

The Ribble Autism School

Emily Street, Lostock Hall, Preston PR5 5SZ

Inspection date

8 April 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, 2(1)–2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a)–2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(f), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The proprietor has prepared an appropriate curriculum policy for children in the early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2. The policy emphasises the contribution that each subject will make to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. The information within the policy also shows that the active promotion of fundamental British values is at the core of leaders' work. This work includes the promotion of values such as tolerance and respect, together with the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of citizenship.
- The curriculum policy is supported by suitable schemes of work for each subject at key stages 1 and 2. There are also appropriate schemes of work for each aspect of the learning and development requirements as set out in the 'statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn during their time at the school. Leaders' curriculum design considers the specific and individual needs of pupils, all of whom will be pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- There is suitable importance placed on speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics in the curriculum. Additionally, there is an emphasis on pupils studying subjects such as science, art and design, history and geography. Subjects will also include information and communication technology and physical education (PE).
- Pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education will be taught through timetabled lessons. Aspects of PSHE education will also be woven into the whole-school curriculum. The development of pupils' life skills and their emotional and well-being skills is considered an essential part of the curriculum by leaders. The topics to be covered are suitably wide-ranging and include learning about the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Paragraphs 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(d)–2A(1)(g), 2A(2)

- The PSHE education curriculum will include the development of pupils' understanding of relationships and health education. Leaders have taken into consideration the relevant statutory guidance. They have drafted a policy statement, and they have

considered how they will consult with parents and carers about the policy. Leaders are aware that the statement must be placed on the school's website.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a)–3(j)

- The proprietor has already recruited some staff and is in the process of recruiting other staff. The proprietor has a clear idea of the calibre and expertise that it is looking for in new teachers and other staff.
- Templates have been created for short-term curriculum planning. Leaders will ask teachers to set out the content of lessons in these templates should the school be approved to open. Teachers will be expected to consider the needs of the pupils when designing lesson activities. The school is well resourced with a range of appropriate educational books and equipment. These are relevant to the proposed age range of pupils.
- The proprietor is committed to providing a good-quality education for pupils. The headteacher and other senior leaders already appointed have sufficient knowledge, skills and experience to guide and support teachers. This should enable the proposed school to provide a suitable quality of education.

Paragraph 4

- Leaders have a suitable assessment policy in place.
- Leaders will assess pupils' academic attainment and personal needs when they start at the school. Pupils' progress and attainment will be assessed regularly. Pupils' progress will be communicated regularly with parents and those responsible for governance. Teachers will use these assessments to inform their teaching.
- Pupils at the school will not complete national end-of-key-stage assessments.
- 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, 5(a), 5(b)–5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d)–5(d)(iii)

- Pupils' SMSC development is a thread that runs throughout the curriculum for the proposed school. Pupils' SMSC development is central to the school's aims, policies and plans.
- Aspects of SMSC development are threaded through the PSHE scheme of work. For instance, pupils will learn about democracy and different faiths. Enrichment activities will be offered to all pupils to ensure that they experience a diverse range of social and cultural activities and traditions.
- Leaders have plans to provide opportunities for pupils, where appropriate, to discuss local and national issues in an impartial way. Pupils will be encouraged to put into practice the values that are fundamental to living in modern Britain.
- The school's policies include appropriate references to all of the protected characteristics set out in legislation.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The proprietor has paid attention to the current statutory guidance for safeguarding pupils. A suitable and up-to-date safeguarding policy is in place. Leaders have introduced all the necessary arrangements to keep pupils safe and to promote pupils' welfare at the school.
- The headteacher and another senior member of staff are already appointed as designated safeguarding leads (DSLs). It is likely that other staff will also be trained at DSL level. All new staff will receive appropriate induction training, safeguarding training and regular updates on risks, such as radicalisation and extremism, sexual exploitation, sexting and e-safety.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a)–9(c), 10

- The proprietor has detailed and suitable behaviour and exclusion policies in place. There is also an appropriate anti-bullying policy. Any incidents of poor behaviour will be recorded. Leaders intend to cross-reference these with any other concerns so that they can gain a full picture of an individual pupil's behaviour and respond quickly to any additional needs that arise. The policy includes appropriate and proportionate sanctions.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The proprietor has a health and safety policy that is tailored to the premises of the proposed school. It complies with all relevant laws. Regular fire-safety checks of the premises are planned. The proprietor understands its duties as set out in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The proprietor has an appropriate first-aid policy in place. A number of staff have completed first-aid training.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place. The risk assessments that have already been completed show that leaders plan to take appropriate actions to minimise risks to pupils. This includes risk assessments for the school building, for trips and for individual pupils.
- Leaders have made appropriate arrangements to ensure that the school's computer network has appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements in place. This is to assure pupils' safety when they are working online.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils will always be appropriately supervised, including at breaktimes, when arriving at school and on leaving the school premises.

