

Fortitude School

Seggs Lane, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5HJ

Inspection date

23 October 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)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 2A(1), 2A(1)(a) and 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2)

- The proposed school has a clear vision for the quality of education it intends to provide for pupils. The school's curriculum policy is suitably specific in setting out this vision. Leaders have carefully considered the design of the curriculum and the range of subjects that pupils will study. These subjects include linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative education.
- The school has adopted and developed schemes of work for each subject. These schemes of work provide an overview of the content that pupils are expected to know and remember. Staff have identified the knowledge and vocabulary that they intend to teach. They plan to teach this information in a logical order, allowing pupils to build their knowledge progressively over time.
- The school's proposed curriculum upholds the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- The school is committed to providing education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders emphasise the importance of accurately identifying each pupil's starting point upon admission to the school. As part of this work, they have implemented a comprehensive process for reviewing information from pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plan).
- The school has adopted a commercial scheme of work for teaching personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Leaders have reviewed this scheme of work to ensure that it is suitable to meet the needs of pupils who will attend. The school's relationships and sex education (RSE) policy outlines a range of themes that will be included in the curriculum. The school intends to consult with parents and carers concerning the teaching of RSE, as part of pupils' induction into the school.

Paragraphs 3 to 3(j) and 4

- The proposed school intends to make necessary adjustments to ensure that all pupils access the full curriculum. The school has recruited several staff members with experience in adapting the curriculum to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND. These staff members have started to work with the families of prospective pupils to help plan a successful transition into the school. Staff intend to make use of the outdoor environment, resources to support learning and a range of other strategies to meet the specific needs of pupils.
- The school plans to implement various strategies to encourage pupils to act responsibly and engage in their learning. Leaders intend to deliver a specific programme of study that promotes pupils' self-awareness, motivation, empathy and social skills.
- The school is suitably well-resourced. Leaders have purchased a range of equipment, books and materials to support learning. For example, the school has an appropriate selection of decodable books for pupils to apply and practise their knowledge of phonics.
- The school has established a framework for assessing pupils' progress through the curriculum. This framework outlines how staff will regularly check on pupils' understanding. The school plans to use the information gathered from these checks to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- All of the independent school standards ('the standards') in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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

Paragraphs 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders understand the likely needs of pupils who will attend the proposed school. They have made pupils' social and emotional development a central part of their curriculum thinking. They intend to prioritise the school's work to help pupils form positive, safe, and effective relationships with others. This theme is woven into a broad range of learning experiences that leaders have planned to include in the curriculum. Staff plan for pupils to make weekly visits to a local farm for a structured programme of social and emotional learning.
- The curriculum aims to help pupils understand themselves and the world around them. The school plans to educate pupils about cultures different from their own. For instance, in religious education, pupils will learn about various faiths and beliefs. The school also intends to teach pupils about respect for all, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. In addition, leaders have started to make arrangements for trips and visits that they believe will enhance pupils' understanding of these and other social and cultural concepts.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The proposed school takes its safeguarding duties seriously and has set out a policy to promote the welfare of pupils. This policy reflects the most recent guidance of the Secretary of State. Leaders have identified a range of potential risks, including those that are specific to the context of the school. Staff receive relevant training as part of their induction to the school. This ensures that adults know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil. Leaders are well-prepared to act and work with external agencies to help pupils when necessary. Leaders' roles and responsibilities are clear. Arrangements have been made so that those responsible for governance maintain oversight of the school's work to safeguard pupils.
- Leaders express determination to foster positive attitudes toward learning among pupils at the school. They plan to implement daily sessions to help pupils recognise and understand how their emotions influence their behaviour. The school's behaviour policy outlines how staff will promote and reward positive behaviour among pupils.
- The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy in place. The policy sets out clear procedures for managing any incidents of bullying. Leaders have arranged to use a digital recording system that enables staff to track and analyse patterns in these incidents over time. In addition, the school's curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn about different types of bullying and how to protect themselves from it.
- The school has made arrangements to ensure compliance with relevant health and safety requirements. A suitable policy is in place that includes various measures to promote health and safety. This has included the school completing necessary checks on the safety of the premises. For example, checks have been made on the quality of water supplies.
- The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This has involved the school consulting a qualified fire officer and completing a fire risk assessment.
- The school intends for pupils to be supervised at all times. Leaders have considered how adults will be deployed during break and lunch times to ensure proper supervision.
- The school has established a suitable risk assessment policy. Leaders have identified several risks related to the school's context and plan to conduct individual risk assessments for each pupil attending the school.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 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(5)(a)(ii) and 21(5)(c) to 21(6)

- Leaders are aware of their responsibilities concerning safe recruitment practices. They follow a systematic procedure to conduct necessary checks on adults employed by or working in the school. These checks include assessments of medical fitness and safeguarding measures. They have completed these checks for current staff members. Additionally, members of both the proprietor body and the governing body have also undergone the required vetting.

