

# Bestwood Village School

School Walk, Bestwood Village, Nottingham NG6 8UU

**Inspection date**

24 July 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)h to 2(2)(i)*

- The school aims to provide education opportunities for pupils aged seven to sixteen with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who have a primary diagnosis of autism. The school is proposing a curriculum that is bespoke to pupils' needs as many will arrive with knowledge and skills gaps due to previous unsuccessful school placements, or periods of time spent away from education. The curriculum has been designed to address these gaps in learning, provide life skills and prepare pupils for life in British society.
- The school plans to assess pupils when they first join. They will use this information as well as outcomes stated in pupils' education and health care (EHC) plans to decide which curriculum pathway is best suited to pupils' individual needs. This will either be an 'informal', 'semi-formal' or 'formal' curriculum pathway.
- The school has produced a curriculum policy supported by high-quality, logically sequenced plans and schemes of work that will provide appropriate education to meet the needs of pupils placed on these pathways.
- For the formal curriculum, the school has adopted published schemes of work for English and mathematics that are structured to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. All staff will receive training to deliver the school's chosen phonics programme to help pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read.
- The schemes of work currently in place do not undermine the fundamental British values of, for example, individual liberty and tolerance and respect of those with different faiths and beliefs.

#### *Paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(d)(ii), 2A(1) to 2A(2)*

- The schemes of work for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE) are comprehensive, suitable for pupils with SEND, and reflect the aims and ethos of the proposed school. The proposed curriculum encourages respect for others in regard to the protected characteristics. The RSE policy will be made available on the school's website when the website is

established. The policy recognises the need to consult with parents about the delivery of this programme.

*Paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(e) to 2(2)(e)(iii)*

- The proprietor has engaged an impartial provider to ensure that pupils receive appropriate careers advice and guidance. This will help pupils make an informed choice about their next steps in employment, education or training.

*Paragraph 3 to 3(g), 3(i) to 3(j)*

- The school has clearly defined the end points of each curriculum pathway. There is a 'spiral curriculum' overview that shows how the school's thematic approach will shape pupils' progress through the curriculum and how teaching will develop pupils' knowledge and skills.
- The planned induction period, when teachers and therapists will assess pupils' needs and gaps in learning, will ensure that pupils' aptitudes, needs and prior attainment will be taken into account when teachers deliver the curriculum.
- It is clear from the schemes of work provided for each curriculum pathway that lessons will be well planned and make use of effective teaching methods to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Resources to support the delivery of the curriculum are available for the first few weeks of each curriculum pathway. These are high quality and appropriate to the desired outcomes from the curriculums. The resources to support pupils in the school, such as the 'immersion room', therapy areas and kitchen, are of a very high quality.
- There is an appropriate framework in place to assess pupils' work and progress which will identify the next steps towards the outcomes stated in pupils' EHC plans.
- The proprietor proposes to employ only qualified teachers who have a background of working in special education settings. Some teachers currently employed by the proprietor in their other schools are subject specialists. If required, these teachers, alongside the senior leaders, will support staff with their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught.

*Paragraph 4*

- The report templates the school intends to use to report to parents about pupil performance matches the three proposed curriculum pathways.
- 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 to 5(d)(iii)*

- The school will ensure that the proposed curriculum promotes the fundamental British values of, for example, democracy and the rule of law. Teachers' lesson plans will show how these aspects of British values are incorporated into lessons.
- There are planned assembly times on Friday mornings that will be themed according to the British values that are in focus for that week.

