

Aurora Cedars School

39 Compton Road West, Compton, Wolverhampton, West Midlands
WV3 9DW

Inspection date

26 April 2023

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) and 2(2)(i)

- Leaders, including the proprietor body, intend for the proposed school to provide education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many pupils are likely to have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- Leaders intend to provide an ambitious curriculum that is both broad and balanced. At key stages 1, 2 and 3, the curriculum on offer will be in line with the national curriculum. At key stages 4 and 5, pupils and students will access a range of externally accredited courses. Leaders have carefully selected the range of subjects and exam specifications that will be most suited to the anticipated needs of the pupils and students at the school. The range of options available ensures that all needs can be catered for.
- Leaders have ensured that a curriculum policy and appropriate schemes of work are in place to facilitate this range of study, including an appropriate scheme for personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- Through a thorough induction procedure, leaders intend to identify the needs of all pupils and students. They intend to use this information to ensure that the curriculum and programme of activities are adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and students.

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

- Leaders have developed a careers policy that outlines a comprehensive approach to providing pupils and students with independent careers advice. There is a deliberately planned curriculum that is supplemented through a careers week annually, attendance at careers fairs, and sessions with a qualified independent careers adviser.
- Leaders intend for pupils and students to have access to work experience and understand the importance of this aspect of the curriculum.

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

- Leaders have ensured that there is a comprehensive policy and programme in place to deliver the statutory curriculum for both relationships and sex education (RSE). The programme is age-appropriate and will gradually build pupils' understanding of healthy relationships.
- The RSE policy outlines the right of parents and carers to withdraw their child fully, or partially, from sex education lessons.

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

- The proprietor body has ensured that a suitably qualified and experienced leader is in post as headteacher. She is ably supported by a team of other suitably qualified leaders with relevant experience and understanding of working with pupils with SEND.
- A comprehensive programme of professional development is planned for all new staff as part of their induction. This is so that all staff acquire the knowledge and understanding they need to work with the pupils and students at the school.
- Leaders have set out how teachers will assess and review pupils' progress over time. Regular reflections on pupil progress and monitoring by leaders will ensure that adaptations to provision can be made in response to pupils' changing needs.
- Leaders have significant experience of working in independent special schools and show a good understanding of how teaching needs to be adapted to meet pupils' needs.
- The proprietor body has ensured that 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) and 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders have developed an active citizen programme that is at the centre of pupils' development. This includes a range of deliberately planned activities that pupils and students are given opportunities to take part in. These opportunities include trips and visits to explore diversity within British society.
- The well-planned curriculum in PSHE ensures that pupils and students would be encouraged to develop respect for other people, paying regards to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Leaders have planned an annual calendar for the development of pupils' cultural capital. This includes an exploration of the beliefs of others.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 32(1)(c)

- There is a written safeguarding policy which reflects the most recent statutory guidance. It is published on the school website and is available on request.
- Leaders are suitably trained to ensure that they establish an appropriate safeguarding culture. They demonstrate a secure understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm. They have ensured that all staff currently employed have been suitably trained

to recognise any signs that a pupil or student might be at risk of harm. Rigorous systems and processes are in place for staff to report any concerns they have about a pupil's or student's welfare.

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

- Leaders have developed behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Both policies propose to educate pupils and students about the impact of negative behaviour and encourage them to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Leaders intend to carefully analyse any patterns of behaviour to help identify appropriate support and intervention.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13

- There is a detailed health and safety policy that is fit for purpose. Leaders work with a facilities manager to ensure that all the relevant checks are made so that premises are maintained to a high standard.
- The premises underwent a fire risk assessment in March 2023. All recommended actions have been taken. Leaders have ensured compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- There is an appropriate first-aid policy in place. Staff are suitably trained to administer first aid.

Paragraphs 14, 15

- Leaders will ensure that pupils and students are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of staff. The level of supervision will be in line with pupils' needs. This will be determined before a pupil is admitted. Leaders intend to increase the number of staff as the number of pupils increases.
- Leaders have ensured that the information to be included on the admission and attendance registers will meet requirements.

