

# Meadow Bridge School

The Old School House, High Street, Cricklade, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 6DD

**Inspection date**

31 May 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

*Paragraphs 2, 4*

- Meadow Bridge School is proposed to be a special school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and/or autism spectrum disorder. All pupils will have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). The proprietor body, central directors and the headteacher are experienced leaders with a broad and deep understanding of inclusion, special educational needs and/or disabilities and teaching pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- The curriculum policy sets out to provide pupils with learning that matches their individual needs. Leaders recognise that pupils who attend the school may have had negative experiences of school and/or high levels of anxiety. Therefore, leaders have devised a curriculum that will enable teaching to build on pupils' individual needs right from the start. For example, there will be three phases to the curriculum. Phase one focuses on overcoming barriers to learning and re-engaging pupils in school life. Further phases build incrementally to increase and broaden pupils' knowledge and skills across the curriculum. The aim is for pupils to become what leaders call 'community ready'. Schemes of work show what leaders intend pupils to learn in each phase.
- Leaders have prepared schemes of work that incorporate all the aspects of the curriculum required by the independent school standards (the standards). Most English and mathematics lessons will be timetabled for morning sessions. Across the rest of the day, there will be an emphasis on project-based learning and therapeutic learning as necessary. Each pillar within the curriculum provides increasing academic challenge, including for modern foreign languages. Leaders have identified a systematic synthetic phonics programme and intend to implement it for pupils at the early stages of reading.
- There is an assessment policy and framework in place. The policy describes how staff will check what pupils know and understand and then use this information to adapt teaching so that the curriculum will support pupils to know and remember more. Leaders have plans to support teachers to cater for pupils' individual needs as set out

in their EHC plans. Teachers will check pupils' progress and review plans for their learning to ensure it is precisely what they need.

- Teachers will provide a written report every term to keep parents well informed about their child's achievements. They will also hold meetings with parents and carers to review pupils' progress against pupils' individualised targets.
- A robust careers education package is already in place. It starts in key stage 2 and will continue throughout the school. It is likely to ensure that pupils receive impartial careers guidance. This will consider pupils' individual skills and talents and build on pupils' aspirations.
- The intended curriculum will support pupils to achieve a range of qualifications, including GCSEs in English, mathematics, sciences, geography, history and religious studies. The school will offer a range of functional skills at levels 1 and 2, entry level 3 courses and BTEC qualifications in, for example, music and art. Post-16 students will have access to A-level courses and/or will continue to follow individualised programmes of study, including work-related learning.
- A relationships and sex education policy is in place and published on the school's website. This curriculum includes everything it should. Leaders state that they will hold staff to account for ensuring that all pupils access this age-appropriate curriculum and it meets pupils' individual needs.
- Leaders have organised a curriculum with pupils' personal development at its core. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is well thought out. The curriculum teaches about protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. It will also teach pupils about risks such as drug use and criminal and child exploitation. Leaders intend that the wide scope of subject content in the PSHE curriculum will also build pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and independence over time.

### *Paragraph 3*

- The Spaghetti Bridge executive team have plans in place to check that teachers and other staff use and apply strong subject knowledge when teaching. They will check that teaching builds on what pupils already know.
- Leaders have already employed some qualified teaching staff. There is a weighty training programme in place to ensure that all staff are fully prepared to use effective teaching approaches that take into full account pupils' needs and prior attainment.
- Teaching resources are in place to ensure that staff are supported in teaching the intended schemes of work. This includes the resources for the teaching of early reading. All staff will be trained in systematic synthetic phonics.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

### *Paragraph 5*

- The curriculum will promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The scheme of work identifies how teaching will support pupils to be tolerant, polite and have mutual respect in line with the school's aims and ethos. The curriculum sets

out how teaching will support pupils to know right from wrong and take responsibility for their actions.

- The curriculum stipulates explicitly how it will promote fundamental British values. This includes learning about individual liberty, criminal law and democracy and learning to respect people, including those with protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraphs 7, 9–16*

- The safeguarding and child protection policy is published on the school's website. The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe from harm. Leaders' induction programme sets out the comprehensive training that all staff will receive, including the risks of radicalisation. Leaders are aware of local and contextual risks to which pupils may be vulnerable.
- Leaders have put a behaviour policy in place that sets out the school's approach to managing behaviour. The induction programme for staff includes training so that they can follow the school's methods for helping pupils to regulate their behaviour. The anti-bullying policy includes guidance that indicates that the school is likely to be effective in preventing bullying.
- The proprietor has ensured compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The premises have suitable signage and equipment in place, such as fire extinguishers and evacuation 'grab bags'. Evacuation routes and systems for staff, pupils and visitors that require personal emergency evacuation plans are in place. Fire doors and mechanisms have been upgraded as part of the refurbishment of the premises.
- There is a nominated person outlined in the first-aid policy to ensure compliance with first-aid procedures in the school. First-aid boxes and supplies are well stocked for staff to use as necessary.
- The admission and attendance registers that leaders plan to implement meet the regulations and will allow leaders to oversee pupils' absence.
- There is a risk assessment policy in place. Leaders have made a strong start to risk assess the site in line with their policy. Current records show that leaders are knowledgeable in identifying possible risks on and off site, and they are able to implement systems and procedures to mitigate pupils' risk of harm.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

#### *Paragraphs 18–21*

- There is a single central record in place. The proprietor has ensured that checks take place to ensure that adults at the school are suitable to work with children. This includes all staff working at the school and central Spaghetti Bridge staff, including directors. Directors demonstrate a strong working knowledge of safer recruitment.