- Pupils will learn about the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 in their PSHE lessons.
- Pupils will learn about right and wrong. This will be covered in PSHE lessons, for example, when pupils are taught about consent. The behaviour policy states that there is an expectation that teachers will have restorative conversations with pupils after incidents to help them understand how what they did was wrong and how they can do it right the next time.
- There are planned opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and faiths at key celebration points throughout the year.
- Leaders have made contact with the local parish council and are exploring how pupils can be involved in local community projects, including potentially joining a local gardening group that supports autistic people.
- The school will ensure that staff and visitors provide balanced points of view when they are delivering content to pupils.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7 to 7(b)*

- Leaders have prioritised safeguarding. They are aware of the increased safeguarding vulnerabilities that pupils with SEND may face. Leaders understand the potential safeguarding difficulties when pupils travel from several different local authority areas.
- The designated safeguarding lead and other senior leaders have undergone appropriate safeguarding training in line with national guidance.
- Leaders have an appropriate system in place for staff to record any safeguarding concerns that they may have about pupils. The system has opportunities for leaders to record any subsequent actions and any contact with outside agencies, such as children's social care.
- The safeguarding policy reflects the latest national guidance. It provides useful information about local safeguarding partners. It clearly sets out that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Pupils will be taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online, through PSHE and 'life skills' lessons such as travel training.
- Web-filtering and monitoring systems are in place.

#### *Paragraphs 3(h), 9 to 10*

- Appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place. Staff will use the guidance in the policy to ensure good behaviour and appropriate routines. Leaders are aware that the pupils they plan to admit may present particular challenges and can become anxious and dysregulated. They have appropriate therapeutic strategies in place to support these pupils to regulate and help them communicate their wants and needs in positive ways.

- All staff will be trained in the organisation's trauma-informed approach and in how to use de-escalation and intervention strategies appropriately.
- The school's online management system will be used to record any incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying.
- Pupils will learn about different types of bullying through their PSHE lessons. They will know how to report any bullying they may experience.

*Paragraphs 11 to 13*

- There are appropriate health and safety and first-aid policies in place. The headteacher and the facilities manager will ensure the effective implementation of these policies, including by undertaking weekly checks. The proprietor will conduct termly and annual health and safety audits. Staff will receive appropriate first-aid training.
- A fire risk assessment has been completed. A further fire risk assessment produced by an external company will be completed in October 2024. The facilities manager will ensure weekly and monthly fire safety checks. The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

*Paragraph 14*

- Leaders will ensure that the pupils are appropriately supervised by staff during lessons, social times and when out on educational visits. The current proposal is that there will be a minimum ratio of one staff member to two pupils.

*Paragraph 15*

- Leaders will ensure that the admission register meets statutory requirements.
- Daily registers will be kept, and the school is employing a family support worker in September to follow up any pupil non-attendance.

*Paragraph 16 to 16(b)*

- There is an appropriate risk assessment policy available. Risk assessments for the site and for activities contain clear control measures to mitigate any identified risks. Individual pupil risk assessments and pen portraits are detailed and contain possible behaviour triggers and appropriate support and de-escalation techniques for staff to employ.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

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

*Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(6)*

- All leaders, including the proprietor, have undertaken training in safer recruitment. They understand their duty to carry out the necessary recruitment checks to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with children. They know they must complete these checks before staff begin to work at the school.
- Appropriate recruitment checks are undertaken on members of the body of proprietors.

- The school does not intend to use supply staff as this is unsettling for the pupils they plan to admit. However, leaders know the information they require if they choose to appoint supply staff through an agency.
- Recruitment checks are appropriately recorded on the single central record.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraphs 23(1) to 24(1)(b), 24(3) to 29(1)(b)*

- The proposed site has suitable toilet facilities that are readily available for the sole use of pupils. The facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. The hot water does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- There are appropriate changing facilities that are suitable if pupils require intimate care from staff, and a shower for pupils.
- There is suitable accommodation for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. It includes a washing facility and is close to the toilet.
- The proposed premises are currently undergoing extensive refurbishment. There is a very high standard of finish to the classrooms that are completed. Leaders are committed to maintaining the premises to a high standard to ensure pupils' health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- The lighting and acoustic conditions in the classrooms are suitable for pupils who have particular sensory needs.
- There is external lighting to help ensure that pupils, staff and visitors can leave safely when it is dark.
- Drinking water is readily available to pupils and is marked as such.
- There is a suitable outdoor area for pupils to socialise and to play. These are separated into primary and secondary areas to help keep pupils safe and provide suitable play equipment.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

