

Education Plus Independent Special School

Newton Aycliffe Industrial Estate, Business Training Services, Durham
Way South, Newton Aycliffe, Durham DL5 6XP

Inspection date

15 September 2022

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet all the independent school standards. It is currently operating without registration

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

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

- The proposed school has a curriculum in place for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. The curriculum covers a range of subjects as required by the independent school standards (the standards). At key stage 4, the proposed school intends to operate three curriculum pathways, including an academic pathway, a vocational pathway and a nurture pathway. There are schemes of work in place for all subjects that the proposed school intends to teach.
- Leaders intend to actively promote fundamental British values through the personal development curriculum. Leaders intend to ensure, for example, that pupils understand the values of respect and tolerance and the meaning of living in a democracy.
- Leaders have planned a personal social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum for key stage 3 and 4 pupils. Leaders intend to deliver relationships and sex education (RSE) as part of the proposed school's PSHE curriculum. Leaders intend to consult parents and carers on this curriculum when the proposed school opens.
- The intention of leaders is to implement a programme of careers education. This will include work experience opportunities and impartial careers advice and guidance. Businesses and professionals will also be invited to the proposed school.
- Leaders have developed an assessment policy which outlines how pupils' progress will be assessed and reported to parents.
- Leaders updated the proposed school's curriculum plans for physical education (PE) during the inspection to ensure that boys and girls are given the same opportunities and experiences.

- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2)(g), 2A(1), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(g), 3, 3(c), 3(f)

- Leaders have not ensured that there is an RSE policy in place for the proposed school.
- There are currently no teaching resources. For instance, the proposed school's curriculum includes science and information and computing technology. There are no resources to teach either of these subjects.
- Leaders intend to cater for a wide range of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, staff do not have the necessary expertise to cater for pupils with such a wide range of needs.
- Leaders have not developed a programme of activities for pupils above compulsory school age, even though leaders have applied to admit pupils up to the age of 19.
- Some of the proposed school's curriculum plans do not take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, as required by the independent school standards.
- These standards are unlikely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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)

- Leaders intend to provide opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship and learn about the different faiths and cultures of modern Britain.
- Leaders are clear that staff must not promote partisan political views. They intend to make this clear in the staff handbook. Systems are in place to check visiting speakers who are invited to school.
- The proposed school's policies pay regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Pupils will contribute to the local and wider community. They will also learn about the public institutions and services in Britain. Leaders were able to give examples of the ways in which current pupils, who attend the unregistered alternative education provision, contribute to their local community.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is one of the proprietors. Leaders intend to transfer this role to another member of staff to ensure that the DSL is not one of the proprietors.
- Leaders have not considered what internet filtering they will put in place to keep pupils safe online.
- Leaders have not ensured that all necessary safer recruitment checks are made on staff before they are appointed. The required documents, following the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance, Keeping children safe in education 2022 (KCSIE), are not kept on individual staff members' personnel files. Two references are

not obtained before a member of staff is appointed. Leaders were unaware of how to carry out overseas checks. A lack of robust checks puts pupils at risk of harm.

- The proposed school's safeguarding policy does not follow the guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education. For instance, the safer recruitment section of the proposed school's safeguarding policy lists the statutory checks that the school intends to make before a member of staff is appointed. The list of checks that the school has included does not reflect the expectations set out in KCSIE.
- Leaders do record safeguarding concerns about pupils who currently attend the unregistered alternative education provision. Where concerns arise, sometimes referrals are made to external agencies by the pupil's home school. At other times, leaders from the unregistered alternative education provision will make the referral. However, record-keeping is not strong. Chronology of events, actions taken and outcomes are not clear and are often not recorded. Record-keeping is not in line with the DfE statutory guidance, KCSIE.
- These standards are unlikely to be met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10

- The proposed school has a behaviour and anti-bullying policy in place. There are systems to record behaviour and bullying incidents. Leaders intend to analyse these incidents. All suspensions are recorded and contact is made with parents. There will be a reintegration meeting when pupils return to the proposed school after a period of suspension.
- These standards are likely to be met if the proposed school's procedures and policies are implemented effectively.

Paragraph 11

- The proposed school has a health and safety policy in place. However, this policy does not relate to the building that the proposed school occupies. During the inspection, there was a lack of clarity from leaders about some aspects of the building. For instance, they did not know if there was any asbestos present. Leaders checked on this during the inspection and informed the inspector that there is no asbestos in the building.
- This standard is unlikely to be met.

