaders' aspirations that all pupils will 'have a go, be polite and don't give up'. Leaders are very clear about developing a culture at the school which will promote positive engagement, good manners and resilience in all pupils.
- The school has an anti-bullying policy which has close links to the behaviour policy. Leaders are very aware of the negative impact any form of bullying might have on pupils. Strategies will be put in place to minimise any potential problems associated with bullying.
- Leaders have a good understanding of health and safety requirements, including the need for comprehensive risk assessments and other actions required to keep the school safe. A new fire risk assessment is in place and was completed by an external health and safety consultant who also advises leaders on wider aspects of health and safety through a series of visits that are already established. The school building is well maintained.
- Leaders plan to ensure that staff to pupil ratios are suitable at all times. Staff will be trained in first aid at a suitable level. Some staff have already completed first aid training. This includes mentors, who undertake a two-day course which includes a focus on working in the outside environment. Staff will also access bespoke training to support their understanding of the school's therapeutic approach to managing pupils' behaviour. It is intended that all staff will undertake mental health first aid training before the school opens.
- Leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in Part 3 are likely to be met.

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

- *Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6)–21(3)(b), 21(6), 21(7)(a)–21(7)(b)*
- Leaders know about the checks that need to be made on adults working with children in regulated activities. These include all of the required verifications such as medical fitness and qualification checks where appropriate. Leaders know that staff should not begin work at the school without the necessary checks and references being in place.
- Leaders have already established a clear process for recruiting staff. This is in line with current guidance and requirements. Four leaders have already completed safer recruitment training.
- Some staff are already employed in the proprietor's tutoring business. Leaders are in the process of transferring records, including references and Disclosure and Barring Service checks, into the school's own single central record and staff information management system.
- The school does not intend to use employment agency staff.
- Leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in Part 4 are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2)–29(1)(b)

- The proposed school is situated in a residential area and occupies part of what was formally a modern church building and linked accommodation. The proprietor has recently completed renovations, including fitting a new fire alarm system.
- Classrooms and other learning spaces are suitably furnished, but not large enough for the proprietor's original proposal to open the school with up to 25 pupils. Two small classrooms and a larger classroom area, which will also be used as a communal space, are more suited to approximately ten pupils, especially when their potential complex needs and high level of adult supervision are taken into account.
- Additional spaces are available for one-to-one work and pupils will have access to a small kitchen and a small room for computing studies. There are adequate toilets and washing facilities for both pupils and staff. All facilities have sufficient water supplies, and the temperature of hot water is regulated appropriately. Drinking water is available and labelled as such.
- The school has a small private courtyard which provides adequate space for small numbers of pupils to take a break. The school is situated adjacent to a public park which provides further space for pupils to take supervised breaks outside of the school building. Physical education will be provided off site.
- The lighting, heating and acoustics are all suitable for the pupils likely to be at the school. Outside, there is sufficient lighting around the buildings and in the grounds to ensure safe passage in the dark.
- There is allocated accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils, as well as the short-term care of those who are sick or injured.
- Leaders intend to acquire a former doctors' surgery adjacent to the school as additional premises.

- Leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in Part 5 are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(d), 32(1)(f)–32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(d)–32(3)(f), 32(4)–32(4)(c)

- At the time of the inspection, the school did not have a website. Leaders understand the requirements to publish key information on the school's website if and when the proprietor decides that a website would be appropriate.
- Leaders are aware of the requirement to provide specified information detailed within Part 6. This includes when pupils are funded or partly funded by a local authority. They also know that they need to have certain reports and other information as necessary available on request, particularly information required by parents, carers or local authorities.
- Leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in Part 6 are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph [33–33(k)]

- The school's complaints policy and procedures are available on request. They set out clear timescales for the management of any complaint. The policy meets all of the requirements of Part 7. Leaders demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of the policy and how it will be implemented.
- Leaders plan to keep any copies of complaints confidentially and available for inspection on the school premises.
- Leaders have ensured that all standards in Part 7 are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

■ *Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)*

- School leaders and the proprietor's board of directors are knowledgeable and have a background in education and social care. Their rationale for opening the school is sound and is based on a clear moral purpose to provide pupils who have previously struggled in mainstream education with high-quality care and education in a safe and nurturing environment.
- Presently, the proprietor's board of directors has oversight of the work of leaders as the proposed school is preparing to open. However, work has already started to recruit a small team of suitably qualified people who will provide a 'local' governing board. This local board will report to the directors on all aspects of the quality of provision.
- Directors understand the importance of ensuring that those in positions of governance have the right skill set to hold leaders to account and provide support when needed. They have employed independent consultants to advise them prior to opening the school. There is a clear sense that directors understand the importance of high-quality, independent advice in order for them to have confidence in the quality of provision at the school that they will be responsible for.
- Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements within the independent school standards. They have ensured that the school is likely to meet all of these standards when it opens and are committed to ensuring that these

requirements continue to be met. This includes actively promoting the welfare of pupils.

- Leaders have ensured that all standards in Part 8 are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders already have a suitable accessibility plan in place. They intend to update the plan at appropriate intervals and dependent on the needs of pupils and staff once the school opens. 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	149070
DfE registration number	886/6170
Inspection number	10232870

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 special school
Proprietor	King's Reach Ltd
Chair	Richard King
Headteacher	Stewart King (Head of school)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£70,000 to £85,000
Telephone number	01622 693 737
Website	None
Email address	info@kingsreach.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	Not applicable	11 to 25	11 to 25
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	Up to 25	Up to 10

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- Current accommodation is not big enough for up to 25 pupils. The proprietor intends to purchase and expand into an adjacent property. However, this may take some time and the intended additional accommodation will need to be refurbished. At the time of the inspection, it was not possible to view the adjacent property to check its suitability.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Boys
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	Up to 25
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	Up to 25
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	Up to 25
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 25
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 25

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	6 on opening
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Maidstone, Kent. The proprietor originally proposed that it would cater for up to 25 male pupils between the ages of 11 and 25, primarily with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- As a result of the inspection, the proprietor agreed that the present accommodation is not suitable for up to 25 pupils and that the maximum number of pupils should be no more than 10 if the registration is approved.
- All pupils are likely to have an education, health and care plan. All pupils will be placed by local authorities. Most pupils are likely to have been out of education for long periods of time prior to joining the school.
- The proprietor intends that the proposed school will have a local governing board, whose members will report to the board of directors. Currently, the board of directors is fulfilling the roles of governance. Work to recruit members to the local governing board is under way.
- It is not intended that the school will use alternative provision on opening.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school. 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.
- 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 building and outside areas. He reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, risk assessments, policies and curriculum information.
- The inspector met with the head of school, the deputy head of school, the education manager and other staff already appointed by the proprietor. The inspector met with two directors, including the chair of the board of directors. He also met with an educational consultant who is advising the proprietor and school leaders prior to the proposed school opening.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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