## Part 6. Provision of information

### *Paragraph 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f) to 32(1)(i), 32(2) to 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii) to 32(3)(g)*

- The school does not yet have a website. Leaders are aware of the information that must be made available on the website once it is online, including the safeguarding policy, the RSE policy and copies of inspection reports.
- Parents will be able to request paper copies of other policies and documents that will not be available to download from the website.
- Leaders will work with local authorities to review pupils' EHC plans. They understand their responsibilities with regard to providing information to local authorities about looked after children and pupils with an EHC plan, when requested.

- Leaders will share information about pupils' academic performance on the school website.
- Parents will receive an annual report with information about their children's progress.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

#### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

##### *Paragraph 33 to 33(k)*

- The complaints policy outlines what parents should do if they have a concern about any aspect of the school's work. It outlines the process for both informal and formal complaints. Each stage that leaders follow for dealing with complaints is clearly explained and the timeframe for each step is provided.
- Parents who are not satisfied with the way leaders have handled their complaint can request a panel hearing that will be independently chaired.
- Leaders will retain a written record of all complaints and the actions they take in response.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

##### *Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor has a comprehensive understanding of the standards. The proprietor has appointed leaders with extensive experience of working in a special school setting. Both leaders that are currently in post understand well the needs of the pupils they are proposing to accept. They have designed a very suitable learning environment and a curriculum to meet the pupils' needs. They have already demonstrated good knowledge and skills that will enable them to fulfil their roles.
- The proprietor operates a significant number of other special schools and there is an extensive support team that brings expertise to areas, such as health and safety, recruitment and facilities management. This has enabled the school building to be compliant with all the standards and to provide accommodation for pupils that is of a very high quality. The employment of a facilities manager, who has worked in a special school setting previously, will ensure that the school is well maintained and that the health and safety of pupils are assured.
- The checks completed by the proprietor's regional director and those persons who will make up the governing body should ensure that all standards related to the curriculum will be consistently met.
- The policies, planned curriculum, safeguarding arrangements and the quality of the school site provide confidence that the proprietor will actively promote pupils' well-being.
- The school is likely to meet the standard in this part.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed accessibility plan identifies how leaders will ensure that the site, the curriculum and any documentation are accessible for pupils with SEND.
- The school is likely to meet the regulation in this part.

## **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	150914
DfE registration number	891/6050
Inspection number	10348894

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	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Christopher Bailey
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000 to £91,172
Telephone number	0115 8561799
Website	To be confirmed
Email address	info@bestwoodvillageschool.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	N/A	7 to 16	7 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	36	36

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	N/A	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	N/A	36

Number of part-time pupils	N/A	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	36
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	36
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	36

### Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	N/A	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	N/A	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	N/A	16

### Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor of the proposed school is Acorn Care and Education Limited. This company currently runs a number of independent special schools across the country.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken up their posts at the proposed new school.
- The proposed school is located in Bestwood Village, Nottinghamshire.
- The proposed school will provide full-time education for up to 36 pupils aged between 7 and 16 who have a primary diagnosis of autism. The school is also proposing to admit pupils with other special needs including: cognitive and learning needs; speech language and communication needs; social, emotional and mental health needs and moderate, specific and severe learning difficulties.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection. It 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.
- The inspector met with a member of the body of proprietors, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the proprietor's representative for the development of school sites. He also met remotely with the chair of the proprietorial body.
- The inspector conducted a tour of the proposed site with the contractor to check the premises against part 5 of the standards. At the time of the inspection, the dining facility and some of the outdoor areas for the school were still under construction. The contractor and proprietor's representative provided site plans and discussed with the inspector how any unfinished aspects will be completed.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including policies, and curriculum plans.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for safeguarding and staff recruitment.

## Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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