

Esland Shropshire School

The Old Navy Building, Station Road, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 6SU

Inspection date

27 November 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

Paragraphs 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 and school leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. Leaders have high ambition for pupils who will attend the proposed school. They have formulated a clear curriculum that details their intentions about how pupils will progressively build on their knowledge and understanding over time. This includes helping pupils build up their self-confidence.
- The curriculum and schemes of work are detailed and well thought out. As all pupils will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, the school intends to create personalised and bespoke curriculums for all pupils. These will include pupils' different levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The schemes of work consider sensibly the likely needs of pupils with SEND.
- The proposed curriculum is likely to enable pupils to develop their speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy and scientific skills and knowledge. This is because plans are clear and tailored to the needs of the pupils with SEND the school proposes to admit. The school knows that many pupils are likely to arrive with low literacy levels. The reading and phonics curriculum is appropriate and, if implemented well, is likely to lead to pupils catching up and improving their reading skills.
- The school has developed a suitable plan to ensure that pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance in key stages 3 and 4. This is proposed to include experiences of the world of work, visits to universities and guest speakers from the world of business.
- The school has set out clearly its expectations of how pupils should behave in lessons. The behaviour policy specifies clearly the proposed procedures and strategies that staff will employ to help pupils act responsibly. This policy is likely to support pupils to have a clear understanding of what behaviours are expected of them.
- Leaders have created a suitable assessment framework to enable them and staff to check on what pupils can do and know. The assessment documents have been adapted to match the learning that is outlined in the schemes of work. Plans to check

on individual pupils' learning is included in lesson design. If implemented effectively, these policies are likely to provide information on how well pupils are progressing through the intended curriculum.

- The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is underpinned by many policies and strategies designed to meet the needs of the pupils the school proposes to admit. Consequently, the PSHE curriculum is likely to reflect the values and ethos of the school. For example, the proprietor body and leaders want all pupils to reach their full potential regardless of their personal barriers, and this is included in the PSHE programme. The school aims for pupils to become confident, independent and be well prepared for the next stage of their lives. If implemented, these schemes are likely to equip pupils with the knowledge they need to become active citizens in modern Britain.
- The curriculum documentation has clear strands about how the school proposes to encourage respect for all the different protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, including disability and sexual orientation. These have been adapted to be age and ability-appropriate to meet the needs of the pupils the school wishes to admit.
- The school's relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is well organised and age-appropriate. Leaders have clearly considered how staff will be trained to have the knowledge and skills they need to teach this effectively.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

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

Paragraph 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The proposed schemes and policies for the teaching of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and PSHE education are clear and coherent. They reflect the ethos of the school as set out in the curriculum policy. The schemes are specific to this school and mirror leaders' high ambition for pupils.
- The proposed schemes are clear in what should be taught. For example, plans include the teaching of religious studies and RSE for all pupils in an age-appropriate way. If implemented effectively, these schemes are likely to ensure that staff are clear about what to teach and in what order.
- The PSHE curriculum is likely to ensure that pupils will gain a good understanding of fundamental British values, the Equality Act 2010 and other aspects of pupils' SMSC development.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is granted permission to open.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 9 to 16(b)

- The proprietor body's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare and safety of pupils at the school are likely to be effective. The proposed policies are fit for purpose and adhere to government guidelines.

- The proprietor body and leaders have created policies which are specific and unique to the school and the pupils who will attend here. This means that staff are likely to have clear guidelines about what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Relevant safeguarding policies clearly outline the process and procedures staff will follow and how records will be kept.
- The proposed child protection and health and safety policies are clear and fit for purpose. The school refers to up-to-date guidance and demonstrates a good understanding of the statutory guidance for keeping children safe in education. If implemented, these policies are likely to ensure that staff understand their safeguarding duties, roles and responsibilities to act in the best interest of children.
- There is suitable provision for first aid on site. The school has a suitable medical room for the treatment of anyone being sick or ill at school. The school has given careful consideration to the potential needs the pupils may have. For example, it has created a sensory room and quiet spaces for pupils to have some time out, where required.
- The proposed risk assessment policy is suitable. Leaders plan to complete individual risk assessments for each pupil. Suitable risk assessments to identify potential risks to pupils and staff have been completed. For example, leaders plan to make use of the local leisure centre for pupils' sporting activities and have considered what the potential risks may be.
- Fire risk assessments have been completed by qualified professionals. Leaders have acted on the recommendation and put in place strategies to mitigate any identified risks.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is granted permission to open.

