

Red Balloon Learner Centre Worthing

52-54 Windsor Road, Worthing BN11 2LZ

Inspection date

9 August 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 1–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g)–2A(2), 3–4

- The school's proposed curriculum is broad and balanced. It sets out information about what will be taught in each subject and year group. The curriculum provides a secure framework for teaching in each year group across a wide range of subjects.
- Staff will be trained to adapt the curriculum according to pupils' needs and experiences. The school will provide a range of therapies to support pupils' individual needs, including counselling sessions, art therapy and music therapy.
- Leaders intend to develop individual programmes of learning and support based on pupils' experiences, contexts and needs. Pupils' views will form a central part of this process.
- Staff will use games and activities, such as quizzes, to gauge pupils' abilities and needs when they join the school. They will monitor pupils' personal, social and academic progress continuously as an everyday part of school life.
- The English curriculum is built around themes, such as 'self', 'society' and 'power and politics'. Texts will be chosen according to pupils' needs and interests. The school's library will provide a range of books for pupils to read and enjoy.
- Leaders intend to use a range of programmes to promote creativity. For example, the school will offer a multi-disciplinary arts award, in addition to art GCSE. The award will involve the completion of projects in subjects such as creative writing, music and drama. The school's curriculum will also include art events, such as a sculpture project.
- The school intends to provide courses in nationally accredited qualifications for the older pupils, such as GCSEs in English, mathematics and science, following each examination syllabus. The school's sixth form will make provision for pupils who need extra time to complete courses and qualifications prior to going on to the next stage of education, training or work.

- The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum includes a suitable range of topics. These will be adjusted according to pupils' needs and experiences. Relationships and sex education (RSE) will be taught as an element of the PSHE curriculum. Leaders have suitable plans in place to consult with parents about the content of the RSE programme.
- The PSHE programme will be supplemented by activities and events in the everyday life of the school. For example, lunchtimes will be an important time for pupils to relax and socialise.
- The school's careers programme will be tailored to pupils' experience, skills and interests. Pupils will be supported to identify post-16 options, develop ambitions and make plans for the future. Leaders plan to supplement the careers curriculum with work experience opportunities, events and visiting speakers.
- The proposed school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- Leaders intend to promote positive values, including fundamental British values, through the school's curriculum and its inclusive and respectful ethos.
- The PSHE programme includes the study of religious education. Pupils will also have regular opportunities to consider and discuss challenging themes, such as 'Is religion a source of peace or conflict?'
- The proposed school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b), 9–16(b)

- Leaders have updated the school's detailed safeguarding policy to reflect recent staff appointments and to ensure compliance with current statutory guidance. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and business manager have completed suitable designated safeguarding lead training. Leaders will expect staff to give pupils' safety a suitably high priority and to be continuously vigilant about pupils' well-being. Staff will complete safeguarding training as part of the school's induction programme.
- The school will use commercially produced software to record and monitor safeguarding concerns. Staff will be trained in how to use the system.
- Work to refurbish the school has been completed since the last pre-registration inspection. The proprietor has addressed all omissions identified in the school premises at that time. The school is now an attractive, safe and welcoming learning environment.
- The behaviour and anti-bullying policies are fit for purpose. The school aims to support pupils in 'learning how to manage their own behaviour by making informed choices'. The development of strong relationships between staff and pupils will be

central to the success of the school's behaviour policy. Pupils will be encouraged to be 'determined, optimistic and emotionally intelligent'.

