

Stannard School

Ridgeway Avenue, Dunstable LU5 4QL

Inspection date

13 December 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)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(2), 2(2)(a)–2(2)(a)(i) and 2A

- The school has designed the curriculum to ensure that pupils learn a broad range of subjects. It has identified the important knowledge and skills pupils need to know and remember as they move through the school.
- Leaders intend to assess carefully each pupil's needs when they arrive at school. They plan to use this information to then sequence each pupil's curriculum journey based on their prior knowledge and not necessarily their chronological age.
- The proposed curriculum has sufficiently prioritised reading. Those pupils who join the school needing support with phonics will receive this through the school's chosen phonics programme.
- The proprietor body understands the need to promote pupils' personal development. A detailed programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education has been planned. This aims to prepare pupils for the next stage of their lives, for example by helping them to understand aspects such as healthy relationships or to celebrate difference.
- The school plans to provide pupils with impartial careers advice and guidance.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a)–3(a)(j) and 4

- Staff appointed have appropriate levels of qualifications and subject expertise to teach their areas of the planned curriculum. The executive headteacher and the headteacher have significant experience in teaching and school leadership.
- The curriculum plans provide information for teachers and set out the key knowledge to be learned. Each plan includes subject-specific knowledge, along with certain disciplinary knowledge and skills that are weaved through.
- Assessment systems are in place to help teachers check that pupils learn the intended curriculum. Reporting formats have been constructed, with regular reporting times and provision of clear information about a pupil's progress.

- The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards (the standards) in this part.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5, 5(a)–5(d)

- The curriculum makes provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Along with the PSHE education curriculum, the school intends to enrich these aspects of the curriculum through a range of wider opportunities. Pupils will undertake projects in the local area, such as charity work, litter-picking or running a coffee morning. The proposed timetable provides enrichment opportunities each day. These offer pupils the chance to develop their personal interests while in school.
- Pupils will be encouraged to consider different ways to help manage their own behaviour. They will be expected to follow the school rules and learn how to work alongside one another to build successful relationships.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The school has in place suitable arrangements to safeguard pupils. The safeguarding policy provides guidance to staff on how to identify and report concerns that may arise about the welfare of a pupil. The headteacher has received training as the designated safeguard lead. As staff join the school, they will undertake in-depth training to help them understand the risks that pupils may face.

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

- The school has an appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policy. This policy clearly sets out the ways in which staff will set high expectations for how pupils will behave. The school plans to provide staff with useful support and guidance through the proprietor body's induction training package.

Paragraphs 11, 12 and 13

- The proprietor body has suitable health and safety policies in place. There is a schedule for regular checks that the school will undertake, such as regular tests of water temperatures.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. It has used external expertise to update the fire risk assessment. The risk assessment identifies the risks posed and steps to mitigate these.
- The school intends to train staff to administer first aid as part of their induction. All first-aid equipment is stocked and accessible to staff.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of how to deploy staff to ensure that pupils are adequately supervised. As the school grows, over time, the proprietor body has plans to increase the number of staff in school.

Paragraphs 15 and 16

- The processes and procedures for admissions and attendance are in place. The admissions register contains the required information. Similarly, the daily attendance registers will ensure that leaders know who is present. Systems are in place to follow up any non-attendance.
- Risk assessments for many aspects of the school site have been written. If leaders' risk assessments are implemented effectively, risks are likely to be reduced. Leaders plan to make individualised risk assessments for pupils once they have been admitted to the school.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a)–18(2)(f), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a)–19(2)(d), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a)–21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a)–21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7) and 21(7)(a)–21(7)(b)

- The school has an electronic single central record in place. It contains the required checks that need to be made on staff who are employed in the school. Leaders know the checks that are required on different staff, for example those in management positions, and have systems in place to ensure that these checks are carried out and recorded appropriately.
- Leaders do not intend to make use of supply staff at the school. However, they are knowledgeable about the procedures to follow should they wish to use supply staff in the future.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a)–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)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a)–28(2)(b), 29(1) and 29(1)(a)–29(1)(b)

- Since acquiring the building, the proprietor body has overseen a full refurbishment. This has been completed to a high standard. The six classrooms are light and airy. They provide inviting spaces in which pupils can learn.
- There is an adequate number of toilets and washing facilities, with water at the appropriate temperature. Drinking water is available and labelled appropriately. The private medical room has a bed and washing facilities.
- The secure outdoor area provides ample space for pupils to play and socialise. This space is also to be used for some physical education lessons, with some lessons taking place off site.

- The school is in the process of refurbishing the second phase of the school. This should provide space for the school to increase the number of pupils above 36. The proprietor body knows it will need to apply to the Department for Education for a material change before the school admits more pupils.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(a)–32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a)–32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a)–32(3)(g)

- The school has provided all required information on its website.
- Leaders intend to provide parents and carers with regular reports regarding pupils' academic and social development. There is a developed reporting format that leaders intend to use for this purpose.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in this part.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–33(k)

- The proprietor body has an appropriate policy in place for handling complaints. This is published on the school's website and is easily accessible for parents.
- The policy sets out the different stages of making a complaint and how the school will manage each stage. The school has a system in place to record any complaints it receives, the action taken and subsequent outcome.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)–34(1)(c)

- Members of the proprietor body and school leaders have demonstrated the required knowledge and skills they need to make sure that the independent school standards will be consistently met.
- The proprietor body has put in place a range of systems to ensure regular and impartial quality assurance of the school's work. These systems plan to provide school leaders with challenge and support, holding them to account for the provision pupils receive.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in this part.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has put in place an equalities policy that identifies leaders' responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. There is an appropriate accessibility plan in place.
- The school is likely to meet 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	150413
DfE registration number	823/6001
Inspection number	10317714

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	Polaris Children's Services Limited
Chair	Joanne August
Headteacher	Michael Davis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000 to £60,000
Telephone number	01527 556480
Website	www.stannardschool.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@stannardschool.co.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 18	5 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	36	36

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	36
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	Up to 36
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 36
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 36

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	1	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	8

Information about this proposed school

- Stannard School is part of Polaris Children’s Services Limited. The proprietor body intends for the school to open on 1 January 2024. The proprietor intends to grow the number of pupils on roll gradually to eventually reach its capacity of 36 pupils.
- The proprietor body seeks permission to provide education for up to 36 pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils are likely to be placed at the school by the local authority, with most pupils likely to have an education, health and care plan. Some pupils might stay at the school until the age of 18 to complete key stage 4 qualifications.
- The headteacher started his role on 1 December 2023. The executive headteacher has led the proposed school to this point. The executive headteacher is also responsible for several other school across the company.
- The school does not intend to use the services of alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education commissioned the inspection to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards if it is approved to open.
- This is the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with the executive headteacher, the headteacher and the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector toured the proposed school to check the suitability of the premises. He reviewed the health and safety and fire hazard assessments made by internal and external specialists.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including curriculum plans. He reviewed relevant policies. The inspector reviewed safeguarding documents, including the single central record of background checks undertaken to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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