Paragraph 15

- Leaders have appropriate systems in place to register pupils' attendance and to allow them to monitor pupils' absences effectively. Leaders will report on attendance on a regular basis through the governance arrangements at the school.
- The proprietor has published a suitable admissions policy for the school. Systems are in place to ensure that records of admissions will adhere to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c)–18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa)–19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b)–19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i)–20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)–21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7)–21(7)(b)

- The single central record (SCR) is in place and meets the requirements for the information that it must contain. Leaders understand the need to complete all the required checks on the suitability of staff before they take up an appointment.
- Records relating to checks on the members of the proprietor body are included on the school's SCR. All of the suitability checks for these members, including those relating to the leadership and management of a school, have been carried out.
- The chief operating officer, who is the proprietor's representative, the headteacher and the chair of governors have completed appropriate training to support the appointment of suitable staff to work in a school. Some teaching staff have already been appointed. Plans to recruit additional teachers and support staff are in place. The induction documentation for new staff makes it clear that they will undergo a full suite of safeguarding training, and other appropriate training, on appointment.
- Leaders are aware of the procedures that they should follow in the event of employing agency staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.
- Leaders do not intend to engage volunteers. However, they are clear about their responsibility for checking the suitability of any volunteers who may work with pupils if this does occur.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a)–23(1)(c), 28(1)–28(1)(d), 28(2)–28(2)(b)

- The proposed school is housed in a building that was formerly used as a nursery school. The good-sized building has been refurbished to a high standard. The accommodation comprises of a few small teaching rooms, a communal space, a kitchen, a medical room, a reception area and an office.
- There are appropriate toilet and washing facilities. All toilet cubicles can be secured from the inside. There is hot and cold running water. The hot water is set at an appropriate temperature. There are signs indicating that this water is not suitable for drinking. Pupils will have access to drinking water throughout the day.
- There are appropriate changing and shower facilities for pupils on the proposed school site. These are clean and furnished to a high standard.

Paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- A medical room has been set aside. There are suitable washing facilities in the room and easy access to a toilet. A bed and first-aid kit were in the medical room at the time of the inspection.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- The accommodation throughout the proposed school is of a high standard, and it meets all requirements for the health, safety and welfare of pupils. This includes suitable acoustics and lighting. Teaching rooms have a suitable source of natural light. The exterior and interior lighting is of an appropriate standard. Access through main doorways and gates will be via keypads.

Paragraphs 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The proposed pupils will have access to an outdoor area that is safe. It will be an appropriate space in which pupils can play when not in lessons and for them to engage in PE activities. PE activities will be regularly timetabled in accordance with the school's curriculum requirements. Some of these sessions may be conducted at local leisure facilities. Leaders will have risk assessments in place to ensure pupils' safety when travelling to and from these facilities and when using these sites.
- All the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1)–32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a)–32(2)(d), 32(3)–32(3)(g)

- The proprietor has set up a school website that contains all of the required information. The proprietor is fully aware of the requirements for the information that a school should publish on its website.
- There is a suitable range of information available for parents and pupils when they join the school. A comprehensive range of policies for parents is in place, including information on admissions, behaviour, the curriculum and safeguarding. All documents will be made available for parents on request from the school office, as well as being available on the school's website.
- Leaders intend to provide termly and annual reports on pupils' progress and attainment for parents. Reports will be detailed and provide a holistic picture of a pupil's progress. They will also report on pupils' personal development and emotional health and well-being. Leaders are aware that any inspection reports need to be made available to parents.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33, 33(a)–33(k)

- The complaints policy is appropriate. It outlines all of the required stages. It includes appropriate timescales and information about the storage and sharing of written records. The policy is detailed, and it ensures the transparency of the school's intended complaints procedures.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has an appropriate understanding of the standards. The proprietor has plans in place to monitor the school's compliance with the standards regularly.

- Leaders demonstrate the knowledge required to set up and run this independent school successfully. They have experience of, and a commitment to, providing an effective quality of education for pupils. They are likely to fulfil their responsibilities to promote the well-being of pupils.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's accessibility plan fully reflects the statutory requirements.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- The school is likely to meet safeguarding and welfare requirements.
- The school is likely to meet learning and development requirements.

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	150282
DfE registration number	888/6134
Inspection number	10313399

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 special school
School status	Independent day school
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services Limited
Chair	John Anderson
Headteacher	Lisa Sharrock
Annual fees (day pupils)	£87,184 to £137,369
Telephone number	01257 220011
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk
Email address	lisasharrock@aspriscs.co.uk

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	4 to 11	4 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	10	10

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	10
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	10
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	10
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Not known

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	1	2
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	12

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is housed in a small former nursery school building. The proposed school is located at Emily Street, Lostock Hall, Preston PR5 5SZ.
- It is proposed that the school will provide full-time education for up to 10 mixed-gender pupils aged between four and 11 years. Initially, leaders intend to focus on enrolling children in the early years and key stage 1 pupils.
- It is intended that the proposed school will cater for pupils who have autism spectrum disorder and severe learning difficulties. All pupils will have an education, health and care plan.
- The school plans to offer a specialist curriculum. This will include both educational and therapeutic provision.
- The proprietor has appointed a chief operating officer and a chair of governors.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether the school is likely to meet the standards and statutory requirements prior to opening as a registered school.
- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher. She also spoke to the school business manager, who will have responsibility for the single central record.
- The inspector met the chief operating officer and the chair of governors.
- The inspector made a tour of the school to check the suitability of the proposed premises against the relevant standards. She also looked at a wide range of documents and policies, including those relating to the curriculum, behaviour, and health and safety. She also checked documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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