

Arun Court School

14 Arun Court, Bramley, Guildford GU5 0HF

Inspection dates

18 December 2018

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 1, 2, 3 and 4

- The proprietor has a very clear view of the kind of pupil for whom the proposed school will provide education. She sees the school's particular expertise in engaging and educating pupils with mental health needs, especially anxiety, where these needs have been barriers to success in pupils' previous schools.
- It is likely that leaders and staff will have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of the pupils the school plans to admit. Leaders indicate that they will exercise required diligence in checking pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to determine whether they are likely to be able to meet their needs before offering a place.
- The proposed schemes of work set out the curriculum content, and teaching and learning intentions, for each subject. This subject-based curriculum is intended to sit alongside the school's therapeutic work. A bespoke balance between the two aspects will be adjusted according to each pupil's needs and readiness to re-engage with meaningful learning.
- The rich and diverse curriculum plans proposed, if implemented effectively, are likely to provide pupils with the required breadth and variety of learning and experiences. There are well-structured plans in place for personal, social, health, citizenship and economic (PSHCE) education. A multi-layered approach to providing careers advice is intended to meet pupils' specific mental health and SEND needs.
- The proprietor intends to employ qualified teachers and senior teachers, most of whom have already been involved in making plans and preparations for the proposed school. It is likely that the staff team will have the subject knowledge to implement the planned curriculum, and the proprietor is suitably mindful of the importance of ensuring this expertise.
- Leaders and staff have made plausible and thorough plans for assessing pupils' capabilities and progress, mindful of the school's context. They convey high expectations of pupils that they anticipate will often have very strong academic potential. Policies and plans indicate deep thinking about how to enable pupils to

reduce the gap between their actual achievement and their potential by promoting their mental health and well-being.

- The school is likely to meet all the requirements of this part of the independent school standards.

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

Paragraph 5

- The proposed school's ethos, intended therapeutic approach and planned curriculum, if implemented effectively, are likely to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The principal and staff speak enthusiastically and with conviction about this aspect of the proposed school's work.
- The planned PSHCE programme covers a broad range of important and meaningful topics. It aligns well with fundamental British values, and these underpinning concepts are each included and explored in the written plans.
- Curriculum plans prioritise providing pupils with memorable and enriching experiences. Leaders plan to regularly take pupils out on visits, ranging from a Buddhist temple, to a sculpture garden, to a steam museum.
- There is no doubt that curriculum policies and plans pay high regard to equalities and the rightful respect of diversity. This inclusive approach embraces all of the protected characteristics specified in the Equality Act 2010. However, the proprietor recognises that there is scope to make these references to specific characteristics more explicit in plans and policies.
- The standard contained in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 6 and 7

- Designated safeguarding leaders speak knowledgeably and confidently about safeguarding vulnerable pupils. Throughout policy documents, detailed and unequivocal statements prioritising the safety and welfare of pupils indicate that the culture of safeguarding is likely to be strong and uncompromising.
- The proposed policies and arrangements for safeguarding pay close attention to the most recent statutory guidance. A comprehensive safeguarding and child protection policy offers insightful coverage of a wide range of potential safeguarding issues and risks. Although the policy is understandably extensive and detailed, a well-organised contents page and helpful appendices make information easy to find. As required, the policy is published on the proposed school's website.
- In writing this and other policies, the proprietor and leaders have taken clear and careful account of the proposed school's context and the kinds of pupils the school proposes to admit. In terms of safeguarding, the policy makes particular reference to the additional barriers that may exist to identifying abuse affecting pupils with SEND or other additional needs. An explicit determination to overcome these barriers and provide 'equal protection' for all pupils is woven through the proposed policies.

Paragraph 9

- The definite intent of the proprietor and leaders is to focus on promoting positive pupil conduct and behaviour. The underpinning purpose of the behaviour policy includes the desire to create a 'happy and respectful' ethos. Leaders and staff plan to draw on their experiences of running alternative provision. They expect to use their knowledge of individual pupils to make reasonable adjustments to the provision that will enable and encourage the desired pupil behaviour they seek.
- The laudable aim of the school's intended approach to behaviour management is to encourage intrinsic positive behaviour in pupils that they can sustain in their later lives. The proprietor has rejected a 'consequence-driven' system of sanctions and rewards in favour of a therapeutic approach that is consistent with the school's intended ethos. The policy provides a succinct and reasonable list of unacceptable behaviour. Workable arrangements are in place to keep records of behaviour incidents and their outcomes.
- The proprietor has taken the reasonable decision not to use fixed-term exclusion to manage behaviour. However, understandably, she reserves the right to 'terminate agreements', in effect permanently excluding pupils, for the most serious incidents, such as those involving the police.