- The school has established a single central record and begun to record the necessary checks about the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Checks on staff that have already been recruited have been accurately recorded. This includes checks made through the disclosure and barring service being entered on the record.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(1)(b), 24(1) to 24(1)(b), and 24(2) to 29(1)(b)

- The premises have been refurbished to a high standard. All rooms are well-lit and have good acoustics. There are five classrooms, each equipped with a range of suitable and adaptable furniture. In addition, there are several smaller rooms, including a nurture room designed to provide emotional support to pupils. Overall, there is sufficient space for the proposed number of pupils to learn effectively.
- The school has appropriate toilets for both boys and girls, which include access to hand-washing facilities. Additionally, there is a separate accessible toilet located close to a medical room. The medical room is fit for purpose and includes a washing facility and a bed for pupils to rest on.
- There is suitable outdoor space available for pupils to play and engage in various aspects of the physical education (PE) curriculum. Additionally, school leaders have arranged for pupils to participate in PE using facilities at a nearby local school.
- The school shares a driveway with a neighbouring property. Leaders have conducted a risk assessment to ensure the safety of pupils and staff during their entry and exit from the premises.
- Drinking water is labelled in the school's kitchen. The school intends to provide pupils with water bottles to enable them to hydrate throughout the day.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f) to 32(1)(i), 32(2) to 32(2)(b), and 32(2)(b)(ii) to 32(3)(g)

- The school has a website that offers a wide range of useful information, including school policies and details about the school's ethos and curriculum. This website serves as an engaging and accessible resource for prospective pupils and their families. Essential policies, such as those for safeguarding, behaviour, and complaints, are easy to find and are up to date. Relevant leaders and governors are clearly identified, and their contact details are provided if necessary for any enquiries.
- Leaders demonstrate an understanding of their duty to provide information to local authorities to support annual review processes for pupils with EHC plans.
- Leaders are aware of the requirement to provide annual written reports to parents. They can demonstrate the format in which such reports will be provided.
- The proposed school has ensured these standards are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33 to 33(k)

- The complaints procedure outlines the steps that parents should follow if they have concerns about the proposed school. The goal is to resolve complaints informally whenever possible, but it also includes more formal steps, such as the arrangements for a panel hearing. The policy specifies appropriate timeframes for addressing complaints.
- Leaders have established effective plans to log any complaints received by the school. The monitoring of complaints and subsequent actions will be included in the routine checks conducted by the governing body.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- The school's leaders possess the necessary knowledge and expertise for their roles. Their areas of expertise include school leadership, curriculum development, finance, safeguarding and human resources management. Leaders' expertise has ensured that the school is well-prepared to educate pupils.
- The proprietor body has made a substantial investment in the proposed new school, acknowledging the need for such facilities in the area. Leaders are knowledgeable about the independent school standards and include reviews of these standards in their monitoring and accountability processes. This approach is likely to ensure that the standards are consistently met.
- The proprietor body has established systems to ensure that the school is held to account. For example, a designated governor has been appointed to support and review the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- The proposed school has ensured these standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have developed a suitable accessibility plan which meets 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	151231
DfE registration number	937/6049
Inspection number	10366304

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	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Fortitude Education Limited
Chair	Mr Abide Zenenga
Headteacher	Mrs Jodie McCracken
Annual fees (day pupils)	£35,000
Telephone number	07723404150
Website	https://fortitudeschool.co.uk/
Email address	head@fortitudeschool.co.uk

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	5 to 11	5 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	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	Not applicable	35
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	35
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	35
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	35

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	14
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school intends to educate pupils with EHC plans. It intends to cater for pupils with cognitive and learning needs, speech language and communication needs, autism, social emotional and mental health needs and moderate learning difficulties.
- The proposed school does not intend to use any alternative provision.
- The proposed school does not have a religious character.
- The proprietor body consists of three shareholders, each of whom has experience in the field of education.
- The proposed school intends to operate with the oversight of a governing body.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to carry out a pre-registration inspection of the proposed school.
- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school.
- The inspector carried out a range of activities to ascertain if the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards. These activities included: meeting with representatives of the proprietor body, reviewing a broad range of policies, reviewing curriculum aims and examples of schemes of work, as well as reviewing leaders' intended systems and procedures for managing the school.
- The inspector conducted a tour of the premises.
- The inspector discussed safeguarding arrangements with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Jonathan Leonard, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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