

Hope Tree School

Nursery House, Manor Farm, Impington, Cambridgeshire CB24 9NG

Inspection date

27 October 2021

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)(a)–(b), 2(2), 2(2)(a)–(i)

- The directors are mindful that pupils attending the proposed school may have missed considerable periods of their earlier education. The directors have designed the curriculum to support pupils to achieve well academically and socially. There are plans to identify each pupil's starting point using information from pupils, their families, previous settings and education, health and care plans (EHC plans). Directors have outlined a suitable range of teaching and learning approaches which will be adapted to best meet each pupil's academic and therapeutic needs.
- The intended curriculum covers English, mathematics, art, computing, design, geography, history, music, personal, social and health education, physical education, religious education and science. There are detailed plans of learning in each subject. Plans indicate that Year 7 pupils will be provided with careers information and guidance.
- The directors have designed a curriculum with a strong focus on pupils' personal development and well-being. Plans include teaching pupils about knowing, understanding and respecting the beliefs of others.
- Pupils will have access to a wide range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum. Activities include talks from visitors and visits, both locally and further afield.

Paragraph 2A(1)(a)–(g), 2A(2)

- The directors have made sure that the curriculum will teach pupils about healthy lifestyles and relationships.
- Mindful of the fact that the proposed school will provide for Year 7 pupils from September 2022, plans also include appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE). The proposed school's RSE policy is accessible on the website. Directors plan to review this in consultation with parents once the proposed school is open.

Paragraph 3, 3(a)–(j)

- The head of learning has the appropriate qualifications, experience and knowledge to teach the curriculum. The directors will put in place a programme of training to ensure that new staff are in tune with the proposed school's vision and curriculum intentions.
- Curriculum plans include precise guidance so that teaching will ensure that pupils revisit and build on knowledge they have learned previously. Plans include a strong focus on reading and the teaching of vocabulary across all subjects.
- The head of learning has established a system for checking pupils' progression through the curriculum in all subjects. The intention is to use this information to adjust the curriculum and how it is delivered as appropriate for pupils' needs.
- Teaching spaces are well organised and fit for purpose.

Paragraph 4

- The directors have put in place a suitable process for reporting to parents about their child's conduct, well-being and academic achievement.
- The three independent school standards relating to the quality of education are likely to be met when the proposed school opens.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a)–(d)

- The directors have made pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development a central feature of the proposed school's curriculum and wider work. For example, curriculum plans indicate that pupils will study topics that will help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of local community and life in Britain and the wider world.
- Plans also indicate that pupils will be supported to develop their awareness of self and of others. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to work individually and together to solve problems and understand different viewpoints, for example through the planned orienteering programme.
- Directors' plans include opportunities for pupils to reflect on their personal development and behaviour. Plans also include opportunities for pupils to gain confidence around others and in new surroundings.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met when the proposed school opens.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- There is an up-to-date and appropriate child protection policy in place.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 10

- The proposed school has an appropriate behaviour policy which both directors know and understand. There are also apt exclusion and anti-bullying policies in place.
- The directors have systems in place to monitor and record pupils' conduct and behaviour choices in lessons and at play.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13

- The directors have ensured that the necessary health and safety policies are in place and are being implemented.
- The proposed school has suitable first-aid and administration of medicines policies. These state the processes that staff should follow, including keeping appropriate records.
- Both directors have had health and safety training, including first-aid and fire safety training. Staff who will join the proposed school will receive the necessary training at induction.
- There are plans for appropriate checks to be carried out on buildings and associated services. These plans include the checks and maintenance that need to be conducted by external agencies. Directors are aware of the need to make sure that records of these checks are readily available to the appropriate authorities.

Paragraph 14

- Directors' plans for the deployment of staff indicate that pupils will be properly supervised during the day, including when pupils are outside.

Paragraphs 15, 16

- The head of learning has set up admissions and attendance registers in readiness for the proposed school's opening. These registers have sections to include the required information about each pupil as they join and leave the proposed school.
- The proposed school's relevant policy outlines the importance of risk assessments. The risk assessments that are in place are appropriate. The directors are aware of the types of activities that will require risk assessments in the future, for example visits and visitors.
- The nine independent school standards for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a)–(f), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a)–(d), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–(c)

- Both directors are safer recruitment trained. They have laid out the proposed school's recruitment processes in an appropriate safer recruitment policy.
- Each director is experienced in recruiting education personnel. They know what checks must be carried out on staff who will be working at the proposed school.
- The directors are the only two staff currently employed at the proposed school. Both have relevant qualifications, knowledge and experience to carry out their respective roles, including designing, delivering and assessing the impact of the intended curriculum. They are also suitably experienced and knowledgeable to support pupils' therapeutic needs.
- There are plans to recruit additional, appropriately qualified, staff as the number of pupils at the proposed school grows. The intention is for the first appointment to be made within the proposed school's initial term of operation.