Paragraph 10

- As with the behaviour policy, the anti-bullying policy is very grounded in the proposed school's context and indicates careful thought and planning. It also conveys strongly that bullying will not be tolerated and will be treated seriously when it occurs. The anti-bullying strategy has a sensible dual focus on both the alleged perpetrator and victim.
- The policy provides a succinct and reasonable definition of bullying, with useful examples to illustrate the types of behaviour that might occur. It includes helpful detail of how to recognise bullying and sets out, step by step, the intended process for reporting and responding to incidents. Provision for consistent and high-quality records to be made and kept is in place. Structured forms for this purpose prompt important follow-up action to check that the actions taken to stop any reoccurrence have worked.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16

- A clearly methodical approach, including links between complementary policies and procedures, mean that health and safety arrangements are likely to be effective.
- The proprietor wisely commissioned fire safety consultants to conduct a full fire risk assessment of the premises. The resulting report did not identify any significant issues. The proprietor acted promptly and effectively on the few minor recommendations made. Systematic arrangements are in place to maintain regular checks of fire safety procedures.
- Staff training and easy access to equipment throughout the premises mean that arrangements for first aid are likely to be effective. Planned staff-to-pupil ratios are high. Leaders are mindful of different levels of supervision required in the school and out in the community. If accurately maintained, admissions and attendance registers are likely to meet requirements.

- Leaders and staff have carried out a wide range of appropriate risk assessments in line with their proposed policy. Procedures and supporting documents for making, updating and acting on risk assessments are simple, clear and likely to be effective.
- All standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21

- The proprietor has ensured that all relevant pre-employment checks have been diligently carried out and recorded on the single central record.
- The school does not intend to make use of supply teachers.
- The proprietor does not intend to form a governing body. However, she has applied the same threshold of screening checks for members of the external monitoring and evaluation group that would be required for governors. These checks, including checks to ensure that no member has been prohibited from being involved in running an independent school, are detailed on the single central record.
- Leaders are well informed about recent guidance indicating the need to carry out risk assessments before involving volunteers in activities. They intend to carry out enhanced checks of all volunteers before making use of their services.
- The proprietor has ensured that all requirements in this part of the independent school standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31

- The accommodation is likely to be fit for its designated purpose. There is sufficient heated and well-lit space for the varied planned educational and therapeutic activities.
- There are separate toilet facilities for pupils and staff. Pupils will have use of an individual toilet with an integral washing facility that can be secured from the inside. Drinking water is easily accessible and clearly labelled. It is separate from toilet facilities.
- The proprietor has designated space with washing and toilet facilities for the short-term treatment of injured pupils. Should a sick pupil need to lie down, there is space for this in another room that is directly adjacent to a toilet and washing facility. The school does not intend to cater for pupils with complex medical needs.
- Leaders intend to make use of nearby common areas and parks for daily outdoor recreation. Appropriate risk assessments, including sufficient adult-supervision ratios, have been written for this purpose. The proprietor does not intend to admit pupils with a history of absconding from previous schools, but she has put in place clear and reasonable procedures should such a situation occur.
- All standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32

- The proprietor has created a temporary website that provides details of the proposed school. The website is aligned with the website of the current alternative provision

and other adult services provided by another company involving the proprietor. If the Department for Education (DfE) registers the provision as an independent school, the proprietor intends to create a new bespoke website specifically for the school. The aim of this is to make important information easier to find.

