

Cherry Tree School

72 Queen Mary Street, Walsall WS1 4AB

Inspection date

19 July 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

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

- Leaders have a clear vision for the curriculum they intend to offer at the proposed school. This is modelled strongly on what leaders have already put in place across other schools in this group. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and plan to ensure that they study the full range of subjects that form part of the national curriculum.
- Leaders have detailed, suitable medium- and long-term curriculum plans in place. These set out the key knowledge and skills that pupils are expected to learn and develop over time. Leaders' plans cover all key stages and are flexible to adapt to the various needs of pupils who attend the school.
- Leaders have appropriate plans in place for the early years curriculum. There will be an emphasis on helping children develop their communication and language skills alongside a thematic approach for each term. Leaders have carefully considered their approach to teaching phonics.
- All pupils who attend the school will have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' needs are likely to be linked to autism spectrum disorder, learning difficulties or social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. It is expected that all pupils who attend the proposed school will have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Leaders plan to ensure that they review these plans fully and gather other information on each child before they start at the school. Leaders have appropriate procedures in place to assess pupils when they start at the proposed school so that they identify where potential gaps are in their learning. Leaders state that they intend to develop an individual education plan for each pupil that will include targets related to literacy, numeracy and behaviour. Leaders intend to review these targets regularly so that they are well matched to pupils' needs.
- Leaders plan to ensure that pupils receive appropriate careers advice and guidance. This will begin in Year 7 and expand as pupils move up through the proposed school.

Leaders intend to use the Gatsby benchmarks to structure and evaluate their careers provision. Leaders plan to ensure that pupils visit a range of colleges and universities so that they are well prepared for their next steps in education.

- Leaders intend that the curriculum will have a focus on developing pupils' independent skills. This is because leaders recognise that many pupils who attend the proposed school will have complex needs and/or be a child looked after. Leaders plan for this to begin in the early years with simple tasks, such as putting on socks, before progressing into key stages 4 and 5 looking at how to use public transport, budgeting and using a washing machine.
- Leaders intend that all pupils will receive lessons in relationships and sex education. This will be taught as part of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons and social skills sessions. Leaders plan to deliver these lessons in an age-appropriate way and intend to put in place appropriate support for those who need it.
- These independent school standards (the standards) 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 plan to use the religious education curriculum as the primary way to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This will also be supplemented through PSHE lessons, assemblies and social skills sessions.
- Leaders intend that pupils will learn about fundamental British values, such as democracy, through the PSHE curriculum. This will include engaging in whole-school voting, electing school council members and voting on where pupils would like to go for their reward day.
- Leaders plan to ensure that pupils learn about the rule of law and public institutions through visits from the local police and Friday 'picture news'. Leaders also plan to ensure that pupils learn about different faiths through visits to various places of worship and diversity events.
- The planned curriculum also intends to help develop pupils' understanding of the protected characteristics. For example, in geography, pupils will learn about population diversity and how a person's race is protected in law.
- Leaders intend to offer a range of extra-curricular opportunities at lunchtime. This is likely to include clubs related to gardening, sports, creative subjects and pets.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- A copy of the school's safeguarding policy is available via the school website and is compliant with the latest government guidance.
- It is proposed that the headteacher will be the school's designated safeguarding lead. She will be supported in this role by a deputy designated safeguarding lead who will be the deputy headteacher. Both will be overseen in this role by the group safeguarding lead. All leaders have a clear understanding of how to make

safeguarding referrals to the local authority.

- Leaders plan to ensure that all staff will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction. Many staff who are joining the proposed school are coming from other schools in the group so have a strong understanding of the systems in place to report a concern about a child. Leaders intend to use a similar system at this proposed school where staff record their concerns on a 'cause for concern' form.
- Leaders intend to teach pupils how to stay safe through the PSHE curriculum. This will include liaising with parents and carers about online safety and the use of new technology.
- Leaders have established an appropriate way to log incidents of misbehaviour. This includes records of bullying, sexual harassment or serious misbehaviour. Leaders intend to review this data carefully to spot any potential patterns or trends.
- Leaders plan to ensure that all staff are trained in the use of physical intervention. Several staff across the group are trainers in the use of physical intervention and will lead training to staff before pupils start at the proposed school. Leaders have put in place appropriate forms to log and record all incidents of physical intervention. Leaders intend to discuss this as part of their reflective meeting with staff at the end of each day should they need to.
- Leaders have ensured that there is an appropriate health and safety policy in place. Leaders intend that all staff will receive health and safety training within the first two weeks of starting their job, which will include going through the proposed school's procedures booklet. Appropriate risk assessments are in place.
- Leaders have put in place an appropriate first-aid policy and have several staff who are first-aid trained.
- Leaders have undertaken appropriate work to ensure the building is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Suitable fire doors have been installed throughout the building. Leaders have also ensured that an appropriate fire safety and evacuation policy is in place. Leaders have ensured that all fire detection, alarm systems and emergency lighting have been certified.
- Leaders have established a suitable approach to recording pupils' attendance and admission information. This is compliant with government guidance.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 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)(b), 21(5)(c) and 21(6)

- Several leaders have undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training.
- Leaders ensure that they carry out all required checks on staff before they begin

working at the proposed school. This includes an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. Leaders are aware of their duty to check for any gaps in employment and whether any members of staff have worked overseas. They have a secure understanding of the background checks that need to be carried out should this be the case.