- The directors intend to make use of supply staff should the need arise. The directors know the checks that they need to carry out if this is the case.

Paragraphs 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a)–(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a)–(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a)–(b)

- The proposed school's single central record includes all of the necessary information.
- The four independent school standards for the suitability of staff and proprietors are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a)–(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a)–(c)

- The proposed school's building has a sufficient number of toilets for the intended number of pupils. There is an accessible toilet. This is situated on the ground floor. Toilets have washing facilities, including hot and cold water. There are separate facilities for adults.
- There is a medical room. The medical room includes a bed and washing facilities. This room is located next to two toilets and near the shower.
- There is appropriate first-aid equipment. This is to be stored in a lockable cupboard.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a)–(b)

- The proposed school is in a detached, two-storey building. The directors have established two teaching areas on each of the two floors. There is a kitchen and there are several storage areas, including lockable, walk-in storerooms.
- The building has appropriate acoustics, heating, lighting and ventilation. The necessary fire alarms, extinguishers and emergency lighting are in place. The directors have arranged for the required final checks to be completed well in advance of the proposed school's intended opening date.
- There is a large, secure outside area. This will provide pupils with access to covered and uncovered hard play areas, an area laid to grass and a small vegetable garden. The directors have selected play equipment to meet the social, communication and sensory needs of the pupils.
- The directors have ensured that the building is suitable to support the number, age and needs of pupils that are likely to attend the proposed school.
- The seven independent school standards for the premises and accommodation are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(a)–(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a)–(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a)–(g), 32(4)(a)–(c)

- The proposed school's website provides access to required information, such as the accessibility plan, complaints policy and child protection (safeguarding) policy.
- The directors understand what systems they need to put in place so that pupils' EHC plans are managed well.

- Some pupils who will attend the proposed school may be funded by a local authority. The directors have put in place processes to share information about income and expenditure relating to any funding that the proposed school receives.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–(k)

- The directors have put in place a suitable written policy for handling complaints. This is available on the proposed school's website.
- The directors have set up a system for maintaining written records of any complaints and the proposed school's response to them.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)–(c)

- There are two directors. One director is the head of learning, the other is the head of pastoral care.
- There is no governing body at present.
- The directors have established an advisory board to provide expert external advice to the proposed school. Currently, the advisory board includes members from relevant professions. The directors' plan is that, over time, this board will also include parents and representatives from the local community. It is also the directors' intention that this board will have a quality assurance function.
- The directors have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school's accessibility plan outlines how pupils will be able to access the premises, information and curriculum.
- Many other aspects of the proposed school's documentation make appropriate reference to Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- All requirements 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	148733
DfE registration number	873/6057
Inspection number	10203772

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 Body	Hope Tree School Ltd
Headteacher	Rebecca Sands (Head of Learning)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,500
Telephone number	07488863125
Website	www.hopetreeschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@hopetreeschool.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	7 to 12	7 to 12
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	18	18

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Girls
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	18
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0

Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	18
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Not yet determined
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Not yet determined

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	3
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor body is Hope Tree School Limited. There are two directors. One is the head of learning, the proposed school's name for the role of the headteacher. The other is the head of pastoral care. The proprietor body is seeking registration with the Department for Education (DfE) as an independent special school to admit pupils between the ages of seven and 12. The intention is for the proposed school to admit pupils from January 2022.
- The proprietor body intends to admit no more than six pupils in the first term of the proposed school's operation.
- All pupils likely to attend the proposed school will have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who attend Hope Tree School will have a primary diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- The proposed school is based near Impington in Cambridgeshire. The proprietor body's intention is that pupils attending the proposed school will also make use of nearby sports and swimming facilities.
- The proprietor body intends to use supply staff should the need arise.
- The proprietor body proposes to admit pupils from local authorities within transportation distance.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school.
- The proposed school is not in operation.
- The inspection was commissioned by the DfE. This one-day inspection took place at the proposed school's premises.
- Inspectors met with both directors. Inspectors visited all parts of the proposed school's premises, including outdoor areas.
- Inspectors scrutinised the proposed school's documentation, including policies, procedures, the single central record and communications with Cambridgeshire Local Authority.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cindy Impey

Her Majesty's Inspector

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