

Kiora Hall

Ragpath Lane, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 9JS

Inspection date

8 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

Paragraph 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)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i),

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a written curriculum policy in place. The policy is on the school's website and provides important information for parents about what pupils will learn at the school. The policy reflects the school's mission to inspire, support and equip pupils to fulfil their potential in life.
- A broad range of subjects are offered including English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), science, preparing for adulthood, independent living, community inclusion, health and well-being, history, geography, art, physical education and music. Pupils will have access to qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT.
- Leaders' proposed timetable shows that a balanced range of subjects have been planned over the course of a week.
- Schemes of work cover all subjects of the curriculum. They vary in quality but meet the requirements of the independent school standards. Since the previous inspection leaders have developed a clearer overview of what will be taught in each subject. The curriculum is better organised and ordered so that teachers will know what to teach.
- Leaders are committed to delivering a personalised curriculum which will meet the specific needs of the pupils who will attend the school. With this at the forefront of their thinking they have created a curriculum which offers four different pathways.
- Leaders intend to have a comprehensive assessment of each pupil's abilities on their entry to school. They will use this information to identify the most relevant and appropriate pathway for each pupil.
- Pupils will progress through the curriculum at their own pace. Specific targets based on pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans will provide small steps of learning to ensure success.

- The curriculum for students in the sixth form aims to develop independent living skills and employability skills in preparation for life after school.
- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) plans focus on the skills that will help pupils in their future lives. Leaders have chosen to focus on the key skills of how to manage relationships, how to live in the wider world and how to live a healthy life. Leaders see this as important to support pupils in their preparation for adulthood.

Paragraph 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)

- The proprietor has commissioned an external provider to deliver impartial careers advice and guidance to the pupils. Career plans will be put in place from Year 9 onwards. These plans will include pupils' interests. Work experience and vocational opportunities will be matched to pupils' aspirations for the future.
- Links with local businesses have already been forged, for instance with a hotel and a supermarket chain. Some pupils will access extended work experience placements where they will gain valuable skills and knowledge about the world of work.

Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2), 2A(3)

- Leaders have published the relationships, sex and health education policy on the school website. The proprietor is ensuring that all primary and secondary age pupils will receive an appropriate education which will prepare them for their adult lives.
- The school will consult with parents before any revision is made to the policy.
- Arrangements will be in place for parents to request that their secondary-aged child is wholly or partly excused from sex education.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- The school proposes to admit pupils with autism spectrum disorder and neurodiverse conditions. Leaders have already recruited staff so that they will be well trained to support pupils effectively from day one. For example, training in behaviour strategies, safeguarding and approaches to autism spectrum disorder have prepared new staff to meet pupils' needs as soon as they join the school.
- Leaders have made fostering pupils' motivation and engagement in learning a high priority. Leaders intend to use their detailed knowledge of each pupil to plan work that will interest and inspire them.
- An assessment system is in place to assess pupils' work regularly. Pupils will be assessed on entry to the school. Targets based on EHC plans will be set for pupils to work towards. Pupils' progress will be assessed during lessons, termly and on an annual basis. This information will be shared with parents.
- Discussions with leaders about PSHE show that they intend to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs.
- The standards in Part 1 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)

- The proprietor body have considered how to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils in the proposed school. They have a clear understanding of the social and emotional needs of the pupils. They intend to develop a culture where pupils are supported and nurtured to develop the skills that they need to live in the wider world.
- Individual tutorial lessons will focus on helping pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong and encouraging them to accept responsibility for their behaviour.
- Leaders attach a high priority to pupils being able to communicate their needs effectively. Pupils will gain in self-confidence as they interact with a wider range of people and in different situations. Pupils' resilience will be promoted through the 'can do' approach that is part of the school's ethos.
- Leaders' PSHE scheme of work provides opportunities for pupils to learn about British values and to encourage respect for democracy. Pupils will participate in democratic processes, such as electing their peers to positions on the student council.
- Discussions indicate that leaders will promote respect and tolerance towards people of different faiths and cultures. The school's policies make reference to the promotion and support of people with protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Paragraph 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders are clear that they will not accept partisan political views being promoted in the proposed school. Staff are informed of this policy through the expectations set out in the staff code of conduct. Visiting speakers will always be accompanied and they will be expected to provide a balance of opposing views in any presentations that they deliver.
- The standards in Part 2 are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- A detailed safeguarding policy is in place. It is published on the school's website and sets out what staff must do if they have concerns about a pupil. The policy follows the latest government guidance.
- A behaviour policy makes clear what is appropriate and what is inappropriate behaviour for pupils who will be attending the school. The school does not intend to use sanctions. A record will be kept of any physical interventions that take place during the school day.
- The school's anti-bullying strategy outlines what bullying is, how it can be prevented and what the procedure is for dealing with an incident of bullying. Advice is provided to pupils, staff and parents on what they can do if they are worried about bullying.
- A health and safety policy has been drawn up and sets out the responsibilities of leaders and staff in keeping the premises and the pupils safe.
- The proprietor has complied with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. There is a fire risk assessment in place. Appropriate checks of fire alarms, fire extinguishers and fire doors will take place regularly. Fire evacuations will take place