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

- There is a clear and suitable risk assessment policy in place. It outlines how risks will be assessed and managed.
- Several risk assessments have been created that identify appropriate measures to be put in place to reduce risks.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 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(1), 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), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)

- Leaders have a thorough approach to the recruitment of staff and ensure that all of the appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken. This includes relevant checks on staff who are in management positions.
- The single central record contains the information required.
- The proprietor body has ensured that 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(1)(c), 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) and 29(1)(b)

- The proprietor body has secured ownership of a suitable premises for the proposed school. It comprises a main building, an annexe and some additional pods. The buildings are located within extensive grounds that include a multi-use games area (MUGA), lawned areas, woodlands and a substantial parking area that includes a drop-off zone.
- The main building and annexe have been renovated to a high standard and adapted to be suitable for a school. These buildings provide offices, a medical room, toilets, showers, a bespoke sensory room, several classrooms, specialist classrooms for the teaching of science, design technology and food technology and other smaller rooms suitable for meetings or interventions. There is an industrial kitchen on site with a suitably sized dining area adjacent to it. In addition to the varied teaching spaces, there is a library and a calm space located in pods.
- There are several separate toilet facilities for the sole use of pupils and students. There are also separate toilets available for staff and visitors. All toilets have suitable washing facilities, and the temperature of the water does not pose a risk of scalding.
- The medical room has a bed and washing facilities in it. It is located close to an accessible toilet.
- There are several classrooms, all of which have suitable natural daylight as well as adequate artificial lighting. The acoustics throughout both buildings are suitable.
- There are several cold-water supplies, suitable for drinking. They are clearly marked and are available throughout the day.
- There are several areas in the school's grounds that are suitable for pupils to play outside. The MUGA is suitable for physical education to be provided.
- The proprietor body has ensured that 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)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f) and 32(3)(g)

- Leaders have ensured that all of the information they are required to make available to parents is signposted on the school website.

- Leaders intend to provide parents with a written report on a regular basis to keep them informed about the progress their child is making.
- The proprietor body has established systems for sharing the income and expenditure of funding that the proposed school will receive from local authorities.
- The proprietor body has ensured that 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) and 33(k)

- There is a written complaints policy on the school website which is available on request.
- The policy outlines three stages within the process. It outlines clear timescales for the consideration and management of any complaint. This includes the opportunity to consider any complaints informally in the first instance. It also includes having an independent panel member in the final stage.
- The proprietor body has ensured that 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) and 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor body wants to register this school to meet an identified need in the local area.
- The proprietor body and school leaders have a secure understanding of the independent school standards and have systems in place to ensure that they would be consistently met if the school opens.
- Leaders have a range of experience in teaching and leadership to meet the needs of the intended pupils.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor body has ensured that they have a suitable accessibility plan in place that 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	149579
DfE registration number	336/6011
Inspection number	10271676

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	Beechkeys Limited
Chair	Mark Costello
Headteacher	Zoe Free
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,000
Telephone number	01902 544666
Website	www.theauroragroup.co.uk
Email address	zoe.free@the-aurora-group.com
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	0
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	0
Total hours of teaching provided per week	0

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	N/A	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	80	80

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	N/A	80
Number of part-time pupils	N/A	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	80
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	80
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	80

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	5	To meet pupils' needs
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	To meet pupils' needs
Number of staff in the welfare provision	3	To meet pupils' needs

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school intends to cater for boys and girls aged five to 19.
- The school will cater for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder and pupils with social emotional and mental health needs.
- It is expected that most pupils will have an EHC plan.
- The proposed school will have a proprietor body.

Information about this inspection

- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection. It was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards if it is given permission to open.
- 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 several leaders, including the headteacher and the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector visited all parts of the proposed school premises, including the outside space.

Inspection team

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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