

Bettws Lifehouse Independent Special School

Kingsland Grange, Old Roman Road, Shrewsbury SY3 9AH

Inspection date

20 July 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(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)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2), 2A(3), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- The proposed school aims to cater for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who have been unsuccessful in their previous schools. It intends to do this by providing a highly personalised curriculum for each pupil, based on their needs, interests and abilities. Each pupil will have a 'Lifehouse learning pathway (LLP)'. This will set out the pupil's personalised academic and vocational curriculum. In addition to an LLP, each pupil will also have a person-centred plan (PCP). PCPs focus on pupils' personal development. LLPs and PCPs will be informed by pupils' education, health and care plans.
- Leaders have in place a wide range of detailed curriculum plans and schemes of work on which teachers will draw when producing LLPs and delivering the personalised curriculum. Curriculum plans start in key stage 1, with an appropriate focus on teaching pupils how to read using a validated systematic synthetic phonics scheme. Curriculum plans provide the potential for each pupil to receive a broad and balanced curriculum in the 'lower school', which will include key stages 2 and 3. The 'upper school' includes key stage 4 and the sixth form. Here, pupils and students will specialise more and work towards recognised qualifications ranging from entry level to A level. In all key stages, the curriculum is likely to be appropriate for pupils, whatever their ability or needs.
- It is proposed that elements of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education will be woven throughout the curriculum as well as being taught in specific PSHE education lessons. Leaders have planned an appropriate curriculum. For example, all pupils will receive appropriate relationships and sex education that pays due regard to statutory guidance.

- The proposed school has an assessment, recording and reporting policy. It is detailed and fit for purpose. It outlines procedures for assessing pupils when they join the school and then ongoing formative and summative assessments. Leaders intend to provide termly reports for parents.
- The proposed curriculum has a strong focus on preparation for adulthood. Careers education will play an important part in this. It will be taught through all subjects and within the PSHE education programme. The careers education programme will start in the lower school with a focus on learning about different careers. In the upper school, pupils will focus more on where they intend to study or train when they leave school. Students in the sixth form will have work placements. Some will undertake supported internships.
- The proposed school has successfully recruited suitably qualified teachers and teaching assistants. Some are moving from the proprietor body's other school. Leaders have in place procedures for checking on the quality of education being provided.
- The school's proposed curriculum, assessment and teaching arrangements are all likely to meet the needs of the pupils the school expects to admit. Therefore, 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), 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), 5(d)(iii)

- The proposed school has a spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) policy. It sets out the definition of SMSC development and how it is to be promoted in the school. It includes many examples of how pupils' SMSC development is intended to be promoted. Spiritual development is likely to be promoted through the development of personal beliefs, including an understanding of a variety of religious beliefs. Moral development is likely to be promoted through learning about moral codes and pupils developing their own values. Social development is to be promoted by pupils learning the importance of good citizenship and care for others. Finally, cultural development is to be promoted by off-site visits and celebrating special events.
- The SMSC policy also sets out the proposed school's approach to teaching pupils about the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance. These concepts will be taught explicitly within subjects and through fundamental British values-themed activities. For example, it is intended that the school will be visited by local police officers and members of parliament. Leaders intend to hold mock elections in school to coincide with national elections.
- The proposed school has an access and single equality policy. It describes how the school will promote equality, including paying particular attention to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The proposed school's child protection and safeguarding policy adheres to the current guidance contained in 'Keeping children safe in education'. It is detailed and comprehensive, providing clear guidance for staff on how to recognise the signs that a pupil might need extra help and how to pass on any concerns. It is tailored particularly to the potential safeguarding risks for pupils with SEND. The policy is present on the school's website.
- The anti-bullying policy clearly sets out the school's approach to preventing bullying and dealing with any that does occur.
- The school's behaviour management policy describes the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour, including keeping records of sanctions. The policy focuses strongly on promoting positive behaviour and providing effective support for pupils. It emphasises the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships with pupils. It has been drawn up with the specific needs of the school's likely pupils in mind.
- The school's first-aid and healthcare policy clearly sets out roles and responsibilities for administering first aid to pupils. It names trained first-aiders, identifies required training, describes procedures for record-keeping and reporting and identifies links to other, relevant school policies.
- The proprietor body ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. For example, a fire risk assessment was carried out in June 2022, and it identified no major issues to be rectified. Escape routes are clearly signposted around the school. All firefighting equipment has been serviced this year.
- The school's admissions policy clearly states the information to be kept on the admissions register and the procedures to be followed when a pupil joins the school's roll. The sample admissions register contains all the required information.
- The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy. It contains clear instructions about the types of risk to be assessed and the process for carrying out risk assessments. During the inspection, leaders provided sample risk assessments already in use at the proprietor body's other school. These were all appropriate and confirm that the policy is likely to be implemented effectively.
- The standards in this part 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)