- Personnel files for staff are organised and contain staff's qualifications, references, identity checks and a medical fitness questionnaire.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff, but they are aware of the checks they would need to make should this be the case.
- The proposed school's electronic single central record contains all relevant and necessary information in line with government guidance. All information is recorded accurately.
- These standards 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(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 building of the proposed school was formerly used by another independent school. It is appropriately designed and structured to accommodate pupils. Leaders have spent money refreshing classrooms, corridors and communal spaces. While there is still a small amount to finish, this is likely to be completed and ready for when pupils are due to start in September 2023.
- The school comprises seven classrooms which are well lit with both natural and artificial light. The rooms also contain appropriate desks, chairs and resources. There are an additional six 'retreat spaces' and two 'pod classrooms' where pupils can go should they need time away from class.
- There is also a music room, computer suite and a library area which leads through to the school hall.
- The building also has hobby development, sensory, therapy and home skills rooms. These are all appropriately equipped for their intended purpose. Additionally, the proposed school has a room allocated as a science laboratory.
- There are suitable toilets and shower facilities throughout the building which have been newly installed.
- Drinking-water is available through a dispenser which leaders intend will be clearly marked.
- An alternative therapy room has been allocated as the school medical room which is next to a toilet and is readily available to be used should it be required.
- The proposed school has suitable outdoor space for pupils to play and for staff to deliver physical education. There is a playground to the rear of the building that is adequately fenced off. There is also a separate outdoor space for children in the early years.
- These standards 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)(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)

- The proposed school has recently launched its website. This includes the proposed school's vision and ethos, as well as contact details for school leaders and the proprietor body.
- All policies and documents are available via the school's website, including information relating to safeguarding, admissions, curriculum and behaviour.
- Leaders have put together a suitable template that they will use to provide an annual written report to parents and carers. This will include current levels of achievement and targets. Leaders state that staff will contact parents more frequently through weekly written reports and phone calls.
- Leaders have an appropriate system in place to record both income and expenditure for all pupils with SEND paid for by local authorities. This will be available on request.
- These standards 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)

- Leaders have put in place an appropriate complaints policy. This sets out how different stages of the complaint will be managed to help try and reach an early resolution. Leaders intend to keep records of complaints and subsequent actions. These will be available on request.
- These standards 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)

- Leaders at all levels are highly knowledgeable. Cherry Tree School will be the sixth school to open as part of the Hopedale group.
- Leaders have put in place clear lines of accountability. This runs from the proprietor board right through to school leaders. Directors of education and executive headteachers provide a comprehensive package of support to school leaders so that they are fully compliant with the standards. Leaders intend to continue this structure for the proposed school.
- The proprietor board operates a 'critical friend' model to provide strategic oversight of their schools' work. This board, made up of leaders from across the group, meets termly to discuss the performance of each school. This includes a review of academic, behavioural and safeguarding data. The proprietor board intends to continue with this model for Cherry Tree School to provide both support and challenge to school leaders.
- Leaders put pupils' well-being at the heart of what they do. They set high expectations for pupils' academic and personal development. They are highly committed to helping pupils with SEND achieve their potential.

- These standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have put together an appropriate accessibility policy and plan. Therefore, they are likely to meet their duties under paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

- The proposed curriculum for children in the early years will cover both prime and specific areas of the early years foundation stage curriculum.
- It is likely that all safeguarding and welfare requirements for the early years will be met.

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	149910
DfE registration number	335/6003
Inspection number	10295868

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	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Hopedale Children and Family Services Ltd
Chair	Sarah Deaville
Headteacher	Kelly Butler
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,000 to £90,000
Telephone number	01922 662460
Website	cherrytreeschool.org.uk
Email address	office@cherrytreeschool.org.uk

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	3 to 19	3 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	75	75

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	75
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	None

Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	75
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	75
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	75

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	None
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	None

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school will operate from a building that was formerly owned by another independent school. This is in an urban area near the centre of Walsall.
- The proposed school intends to provide education for pupils with the following special educational needs: autism, learning difficulties or SEMH needs. All pupils will have an EHC plan.
- The proposed school does not have a religious ethos.
- The proposed school intends to cater for boys and girls aged three to 19.
- The proposed school does not intend to make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the standards if it is given permission to open. This is the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspection was conducted with two working days' notice.
- The inspector held meetings with leaders, including the chair of the proprietor body, other senior leaders and the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at several policies and documents to check whether the school is likely to meet the standards and other requirements.
- The inspector also conducted a tour of the school premises.

Inspection team

Mark Howes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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