

Napier School

Old School Studios, Lynchford Road, Aldershot GU14 6EF

Inspection date

2 August 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(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h)–2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(d)–2A(2)

- The school aims to 'achieve the best possible outcomes for the young people in terms of individual learning, independence, personal growth and development'. The proprietor has a carefully planned and well-sequenced curriculum ready for use in the proposed school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and will include a suitably wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. It is suitable for the proposed age range, including for children in the Reception Year. Recent improvements to the school's curriculum planning have introduced helpful clarity about what will be taught and how teachers might adapt the curriculum to support pupils' individual needs.
- Leaders intend to give the teaching of reading an appropriately high priority. Pupils will be taught to read through a range of suitable approaches, including phonics where this is appropriate for their particular learning needs.
- The early years curriculum reflects 'Birth to Four' and the early years foundation stage framework. The headteacher has experience of teaching early years and articulates a clear vision for the school's early years curriculum. She intends to promote learning through a mixture of different approaches and recognises the importance of a well-planned environment in facilitating learning, both indoors and outside.
- The proprietor has a suitable programme in place to support pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils will learn a range of topics, including age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE). The school's RSE policy complies with current statutory guidance.
- Pupils' academic learning and personal development will be supplemented by a range of therapies as appropriate to pupils' needs, such as occupational therapy and speech and language therapy.

Paragraph 3–4

- The proprietor has appointed experienced leaders, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Four teachers, six teaching assistants, a kitchen assistant, a site

manager and a receptionist have also been appointed. Leaders report a strong field of applicants with relevant experience for the posts advertised so far. The proprietor has developed a well-established induction programme in their other schools. This is ready to support newly appointed staff when they join Napier.

- A carefully planned transition programme will be used to support pupils who are new to the school. Pupils' needs and starting points will be assessed at the outset. This information will be used, alongside pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plan targets, to place pupils on one of three curriculum pathways.
- Regular assessments in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and PSHE will be used to check pupils' learning and to adjust how the curriculum is delivered. Assessing pupils' academic and personal development will be a routine part of teachers' practice.
- Leaders have 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(d)(iii)

- The school will aim to provide 'a safe, secure and caring environment where expectations and achievements are high'. The start of each day will focus on helping everyone to settle into the school day and to prepare for the day's activities.
- Leaders intend to use a raft of activities, such as horse riding, dance, music, swimming, yoga and cooking, to enrich pupils' learning, promote their personal development and foster their enjoyment of school.
- The school aims to help pupils to 'develop a richer understanding of the faiths which make up multicultural Britain and the British values our country is built on'. The school's PSHE programme includes consideration of different faiths and beliefs, including Sikhism, Buddhism and Christianity. The school calendar will be punctuated with special days and cultural events to make learning meaningful and engaging. Regular assemblies will focus on a variety of themes and topics, including British values.
- Pupils will be taught about their emotions and feelings, and the impact their behaviour can have on themselves and others. They will learn some of the steps they can take, with staff support, to help them to manage their own behaviour. The establishment of strong relationships will be a priority in helping to build pupils' trust and confidence.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b), 9–10, 32(1)(c)

- The school's policies, procedures and written guidance, if implemented effectively, are likely to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff. The safeguarding policy complies with current guidance and will be published on the school's website. Safeguarding training will be provided for new staff as they are appointed and will be a regular element of staff professional development.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have completed appropriate safeguarding training and are knowledgeable about policies and procedures. They are confident

about when and how to contact agencies regarding any safeguarding concerns that may arise. The headteacher has already contacted the local authority designated officer to introduce herself and the school.

- The proprietor has appropriate arrangements in place for recording any safeguarding concerns. The school's safeguarding leads will monitor records regularly to check that suitable action has been taken to ensure pupils' safety. They will report to the proprietor's overall safeguarding lead.
- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are likely to provide a secure basis for behaviour management. Staff will be trained to understand the triggers for poor behaviour and the strategies they can use to avoid minor incidents of misbehaviour becoming more significant. The emphasis will be on establishing routines and setting clear expectations in a calm environment.