Paragraphs 12, 13, 14

- A member of staff is trained as a fire marshal. Fire exits and fire assembly points are clearly shown. One of the proprietors will carry out weekly fire safety checks on the building. The organisation, which owns the building, will also carry out some of the fire safety checks. A fire audit has recently been carried out by an external provider. Leaders were not clear if the actions highlighted in the fire audit were being carried out. Leaders checked on this during the inspection.
- There is a first-aid policy in place and a system to record any accidents. There are currently two members of staff who are first-aid trained.
- Leaders were able to explain their plans for the supervision of pupils. For instance, there will be two members of staff in every classroom. There would be no more than 10 pupils in each classroom.

- These standards are likely to be met if the proposed school's procedures and policies are implemented effectively.

Paragraph 15

- There is a system in place to record pupils' attendance. The register will be taken in the morning and the afternoon. The attendance register will be held electronically.
- The proposed school has an admissions register. However, it does not contain all the required information such as the address of a pupil's previous school. Leaders were unaware of the need to initial and date any changes in entries to the admissions and attendance register and explain the reason for the change.
- Leaders started to address some of these issues during the inspection.
- This standard is unlikely to be met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The proposed school does not have a risk assessment policy in place. There are generic risk assessments in place. However, there are no risk assessments in place that are specific to the proposed school. For instance, there is no risk assessment to mitigate the risks associated with the outside space.
- Leaders intend to use an off-site leisure centre to deliver PE. However, there is no risk assessment in place for this. The off-site leisure centre was not visited as part of the inspection as arrangements to use the centre were not in place at the time of the inspection.
- The upper floor of the building is occupied by another company. Staff from this company can easily access the lower floor where the proposed school is based. There are no risk assessments in place to mitigate this risk.
- These standards are unlikely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18(1), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- The proposed school has a single central record. This details some, but not all, of the statutory checks that schools are required to make on staff before they are appointed. A Disclosure and Barring Service check and a Children's Barred List check have been undertaken on all staff currently appointed to work at the proposed school. Medical fitness checks and identity checks have also been carried out.
- Some staff appointments are still to be made.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff. However, they understand the procedures that they need to follow should they use supply staff.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(ii), 21(3), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(b)

- Leaders have not carried out prohibition checks on all staff where this check is required. They were unaware of how to carry out this check if a member of staff is not a qualified teacher.
- Leaders have not carried out the appropriate checks to ensure staff have the right to work in the UK.
- Section 128 checks, which establish if individuals have been barred from taking part in the management of independent schools, have not been carried out.
- These standards are unlikely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- There are suitable toilets for the sole use of pupils. The accessible toilet will be used as a staff toilet. There are separate toilet facilities for both boys and girls.
- The proposed school intends to use the changing rooms and showers from a local leisure centre for PE lessons. However, at the time of the inspection, the proposed school did not have a risk assessment in place for this.
- There is a medical room with a sink and a folding bed. The medical room is close to a toilet. There is a locked cupboard for the storage of medication in a room that will be occupied by a member of staff. There are two first-aid kits currently on site.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1)(a)

- There are suitable acoustics and lighting in each of the classrooms. The proposed school has external lighting.
- Building checks, such as legionella and gas checks, pest control and building maintenance, will be carried out by the owners of the building.
- During the inspection, leaders put up signs to identify that the cold water supplies were suitable for drinking.

Paragraphs 28(1), 28(1)(d), 29(1), 29(1)(b)

- The outside area is not currently suitable. In the car park, which is accessible to pupils, there is an area full of debris. Some of this area has been fenced off. However, there is a missing fence panel which means pupils can access this part of the site.
- The outside area is open to an industrial estate and busy road. There is no risk assessment in place related to this.
- The hot water in some of the toilet facilities is too hot and could pose a scalding risk.
- These standards are unlikely 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(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g)

- There is a website for the unregistered alternative education provision. Leaders intend to have a link on this website for the proposed school. Leaders were able to show the inspector the link where required policies, for example the safeguarding policy, will be made available for parents.
- Leaders intend to provide an annual report to parents. The report template was updated during the inspection to ensure that it includes progress as well as attainment information.
- Leaders intend to publish inspection reports on the proposed school's website so that they are available to parents.
- Leaders are clear that staff will attend, and provide any relevant information for, annual reviews of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- Leaders understand that an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school with respect to a pupil wholly or partially funded by the local authority will need to be provided to the local authority.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraph 32(3), 32(3)(b)

- Leaders were unaware of the need to provide details of the proposed school's education and welfare provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- This standard is unlikely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33(a), 33(b)

- Leaders have written a complaints policy. This policy will be made available to parents on the proposed school's website.