- The proprietor board has ensured that all pre-employment checks have been completed in line with statutory guidance. All checks are recorded on the school's single central record.
- The school is unlikely to use supply staff. However, leaders are aware of the checks

that should be made if they do make use of supply staff.

- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 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), 29(1)(b)

- The proposed school is set within 13 acres of attractive grounds. It has four main buildings. Three are proposed to house the upper school, the lower school and key stage 1, respectively. A fourth building has a dining area and performance space. The site housed an independent school until October 2021.
- The site has good-quality specialist facilities, including a sports hall, a science laboratory and a design technology workshop. It also includes plentiful general-purpose teaching rooms. All rooms provide suitable acoustic conditions and are adequately sized for their proposed purposes. There is suitable external lighting.
- The school has a good-size medical room, located in the key stage 1 building. It has its own washing facilities and is close to toilet facilities. The medical room will not be used for any other purpose.
- Each building has ample toilet facilities, all with washing facilities, including hot and cold water. There are separate boys' and girls' toilets and several single-use toilets in addition. Several single-use toilets provide facilities for disabled pupils. The school has additional facilities for staff.
- Drinking water is available in each building in pupils' social areas.
- The site is surrounded by a secure fence. Outdoor space includes several grassed lawns, an all-weather play area and a tarmacked playground. Together, they provide ample outdoor space for physical education and outdoor play.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(e), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(1)(k), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g)

- Leaders were able to provide the inspector with all information specified in the above standards. The school has a website and information is currently being added. Leaders propose that all required information will be available on the school's website if the school is registered by the Department for Education (DfE).
- The standards in this part 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), 33(k)

- The school has a written complaints policy. It complies with statutory guidance. For example, it includes informal and formal procedures and timescales in which complaints should be resolved.

- 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 and school leaders possess considerable experience and expertise gained from operating another school for several years. They have a secure grasp of the independent school standards. Their actions in setting up this school demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge to ensure that the independent school standards are likely to be met consistently.
- Leaders and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to actively promoting pupils' well-being. This is evident in the school's ethos, curriculum and safeguarding arrangements.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an appropriate accessibility plan that meets the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It sets out plans to improve physical access, access to the curriculum and the availability of information.

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	149194
DfE registration number	893/6045
Inspection number	10246190

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 special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Bettws Lifehouse Ltd
Chair	Kay Jones
Headteacher	Nici Jones
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000 to £72,000 depending on need
Telephone number	01686 651166
Website	bettwslifehousekg.org
Email address	meg.jones@bettwslifehouse.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	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	100	100

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	100

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	100
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	100
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	100

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	10	80
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1

Information about this proposed school

- Bettws Lifehouse intends to cater for up to 100 pupils, aged between five and 19, with a range of SEND including communication and interaction and social emotional and mental health difficulties. The school will not cater for pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Most or all of the pupils are likely to have an education, health and care plan. The school intends to open on 1 September 2022. It is located near Shrewsbury in Shropshire.
- Almost all pupils will be referred by local authorities. Some may be admitted via direct applications from parents.
- The proprietor body, Bettws Lifehouse Ltd, has operated a similar school in Wales since 2008.

Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the DfE to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards if it is given permission to open.
- This is the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and the chair of the proprietor board.
- The inspector toured the school premises.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents and policies. He discussed safeguarding and welfare arrangements and scrutinised the school's single central record.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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