- A headteacher and five other staff have been appointed. All the required checks have been completed for these staff and recorded in the single central record. Further recruitment for teachers and support staff is well underway.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff. However, staff responsible for safer recruitment speak knowledgeably about what checks they would need to apply if supply staff were used.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraphs 23–29*

- The proposed school is in a Grade II listed building. It has been a school previously. The main building has nine base rooms for teaching, as well as further break-out spaces and an art room. There is also a meeting space, office space and staff room. There are three further classrooms and a dining hall in the school grounds. All rooms and communal areas have been refurbished and are in good order.
- Most windows are double glazed or have safety glass fitted. Where single-glazed windows remain due to the building's Grade II listing, windows have a protective film on them to ensure safety. Lighting and acoustics in all rooms are suitable.
- Drinking water is clearly labelled. Drinking water will be available for pupils in every building.
- There are sufficient single toilets for pupils' use only. There is sufficient water supply to all toilets and washing facilities, including in the art room. Hot water is at a safe temperature.
- There is a medical room with adequate facilities. There is a toilet close by and a sink. There is a lockable cupboard for medicines.
- The playground and field areas are well maintained. They provide plenty of space to play and socialise. There is an area for ball games and areas for quieter activities. The large play equipment is in good order. All checks of the play equipment are in date. Leaders are aware of the need to keep up to date with checks of playground equipment.
- The proprietor has ensured that the perimeter fences of the proposed school grounds are secure. Beyond the school boundary is a river. The perimeter fences prevent pupils' access to the river. Leaders understand the importance of keeping the perimeter fence in good order. Suitable risk assessments are in place.
- There is a small cornered-off area with no permitted access to one side of the outdoor area. This has the builder's waste materials in it as a result of the school's refurbishment. The proprietor has booked the removal of this waste along with the additional removal of a shelter in the school grounds.
- Remedial works that were required as part of the refurbishment, for example to the sewage plant, have been completed. This area is gated and locked, and pupils will not have access to this area.
- There are no changing rooms as physical education will happen off site.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

## Part 6. Provision of information

### *Paragraph 32*

- The school's website is easily accessible and provides parents and carers with access to all the required policies, including an up-to-date safeguarding and child protection policy.
- The contact details for the school and the proprietor body are available on the website.
- The proprietor has established systems in place 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 will provide this information at pupils' annual review meetings and show this has been used to meet pupils' individual needs.
- Leaders know the additional documents that will need to be published on the school's website, for example inspection reports and public exam results.
- 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 outlines the timescales and the stages for handling complaints. This includes ensuring that complaints can be considered on an informal basis at the first stage.
- The complaints policy sets out how complaints can be considered on a formal basis. This includes a panel hearing if a parent is not satisfied. Leaders know that it is a requirement for one member of any panel hearing to be independent of the management of the school and that a parent can be accompanied at a hearing should they wish.
- Leaders will store records of complaints and any actions taken securely. Records will be available for inspection.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34*

- The proprietor and central Spaghetti Bridge staff have strong knowledge in leading specialist education provision and care. They have already done much work to quality assure the school's systems and processes to ensure that the independent school standards are likely to be met.
- All the necessary policies, procedures and curriculum documents are in place.
- A detailed refurbishment has been completed. The buildings are in good order. All health and safety checks of the school site are in place.
- Some staff have already been recruited, including the headteacher. Additional staff recruitment is already underway. There is a robust 13-week induction programme planned to ensure that all staff have the specialist subject knowledge and skills to support the pupils who attend. Leaders assert that further induction programmes will

run throughout the year so that when new staff arrive, they too benefit from high-quality induction.

- Leaders have well-established systems in place to promote pupils' welfare and care. The executive director of service quality and development and the regional director will have oversight of this.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- An accessibility plan is in place. It meets requirements and is 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	149026
DfE registration number	865/6060
Inspection number	10236925

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	Spaghetti Bridge Ltd
Chair	Stephen Bradshaw
Headteacher	Faye Causer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,950
Telephone number	07964955090
Website	<a href="http://www.meadowbridgeschool.co.uk">www.meadowbridgeschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@meadowbridgeschool.co.uk">admin@meadowbridgeschool.co.uk</a>
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	6 to 19	6 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	60	45

### *Reason for inspector's recommendations*

- The proposed school building is finished to a high standard. The six base rooms that will be the main teaching spaces are fully equipped and well furnished. There are also three other base rooms in the school grounds. Base rooms differ in size considerably and the number of pupils that each room can accommodate varies. There are also flexible spaces and an art room. However, the dining space is small and will not accommodate more than 20 pupils comfortably. A reduction in the maximum number of pupils to 45 is recommended to reduce the risk of overcrowding.



## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	60
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	60
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	60
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	60

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	5	20
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2	10

## Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor, Spaghetti Bridge Ltd, also runs two other independent special schools. The proprietor has three directors, an executive chairman, a chief executive officer and an executive director of service quality and development.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2022. Five new teaching staff are already in post.
- The proposed school is based in a Grade II listed, former school building in Cricklade. The building has been refurbished and provides an inviting and calm environment.
- The school intends to cater for pupils between the ages of six and 19 years. All pupils will have a diagnosis of SEMH needs, and some will have a diagnosis of autism

spectrum disorder. All pupils will have an EHC plan.

## 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 standards with the chief executive officer and proprietor's representative, the executive director of service quality and development, the director of operations, the regional director, the human resources business partner and the group business management lead.
- The headteacher was absent during this inspection due to a pre-planned absence.
- 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 central staff from Spaghetti Bridge Ltd to discuss arrangements to keep pupils safe in the event of the absence of the headteacher.
- The inspector also toured the site and premises, both internally and externally, to determine if part 5 of the standards is likely to be met.

## Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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