Paragraph 11–16(b)

- The proprietor has completed an initial survey of fire safety arrangements. A further independent fire safety audit has been scheduled for early in the autumn term. Newly installed fire extinguishers are located throughout the premises. Fire exit routes are clearly indicated and are fit for purpose, although the proprietor is currently reconfiguring a small lobby area next to one of the fire exits to improve ease of access.
- Suitable health and safety, first-aid and risk assessment policies are in place and likely to be fit for purpose. A variety of forms and templates will be used to ensure that assessments, plans and records relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety are of sufficient quality.
- Specific plans have been established to ensure pupils' safety as they enter and leave the school grounds at the start and end of the day. The proprietor has sensible plans in place to ensure that pupils are supervised properly at all times.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3)(b), 21(5)–21(5)(c)

- The proprietor's human resource department is experienced in recruiting staff. Recruitment and interview procedures include an appropriately strong focus on safeguarding. Robust systems are in place to ensure that recruitment checks for new staff are completed fully and in a timely fashion.
- Relevant checks have been completed for staff already appointed. The school's single central record includes all required information. Leaders do not intend using agency staff but will ensure that all checks have been completed if this becomes necessary.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- The proposed school will occupy a two-storey period property that was previously used for office accommodation. The property has been refurbished to a high standard.

Classrooms are bright, welcoming and well ventilated. Several areas have been carefully reconfigured to meet the needs of pupils and staff. For instance, classrooms intended for use by the youngest children have been designed to provide plenty of space for children to move between activities. A heat pump system has been installed to provide heat and air cooling.

- The school's medical room is suitably equipped for use, including a lockable cupboard and fridge, a sink and a medical bed. A toilet is located nearby.
- The premises include suitable toilet, washing and shower facilities. The water temperature is controlled to ensure there is no risk of scalding. The proprietor has ensured suitable acoustics throughout. Drinking water is labelled and will be freely available to pupils.
- The school's outdoor spaces are attractive, inviting and safe. They have been designed carefully to facilitate a range of activities and include a sensory garden and recently installed play equipment. The areas are securely fenced with controlled entry to the school building and its grounds. Some of the school's physical education will take place in the school grounds and some will take place off site at local sports facilities.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(d), 32(1)(f)–32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c)–32(4)(c)

- Leaders have a good understanding of the requirements of part 6. The proposed school's website has been designed to provide all required information. The website is ready to launch if the proposals are approved.
- Leaders intend to provide regular reports for parents about pupils' learning as well as updates about the school's work. Required information will be provided for local authorities placing pupils at the school.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33–33(k)

- The school's complaints policy meets the requirements of part 7. The policy sets out reasonable timeframes and arrangements for formal complaints procedures. Leaders will publish the policy on the school's website once the Department for Education (DfE) has approved the proposed school.
- Leaders will aim to resolve any concerns informally at an early stage. The complaints policy provides clear guidance about arrangements for a formal complaint should this become necessary.
- Leaders have 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)(c)

- The proprietor has a proven track record in providing effective education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The headteacher and

deputy headteacher have extensive experience of special education and demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards.

- The proprietor has established a robust series of checks and balances that will be used to monitor and quality assure the school's work, including the work of a local governing body, a school improvement partner and a national performance board.
- Leaders have ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an accessibility plan that confirms the proprietor's commitment to ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010: 'We are committed to providing an accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs'.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- Leaders are knowledgeable about the early years foundation stage learning and development requirements. They have designed a curriculum that is consistent with these requirements and is likely to support children in preparation for the next stage of their education.
- The proprietor has ensured the appointment of staff with relevant experience of teaching early years foundation stage, including the headteacher. Relevant training will be provided for staff. Leaders and Reception Year staff will complete paediatric first-aid training early in the autumn term, with the intention that all staff will complete the training in the future.
- Classrooms and areas intended for use by the youngest children are light, airy and safe, with suitable access to outdoor areas. The proprietor has ensured the installation of toilets and sinks of an appropriate height. Classroom doors have been fitted with finger guards.

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	149858
DfE registration number	850/6109
Inspection number	10293328

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	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Sara Evans
Annual fees (day pupils)	£67,890 to £92,980
Telephone number	0777 1875 414
Website	www.napierschool.co.uk
Email address	ciaran.walsh@hmschool.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 11	5 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	54	54

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	54
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	54
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	54
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	54

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	5
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	10

Information about this proposed school

- The school intends to cater wholly for pupils with SEND. All pupils will have an EHC plan, and their places will be funded by a local authority.
- Leaders intend to specialise in providing education for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Pupils may also have a range of associated conditions such as attention deficit hyperactive disorder and emotional and behavioural needs.
- The school will be housed in a two-storey period building that was previously used for office space.

Information about this inspection

- 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 first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector discussed and reviewed all relevant proposals and plans for the new school with the regional director, the headteacher and other senior leaders. She also had a telephone discussion with the proprietor's chief operating officer.
- The inspector had a tour of the school site during the inspection. She also scrutinised a wide range of policies, documents and records presented by the proprietor as evidence of the school's likelihood to meet the standards, including the single central record.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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