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

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(1) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c)

- The proprietor body has created a suitable single central record (SCR) template. The proprietor body and leaders demonstrate the necessary knowledge and understanding to make sure that a SCR is completed accurately and appropriately.
- The proprietor body has made all the necessary pre-employment checks on staff prior to their appointment. The checks have been accurately recorded on the SCR. This includes checking that staff have not been prohibited from teaching. Section 128 checks have been made to ensure managers' suitability to work at the school.
- The proprietor body does not plan to use supply staff at the school. However, they and leaders are clear about the safeguarding checks that need to be made on these staff, should they ever be needed. Leaders demonstrated strong knowledge of the checks required before they would allow anyone to work in their school.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is granted permission to open.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The proprietor body has ensured that all classrooms have suitable acoustic conditions and lighting. Rooms are appropriate for the proposed activities.
- Toilet facilities for pupils are suitable. They have an adequate supply of cold and hot water for pupils to use.
- The proprietor body has ensured that there is a suitable room, where pupils who feel unwell can be treated or first aid be administered.
- Initially, the school plans to take all pupils to a local leisure centre for sport and physical education. Leaders are creating risk assessments to identify and mitigate any potential risks while travelling to, and using, the leisure centre.
- The proposed plans for the supervision of pupils are suitable. The school is planning to employ additional non-teaching support staff for each class to make sure that lessons remain free of interruptions and pupils receive calm and swift support.
- The school has ample outdoor spaces, including a play area which is suitable. The proprietor body plans to make some improvements to include a seating area and covered area for pupils to use in case of poor weather.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is granted permission to open.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(g), 32(1)(j) to 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(dc) to 32(3)(d), 32(3)(f) to 32(4)(c)

- The school has a website which provides detailed and helpful information for prospective parents and carers. It includes the necessary information the school is required to provide.
- The proprietor body has ensured that all relevant policies in relation to the school are available on the school's website.
- Leaders will also share relevant information and documents with potential parents in paper form if requested.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is granted permission to open.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33 to 33(k)

- The proposed policy outlines the procedures that will be followed in case of a complaint. Leaders aim to resolve a complaint informally, but the policy explains the steps the school will take where this is not possible.
- The policy includes appropriate timelines in which a complaint will be dealt with. It also refers to a panel hearing should a complainant remain dissatisfied.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is granted permission to open.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor body and leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the requirements to make sure that the standards are met continually and consistently.
- The proprietor body and leaders demonstrate the necessary knowledge and understanding to make sure that pupils' SEND needs are identified, assessed and catered for.
- The proprietor body has given due regard to how the school will make sure pupils learn and are safe.
- The proprietor body and leaders have developed all required policies. These policies have been written with thought and attention to the possible needs of the pupils they plan to admit.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is granted permission to open.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a suitable accessibility plan in place. This plan refers to the school's curriculum and the physical space. It outlines the steps leaders will take to make education at the proposed school accessible to the pupils they plan to admit. Therefore, the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are likely to 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	151197
DfE registration number	893/6048
Inspection number	10365409

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	Esland North Limited
Chair	Jill Palmer
Headteacher	Jo Blakeman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£67,425
Telephone number	01743 668 900
Website	www.eslandshropshireschool.co.uk
Email address	shropshireschool@esland.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	8 to 18	8 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	35	35

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	35
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	35
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	35
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	35

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	10
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	1	5

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located in a purposely renovated, single-storey building in a rural setting on the outskirts of the small village of Ditton Priors in Shropshire. It is owned by the proprietor body, as is the outside space and one yet undeveloped building to the side of the school buildings. The school is currently not operating.
- Leaders propose that the school will cater for pupils with SEND. All pupils are likely to have an EHC plan. The main needs are likely to be autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, mild learning difficulties and social, emotional mental health difficulties. Most pupils will likely join the school after having experienced prolonged periods out of education.
- The proposed school will not have any religious character.
- The proposed school does not intend to use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether or not the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards if it is given permission to open. This is the proposed school's first inspection.
- The inspector conducted a tour of the premises with the headteacher and estate manager.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents and policies, submitted electronically by leaders.
- During the on-site visit, the inspector met with a director of the proprietor body and headteacher. The inspector discussed safeguarding and welfare arrangements as well as the school's proposed curriculum.
- The inspector reviewed some of the school's documentation and policies together with the headteacher and proprietor body.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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