at least termly to make sure that pupils and staff know what to do in the event of a fire. Since the previous pre-registration inspection, leaders have considered the support that some pupils and staff might need to evacuate the building safely.

- A first aid policy is in place. Any accidents that occur will be recorded in an accident book. First aid boxes are situated around the school building. All staff will have a first aid qualification.
- The staffing levels proposed are appropriate for supervising pupils throughout the school day.
- The proprietor is aware of the legal requirements for school admission and attendance registers. An admissions register is in place with the appropriate headings. This will provide a record of all pupils who have been admitted to the school. An attendance register will be taken twice each day and recorded electronically. Leaders will follow the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance on the use of attendance codes.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place and has been published on the school's website.
- Since the previous pre-inspection leaders have considered carefully what the potential risks could be to pupils during an evacuation of the school premises. Risk assessments for fire and the use of an evacuation chair are now in place. Where required pupils and staff will have personal evacuation plans. There are now detailed procedures in place for identifying and mitigating the risks to pupils and staff during an emergency evacuation of the building.
- The standards in Part 3 are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 18(1), 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), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c)

- The proprietor has put in place a system to check the suitability of staff to work at the school. All the required checks have been made on staff who have already been employed to work in the school.
- The proprietor does not intend to use supply staff. Leaders recognise that the pupils need the familiarity and consistency of staff that they already know. However, if leaders do employ supply staff they are aware of the necessity to make sure that they have been checked properly by employment agencies.

Paragraph 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), 21(4),

- The proprietor has put in place a single central register (SCR). It is complete. This register records all the appropriate recruitment checks that have been made on new staff, to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The SCR is in electronic form. Checks on the suitability of the proprietor are in place. The proprietor has ensured checks on other members of the body of proprietors are in place.

The standards in Part 4 are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 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 school building has been refurbished by the proprietors to a high standard.
- There are suitable toilet and washing facilities provided for the sole use of the pupils. The toilets are separate facilities for boys and girls. There is also a toilet with appropriate facilities for disabled pupils and adults.
- Toilets have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have adequate supplies of hot and cold water. The temperature of the water does not pose a scalding risk to pupils.
- Drinking water is available from a water dispenser.
- Spacious and suitable changing accommodation and showers are available for boys and girls, for use after physical education lessons.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- A well-equipped room provides accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils. There is a bed, a sink and lockable cabinets for the storage of medication. There is easy access to a toilet facility.

Paragraph 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- The acoustic and lighting conditions in classrooms and other spaces around the school are appropriate for the activities that will take place.
- External lighting is provided so that pupils, staff and visitors can enter and leave the premises safely.
- Leaders had identified at the first pre-registration inspection that the open staircase in the school posed a safety risk to the pupils. They had put plans in place to rectify this issue. However, at the time of the inspection this had not been addressed. This issue has now been addressed. Safety glass has been fitted above all the banisters to enclose the staircase. The balcony on the top floor has also been made safe with safety glass positioned above the balustrade.
- During the first pre-registration inspection a fire door opened into a facility which will be used by the community. This ease of access could have posed a risk to the safety and well-being of pupils attending the school. Since that inspection the proprietor has fitted an electronic fob to the fire door which de-activates when the fire alarm is sounded. The community facility will be used during school hours, but it is not possible to enter the school from this facility without an electronic fob.
- The standards in Part 5 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)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 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)

- The proposed school has a website where all the required policies can be found.

