

Bricklehurst Manor School

Bardown Road, Stonegate, Wadhurst TN5 7EL

Inspection dates

10 April 2024

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) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) to 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2), 3 to 4

- The proprietor body intends for the proposed school to provide education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum which is likely to provide suitable breadth of learning as required by the independent school standards (the standards).
- It is expected that all pupils will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Leaders recognise that pupils who will attend the proposed school may have experienced prolonged disruption to their education. They place building trusting relationships and providing pupils with a nurturing environment at the heart of their work.
- An appropriate curriculum policy and suitable schemes of work are in place. The curriculum is designed to be flexible, with content adapted according to pupils' individual starting points and EHC plan targets. The school intends to identify pupils' individual requirements when they join the school and tailor the curriculum accordingly. Leaders have the knowledge and expertise required to be able to ensure that this is done successfully.
- Pupils will follow programmes of study that include mathematics and English, ranging from functional skills level through to GCSE qualifications if appropriate. The school will offer a suitable breadth of other curriculum subjects tailored to meet the interests and needs of individuals.
- Other aspects of the curriculum, such as personal, social and health education (PSHE) will be delivered through timetabled lessons. Much of the work to promote pupils' personal development will be ongoing through their timetable while personalised to address the emotional and pastoral needs of each pupil.
- Leaders are aware of the requirement to provide pupils with impartial, good quality careers advice and guidance. This includes their plans to work with a range of

external providers to ensure that pupils are fully informed and supported to make appropriate choices for the next stage of their education.

- The proposed school's relationships and sex education (RSE) programme covers all the required content from the statutory guidance. Leaders intend to consult with parents and carers about this policy when the school opens. The RSE policy references the right of parents and carers to withdraw their child fully, or partly, from sex education lessons.
- The proprietor body intends to employ qualified and experienced staff who will be able to support pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills required for future education or employment. Leaders are in the process of recruiting teaching and support staff for the proposed school. They have given careful thought to an induction and professional development process that will help staff to promote the school's aims and intended curriculum successfully through their work.
- The proprietor body has thought carefully about how and when it will assess pupils so that the information gathered is used effectively to support pupils to make progress. This information will be evaluated and shared with parents, as appropriate.
- This part of the standards is likely to be met if the school is granted permission to register.

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

Paragraph 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders have given careful thought to pupils' personal development. They plan to offer a wide range of trips and visits which will be influenced by pupils' interests. The activities are likely to include outdoor learning, sports activities and visits to the local area. These opportunities are likely to support pupils to become active young citizens.
- The headteacher understands the importance of developing pupils' social skills and building their self-esteem, independence and resilience. It is intended that pupils will benefit from a school culture that promotes respect for others and for themselves.
- The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn about equalities, diversity and other religions. Lessons, tutor times and other opportunities will be used to promote British values and develop pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain.
- The planned PSHE curriculum is designed to help pupils to understand their own feelings. By understanding the reasons behind their actions, pupils will be encouraged to learn about how to manage their own emotions successfully.
- All staff will be expected to be positive role models for pupils. This includes ensuring that pupils are not exposed to partisan political or religious opinions.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the standards if granted permission to open.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7 to 7(b)

- The proposed school's policies, written guidance and procedures to assure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are in place. The written safeguarding policy takes account of current guidance, is available on request and will be published on the school's website when it is live.

- The headteacher will undertake the role of designated safeguarding lead. He has undertaken relevant training and is suitably knowledgeable about the role and responsibilities involved. He has appropriate plans in place to ensure that all staff receive training as part of their induction.
- Appropriate plans are in place to identify and help pupils who may be at risk of harm. Arrangements for record-keeping are suitable. These look likely to help leaders to promptly identify where they may need to act to keep a pupil safe.
- Leaders are alert to the potential risks to pupils and realise that some pupils may need extra help in understanding some of the risks they face. Curriculum plans provide ongoing opportunities for pupils to learn about how to make sensible choices to help them stay safe. The focus on developing positive relationships is intended to ensure that pupils will feel confident to tell an adult about any worries they have that potentially put them at risk.

Paragraph 9 to 16(b)

- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies, if implemented effectively, are likely to achieve leaders' aim to secure positive behaviour. Staff will be suitably trained to understand pupils' additional and complex behaviour needs, some of which will be linked to their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- Leaders intend to use the daily staff briefings to ensure that all relevant information about pupils is shared and recorded appropriately. Leaders plan to monitor behaviour records carefully to spot and respond to any patterns that emerge.
- The school's health and safety and risk assessments policies are suitable. They comply with relevant statutory requirements. These are supported by policy and practice which have been implemented in other schools within the Acorn Care and Education Limited group. As such, roles, responsibilities and routines are well defined and appropriate.
- The premises have had a fire risk assessment carried out by an external company, providing assurance that fire safety arrangements are suitable. Appropriate firefighting equipment and fire evacuation procedures are in place. Safety logs have been set up for the regular checking of all equipment and leaders intend to hold regular fire drills.
- Arrangements for providing first aid are fit for purpose. A first-aid policy is in place. It is intended that key staff will be suitably trained to deliver first aid.
- Leaders have planned to ensure that staff-to-pupil ratios are suitable. There are appropriate staffing levels based on the projected pupil numbers. The school has its own secure entrance. Most pupils will arrive by taxi. Leaders have planned procedures for the start and end of the school day with great care to ensure that these daily routines run safely.
- There are currently no pupils attending the proposed school. There is a system in place to record admissions and attendance once pupils begin to attend. These arrangements, if implemented effectively, are likely to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation 2006.
- This part of the standards is likely to be met if the school is permitted to open.