- The current website contains all the information and policies that must be available to parents at this stage. Leaders are clear about the additional information that must be published once the school has been operating for a year, such as details about the school's academic performance.
- The proprietor is well informed about the information that the school must provide to local authorities that place pupils, and information in relation to the annual reviews of pupils' EHC plans.
- It is likely that the standard in this part will be met, providing all required information is successfully transferred to any new website on registration.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The school's written complaints policy meets all requirements of this part of the independent school standards. It is clear and precise and readily available on the proposed school's website. The practical, step-by-step approach detailed in the policy is likely to provide a helpful guide to resolving any concerns that arise. Consequently, it is likely that this standard will be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The proprietor has demonstrated a sound understanding of the independent school standards and associated requirements through her plans and preparations to register as a school. She and leaders have ensured that all standards are likely to be met.
- Mindful of her dual role as proprietor and principal, the proprietor has appointed other senior leaders to act as the designated leaders for safeguarding. Suitable arrangements are in place for handling any concerns or allegations involving the principal. These steps are clearly defined in the safeguarding policy. Designated safeguarding leads are clear about the correct action to take should this scenario arise.
- Information about the range of therapy that the school can offer through qualified therapists is clear. The proprietor has ensured that important therapeutic supervision is in place.
- Although the proprietor has no plans to form a governing body, she has created an external monitoring and evaluation group to provide her with professional challenge and support. The proprietor understands that its members will require further training before this group will have the knowledge and understanding required to be fully effective.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has ensured that there is an accessibility policy and plan in place. The plan outlines reasonable steps aimed at increasing access to the curriculum and premises. The policy makes provision to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy through involving pupils, parents and staff in assessing the impact of policies on increasing accessibility.

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 | 146338 |
| DfE registration number | 936/6015 |
| Inspection number | 10083799 |

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 | Beverley-Sarah White |
| Chair | Paul Phillips |
| Headteacher | Beverley-Sarah White |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £48,000 |
| Telephone number | 01483 894 858 |
| Website | www.big-bear-bespoke-education.co.uk |
| Email address | bigbearbespokeeducation@outlook.com |
| Date of previous standard inspection | Not previously inspected |

Provider already operating

| | |
|---|----|
| Number of pupils of compulsory school age | 19 |
| Number of pupils of compulsory school age for whom a statement is maintained under section 324, or who is looked after by a local authority | 14 |
| Total hours operating as a school per week | 17 |
| Total hours of teaching provided per week | 17 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal | Inspector's recommendation |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Age range of pupils | 9–18 | 11–17 | 11–17 |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 19 | 20 | 20 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Mixed |
| Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age | 0 | 20 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 19 | 0 |
| Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities | 19 | 20 |
| Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan | 14 | 20 |
| Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan | 14 | 20 |

Staff

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff | 3 | 3.3 |
| Number of part-time teaching staff | 2 | 2 |

Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor currently runs an alternative provision on the same site. This provision will expand to form the basis of the proposed independent school if the Department for Education decides to register it.
- The school aims to combine education and therapy for pupils whose mental health needs, particularly anxiety, have not been successfully met in previous schools. The intention is to provide full-time education to get them ready to be reintegrated into other schools.
- Most pupils are likely to be placed by local authorities. Although most pupils attending are likely to have SEND and an EHC plan, mental health will have been identified as the primary need. The categories of SEND that the school proposes to cater for are moderate learning difficulties, and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties resulting from anxiety.
- The premises are in the village of Bramley, just off the High Street. Accommodation is housed in a single building situated over three floors. The premises are attached to a commercial property.
- The proposed school does not have any specific religious character.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first pre-registration inspection under this application. The proprietor previously applied to register an independent school but decided not to proceed with the application at that time.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, other leaders and teachers to discuss their plans and intentions for the proposed school. He had discussions with the chair of the external monitoring and evaluation group set up by the proprietor. He also met with three pupils who use the existing alternative provision, each with a parent.
- Before the visit, the inspector scrutinised the policies and plans that the proprietor is required to submit to the DfE when applying to register. He reviewed further documentation and procedures on-site against the requirements of the independent school standards.
- The inspector toured the proposed school site with leaders and staff. He also visited recreation grounds in the local area that leaders propose to use to provide outdoor space.
- The proprietor has restricted the current alternative provision to a maximum of 17 hours per week. This move was intended to avoid meeting the definition of an independent school and risk being deemed to be operating illegally without registration. The alternative provision was not running on the day of this inspection as the term had finished.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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