- An external audit of fire safety arrangements has been completed since the last pre-registration inspection. All required actions have been completed.
- The proposed school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

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

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)–21(3)(b), 21(5)–21(7)(b)

- Several members of staff have been appointed since the first pre-registration inspection. Appropriate recruitment and suitability checks have been completed and are recorded accurately on the single central record. Leaders will complete further checks as staff are appointed.
- The director of education, headteacher and business manager have completed suitable training in safer recruitment procedures.
- The proposed school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22(1)–23(1)(a), 24(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 28(1)–28(1)(c), 28(2)–29(1)(b)

- The school building has been refurbished to a high standard. It comprises two adjoining houses on a quiet residential road. The accommodation consists of a number of well-lit and airy teaching areas, an art room, a music room, a food technology room and a science laboratory. The largest room will be used as a dining room and communal space. The school also has a 'chill-out' zone for pupils, which is equipped with comfortable seating and board games. The school building provides ample space to accommodate the 20 pupils proposed.
- The proprietor has created a suitably equipped medical room. It includes a bed and sink. A toilet is located nearby.
- Toilets facilities and showers are clean and supplied with hot and cold water. Hot water is maintained at a constant temperature with no risk of scalding. Leaders intend for pupils to use their own drinking bottles, which they will be able to refill in the school's food technology room. Drinking water is labelled clearly.
- Large windows admit plenty of natural light into the building. All windows have been refurbished to ensure safe use. Additional internal and external lighting ensures that the school is suitably lit inside and out.
- Fire extinguishers have been serviced and are located throughout the premises. Fire exits are clearly identified as such.
- The school's attractive and peaceful garden consists of a lawned area, a decking area, a vegetable plot and mature shrubs and trees. Leaders anticipate that some pupils and staff will cycle to school. A bike rack has been installed accordingly. At the time of the last inspection, one of the garden's boundary walls was being rebuilt. This work

has now been completed. A ramp provides disabled access from the decking to the garden.

- The proposed school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(d), 32(1)(f)–32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii)–32(5)

- The school website includes information and policies that the proprietor is required to provide. The proprietor also intends to provide parents with a collection of policies when their children join the school.
- Leaders will provide parents with regular information about pupils' attainment and progress, including termly written reports.
- The proposed school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33–33(k)

- The proprietor has amended the wording of the complaints policy since the last inspection. The policy now complies with the independent school standards fully. It is published on the school's website.
- The complaints policy provides clear timescales for the management of any complaint. It includes the opportunity to consider any complaints informally in the first instance.
- The proposed school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(2)

- Leaders and trustees are experienced in providing education for highly anxious pupils and those with social, emotional and mental health needs. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and director of education have substantial educational experience, including in maintained schools.
- The process of establishing a local governing body has begun. A chair has been appointed, as well as two governors with specific responsibilities for the quality of education and safeguarding. Further appointments are planned to ensure a breadth of experience and specialist knowledge.
- The proprietor anticipates that the local governing body will meet regularly and will be the local 'eyes and ears' of the trustees, as well as acting as a 'critical friend' to school leaders.
- The proposed school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has a suitable equalities policy which includes an accessibility plan and 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	149217
DfE registration number	938/6012
Inspection number	10247074

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	Red Balloon Educational Trust
Chair	Beverley Williams
Headteacher	Kim Anderson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000 to £40,000
Telephone number	07877 857656
Website	www.redballoonlearner.org
Email address	rob.watson@rbet.ac
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	20	20

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	20

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	20
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	20

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	4
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is situated on a residential street. The accommodation consists of two adjoining houses which have been combined to make one building. Rooms have been converted into classrooms with office space, a staff kitchen and a relaxation/dining room. The school has a garden at the rear of the property which pupils will be able to use.
- The proposed school intends to cater for pupils who struggle to attend mainstream schools. Some may have experienced significant bullying, and some may have a history of trauma or self-harm. It is likely that all pupils will have an education, health and care plan for social, emotional and mental health needs. The school aims to support pupils to re-engage with school so that they attend regularly, start learning again and plan for a positive future. The Red Balloon Charity has set up some other schools across the country that cater for pupils with similar characteristics.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) in response to an application from the proprietor body to open a school. The purpose of this inspection was to check whether the school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 if the DfE decides to register it. This was the school's second pre-registration inspection.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the independent school standards, as well as safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the director of education and two trustees, including the chair of trustees. The inspector discussed leaders' aims and ambitions for the proposed school and scrutinised a wide range of documentation.
- The inspector toured the school building and grounds.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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