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

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

- Leaders understand their duty to make comprehensive recruitment checks on staff and those responsible for governance. They demonstrate understanding of the requirements of part 4 of the standards.
- The single central record was in place and complete for the staff already employed at the time of the inspection. It is set up in a way which is likely to ensure that it will meet the statutory requirements when staff recruitment has been fully completed. It is not leaders' intention to use supply staff in the school.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The proposed school will be in the grounds of a manor house. There are two main classroom areas, an intervention room and two further rooms which will serve as a medical room and the staff area. The buildings have been refurbished to a high standard throughout and are bright, airy and well equipped. There is ample space to accommodate the 14 pupils proposed.
- The lighting, heating and acoustics are all suitable for the pupils likely to be at the school. Outside, there is sufficient lighting around the buildings to ensure safe passage in the dark.
- Toilet and shower facilities are appropriate. All facilities have sufficient water supplies for hand washing, and the temperature of hot water is regulated appropriately. Drinking water is clearly labelled as such and will be made readily available to pupils.
- The medical room is fit for purpose. It is suitably equipped with a medical bed for pupils to rest on, hand-washing facilities and a lockable medical cabinet, with a toilet nearby.
- Pupils will have access to a suitable outside space for recreation. Physical education will be provided off site at another local school and at the leisure centre.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met, should the school be granted permission to open.

Part 6. Provision of information

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

- The school's website is in the process of being developed. It has already been populated with relevant documentation and information. For instance, required policies such as behaviour, complaints and safeguarding, are easy to locate and are up to date.
- Leaders are clear about the requirements for making information available to pupils and parents to ensure compliance with the standards. For example, they are aware of the requirement to provide relevant local authorities with an annual account of how each pupil's funding has been spent.

- Leaders see high levels of communication between parents and school staff as a key aspect of the provision. Regular updates and written reports will be provided to parents or carers about pupils' attainment and progress.
- The requirements for this part of the independent school standards are likely to be met if the school is permitted to open.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The school's complaints policy meets statutory requirements. It will be published on the school's website. This policy is clear, comprehensive and fit for purpose.
- The complaints policy gives clear timescales for the management and consideration of any complaint. It includes the opportunity to consider and complaints informally in the first instance.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the school is permitted to open.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor body's rationale for the proposed school is sound. An experienced headteacher with a background in special education has been appointed. They, and the proprietor body, bring suitable knowledge and experience to their roles. Their understanding of pupils' likely needs is convincing and drives their determined work.
- There is a governing body in place made up of experienced headteachers and the regional director. Personnel have an appropriate and broad range of experience and expertise. This places them well to be able to support and challenge the school as it develops.
- Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements relating to the independent school standards. Routines are already in place to keep the proprietor body informed about standards in the school. For instance, there are requirements for the headteacher to report to them regularly about a range of aspects of school life, including safeguarding, staffing, educational standards and health and safety.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders are aware of their duties in relation to equalities. The school has a suite of policies that emphasise its commitment to equalities, including an accessibility policy. It is likely to meet schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 if its policies are implemented properly.

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	150476
DfE registration number	845/6073
Inspection number	10327104

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	Special school
School status	Independent day school
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Jim Cameron
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,670 to £78,760
Telephone number	01580 857271
Website	www.bricklehurstmanorschool.org
Email address	info@bricklehurstmanor.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	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	14	14

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	14
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	14
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	14
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	14

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	4

Information about this proposed school

- Bricklehurst Manor School intends to cater for up to 14 pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. All pupils will have an EHC plan and their places will be funded by a local authority.
- The school intend to specialise in providing education for pupils with a range of SEMH needs.
- The school does not intend to have a particular religious character. Its aim is to re-engage pupils with education, helping them to prepare successfully for adulthood, future learning and/or employment.
- It is not intended that the school will use alternative provision.
- A governing board has been appointed and will provide a degree of external oversight for the school.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to the proprietor's application to open an independent school. This was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The purpose of this inspection was to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Schools must comply with the independent school standards to be registered.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the ex-regional director and the chair of the proprietor body. She also met with two members of the governing body, including the chair. The inspector reviewed documents provided by the school and those available on the school's website. She toured the school's premises and checked the single central record of pre-appointment checks.

Inspection team

Louise Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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