Paragraph 33, 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 complaints policy does not include all the information required by the independent school standards.
- These standards are unlikely 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), 34(2)

- Leaders do not have a good knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards as demonstrated by the number of standards that are unlikely to be met. This suggests that if the proposed school opened that the independent school standards would not be consistently met.
- Two members of the board of proprietors have had senior leadership experience in schools in the past. However, leaders do not have a good understanding of statutory requirements and relevant DfE guidance.
- Leaders have not ensured that all necessary checks are carried out on staff before they are appointed to ensure that they are safe to work with children. Leaders have not ensured risk assessments are in place to mitigate risks associated with the site.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are not in line with the most recent statutory guidance. This puts pupils at risk.

- These standards are unlikely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school does not have an accessibility plan in place. Leaders were unaware that this was required.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	149223
DfE registration number	840/6019
Inspection number	10247489

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	Education Plus NE Ltd
Chair	John Southeran
Headteacher	John Pratt
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,000
Telephone number	07971265397
Website	None
Email address	john.southeran@educationplusne.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	8
Number of pupils of compulsory school age who have an education, health and care plan, or who are looked after by a local authority	0
Total hours operating as a school per week	25
Total hours of teaching provided per week	25

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16	11 to 19	11 to 16

Number of pupils on the school roll	9	50	20
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Reason for inspector's recommendations

- The proprietors do not have a programme of activities in place for pupils above compulsory school age.
- The proposed school is based on the ground floor of a building. There are not enough classrooms to accommodate the number of pupils proposed by the proprietors in their application.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	50
Number of part-time pupils	9	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	50
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	Not known
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	Not known

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	14	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	9	2

Information about this proposed school

- The proprietors run an unregistered alternative education provision, established in 2017, from three sites. The name of the unregistered alternative education provision is Education Plus. One of these sites, where the alternative education provision is already based, is the site of the proposed new school.
- There are three directors on the board of proprietors.
- The proprietors intend to establish a governing body. The chair of the governing body has been appointed, and leaders are in the process of carrying out the necessary checks. No other governors had been appointed at the time of the inspection.
- Education Plus provided unregistered alternative education provision for 220 pupils last academic year. There are currently eight pupils receiving alternative education provision from Education Plus.
- The proprietors intend to continue to provide unregistered alternative education provision.
- The building, where the proposed school is based, is owned by Bishop Auckland College and will be leased to the proposed school. The ground floor of this building will be used by the proposed school. The upper floor of the building is currently used by another company.
- Most places at the proposed school will be commissioned by Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough local authorities. It is expected that all pupils on the proposed school's roll will be pupils with SEND.
- One of the proprietors intends to be the headteacher of the proposed school. The chair of the board of proprietors intends to be the executive headteacher. The proposed school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) will work at the two sites where the unregistered alternative education provision is based as well as the proposed school.
- The proposed school intends to open on 1 October 2022 with 25 pupils on roll in the first year of opening.
- The proposed school does not plan to use any alternative education provision.
- The proposed school intends to use an off-site local authority leisure centre for PE.

Information about this inspection

- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector toured the lower floor of the building where the proposed school will be based.
- A range of policies and documents relevant to the independent school standards were scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with all the proprietors and the proposed school's SENCo.
- The inspector visited a lesson and talked to a few pupils who were attending the unregistered alternative education provision at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
 - 2A(1)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b),
 - 2A(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].

- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person-
 - 18(2)(c)(iii) the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if-
 - 20(6)(a) MB-
 - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
 - 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and

- 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable-
 - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which-
 - 33(c) sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint;
 - 33(d) allows for a complaint to be made and considered initially on an informal basis;
 - 33(e) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (d), establishes a formal procedure for the complaint to be made in writing;
 - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
 - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
 - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;

- 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is-
- 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
- 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and-
- 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
- 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
- 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
- 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
- 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school does not have an accessibility plan in place.

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