- The school's mission statement and core values are displayed clearly on the website.
- Contact details of the proprietor, the chair of governing board and the principal can be found on the website.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the website for parents to access.
- Parents will receive an annual report which will inform them of their child's progress in the main subject areas of the curriculum. Leaders will work with the appropriate authorities in contributing to the annual review of each pupil's EHC plan.
- A template already in use by other schools in the society will provide information about the school fees.
- An admissions policy provides details of the process for referring pupils to the school. Prospective pupils will have a thorough two-day assessment to check that the school can meet their needs. Support for pupils with EHC plans is outlined in the policy.
- Information about the provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is easily accessible by parents on the school's website.
- The standards in Part 6 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)

- A complaints policy has been drawn up and is available to parents on the school website.
- The policy sets out clear timescales for the management of a complaint. It explains how a complaint can be made firstly on an informal basis. If the complainant is not satisfied the complaint can then escalate to a more formal procedure.
- A written record, which includes the findings and any recommendations, will be provided to those involved and kept confidentially on the school premises.

The standards in Part 7 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 is an established provider of education for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. The board of directors and director of education bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to support the proposed school. The proprietor has a strong understanding of the needs of the pupils who will attend the school.
- Leaders are committed to providing a highly personalised curriculum which will engage and motivate pupils to achieve their full potential.
- Processes and procedures are already in place across the other schools in the society to hold leaders to account for standards. These systems will be replicated in the proposed school.
- The proprietor invests in developing a quality workforce. Staff are well trained to work with vulnerable children. There is a comprehensive induction process where staff learn about the communication and sensory strategies that they will need to support the

pupils. Ongoing training, for example, in a sign language system and intensive interaction, illustrates the proprietor's intention to develop a highly trained staff team.

- Two vice principals have been appointed to join the principal on the leadership team. This has added further capacity to the leadership team to support the staff and pupils and quality assure the work of the school.
- Leaders have addressed the standards that were not likely to be met in the previous pre-registration inspection. They considered carefully the steps that they would take to thoroughly meet the unmet standards.

The standards in Part 8 are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has ensured that there is an accessibility plan in place. It sets out how access will be improved to the premises, how improvements will be made to the curriculum and how information will be made more accessible to parents. The plan aims to promote equality and accessibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The proprietor's actions mean that the school is likely to meet the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (SEND).

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	148935
DfE registration number	808/6009
Inspection number	10244722

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	North East Autism Society
Chair	Gavin Bestford
Headteacher	Nigel Rumfitt
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,000 to £120,000
Telephone number	07778892770
Website	www.ne-as.org.uk/kiora-hall
Email address	nigel.rumfitt@ne-as.org.uk
Date of previous pre-registration inspection	7 April 2022

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	n/a	5-19	5-19
Number of pupils on the school roll	n/a	35	35

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	n/a	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	35
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	35
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	35
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	35

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	n/a	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	n/a	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	n/a	38

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school will be one of several schools owned by the North East Autism society.
- The proposed school is situated in a residential area in the outskirts of Stockton-on-Tees. It is a large house in extensive grounds which has been used recently as a community facility. The building has been refurbished to a high standard to accommodate a school for pupils with SEND.
- The proposed school's mission statement is 'Working together to inspire, support and equip people with Autism and neurodiversity to fulfil their potential in life'.
- At the previous pre-inspection the proprietor proposed to accommodate 30 pupils. The proprietor is now requesting that the school be registered for 35 pupils. The inspector agrees with this proposal.
- The school will not have a religious character.
- The school does not intend to use alternative education provision.
- The school proposes to meet the needs of pupils with autism spectrum disorder and other neurodiverse conditions. Pupils will have EHC plans.

Information about this inspection

- This is the second pre-registration inspection of Kiora Hall. It 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.
- The inspection was carried out with two days' notice.
- The inspector met with the director of education who was representing the proprietor, the deputy director of education, the principal and the vice principals of the proposed school.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. The policies associated with the independent school standards were reviewed. The standards that were unlikely to be met at the previous inspection were explored. The single central record was checked.
- The inspector toured the school building and the outside areas accompanied by school leaders.

Inspection team

Suzette Garland-Grimes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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