

The Willow School

Hall Lane, Algarkirk, Boston PE20 2HG

Inspection date

9 December 2020

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a written curriculum policy for the school. Curriculum plans consider the ages and possible needs of pupils who will attend the school.
- The curriculum follows the national curriculum and includes a broad range of subjects. Leaders aim for pupils to receive a bespoke curriculum that is matched well to their personal and academic requirements.
- Leaders demonstrate a good understanding of the likely needs of pupils who will be in their care. They place high priority on ensuring that pupils will be able to learn outdoors whenever possible. For example, the school's extensive grounds will provide opportunities for pupils to learn through play, and by observing nature, growing fruit and vegetables and rearing chickens.
- The teaching of fundamental British values is planned well through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme and across other curriculum subjects. For example, pupils will have opportunities to develop their understanding of democracy through debates and discussions in English lessons.
- Leaders are determined that pupils will develop respect for people who have protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010. For example, the PSHE scheme of work considers differences and similarities in terms of race, sexuality and culture.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding will be assessed when they join the school. Teachers will also use information from pupils' prior learning and, where relevant, information contained within pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plan) to plan lessons.
- The proprietor is intending to employ a small, experienced team of staff who have the required expertise and knowledge to teach pupils with mild to moderate special educational needs and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In addition, teachers will have

access to a range of specialist support and resources for pupils. For example, specialist teachers will provide art and music therapy. Sensory support will be available for pupils when needed, in a purpose-built sensory room.

- Leaders have appropriate plans in place to provide reports to parents and carers that will evaluate pupils' progress and personal development.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders have considered how to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development carefully. They understand the likely vulnerabilities of pupils who will attend the school.
- The PSHE programme of learning is designed to support pupils to grow in confidence and independence and to develop their character. Pupils will have opportunities to build their knowledge of their local community and the wider world. Topics to be studied within the programme include human rights, rules and laws, relationships and sex education, religious diversity, road safety and enterprise skills.
- Leaders are prioritising opportunities for pupils to investigate, play, learn and reflect in the school's outdoor environment.
- There is a suitable policy to ensure that appropriate checks are made on visitors to the school.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- There is a pertinent safeguarding policy in place. The policy is available to parents. A designated leader for safeguarding will be appointed to ensure that the school's policies and procedures are thoroughly implemented.
- The proprietor proposes to ensure that, once staff are appointed, they are appropriately trained to safeguard pupils.
- The school's health and safety policy is appropriate. It provides effective guidance to ensure that leaders carry out the required checks. However, the proprietor has not implemented the policy to make sure that the premises do not pose a risk to pupils' welfare. For example, an open fireplace has not been made safe.
- A formal fire risk assessment of the premises has not been carried out by a suitably trained professional. There are no fire extinguishers or fire exit signs to help pupils and staff in the event of a fire. There is no fire policy or fire safety procedure in place.
- COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions have delayed the progress of installing a fire alarm system. Leaders have arranged for the installation to begin later this month.
- The school does not have a first-aid policy. Leaders intend to write and implement a policy after staff have received first-aid training.

- The proprietor has not considered thoroughly how pupils will be supervised while attending school, through the adequate deployment of staff.
- School leaders have developed a suitable risk assessment policy. Completed risk assessments identify potential hazards and detail the implementation of measures that will be put in place to reduce them. However, the policy is not being implemented effectively as leaders have not successfully identified and resolved risks around the school site.

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

- Appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place. The policies outline expectations of pupils' behaviour. Leaders are knowledgeable about the potential needs and susceptibilities of pupils who will attend the school. A procedure is in place to explain to staff how to manage and address any incidents that happen.
- Pupils will be taught about the consequences of aggressive behaviour and bullying, including cyber bullying, as part of the school's curriculum.

Paragraph 15

- The school's admissions register will comprise the necessary details of pupils who will attend the school.
- Leaders are aware of the legal requirements for attendance registers. They have plans in place to ensure they comply with these requirements.
- The school is not likely to meet all the standards in this part.

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

Paragraphs 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(6)

- A single central register is in place. It details the necessary checks which will be made, by whom and when, before staff are employed.
- At the time of the inspection, staff were yet to be appointed, but relevant checks have been carried out on some staff in preparation for their appointments.
- The proprietor does not intend to have supply staff working at the school.
- The proprietor understands her responsibility regarding safer recruitment. She plans to ensure that leaders of the school are suitably trained in safer recruitment, when appointed.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- There are suitable washing and toilet facilities provided for the sole use of pupils. There are adequate supplies of hot and cold water. An accessible toilet is provided.

- The temperature of the hot water has been checked to ensure it does not pose a risk from scalding. Thermostatic control valves are due to be fitted later this week.
- The proprietor is intending to provide water coolers so that pupils, staff and visitors have access to drinking water when required. Drinking water will be clearly labelled.

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

- The proprietor has provided a room for the medical examination or short-term care of ill and injured pupils. This room has suitable washing facilities. However, there are no toilet facilities suitably close to the room. After discussion with the inspector, the proprietor proposed the installation of a new toilet facility. However, this work has yet to be planned and carried out.

Paragraph 25

- The premises have not been suitably checked to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils.

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

- External lighting is sufficient to ensure that people can enter and leave the school building safely. Acoustics are suitable throughout the school.
- Internal lighting is appropriate throughout most of the school. However, lighting in one classroom is not sufficient for the nature of activities that are likely to take place. Another classroom does not currently have lighting installed. Building work to finish this classroom so it will be fit for purpose is due to resume shortly.

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The school is set within spacious grounds. There is suitable space provided for pupils to play outside and take part in outdoor physical education (PE) activities. The space will be further enhanced by the future provision of a secure, hard surface ball court.
- Leaders intend for pupils to use the local leisure centre for some PE lessons, including swimming. Suitable changing and showering facilities will be available for pupils to use if required.
- The school is not likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g)

- The school does not currently publish relevant information on a website. Necessary information is available from the school on request. Leaders are in the process of designing a website for the school and hope to launch it over the coming months.
- The proprietor has not provided details of the education and welfare provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for those who speak English as an additional language.
- The school is not likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)

- The proprietor has ensured that a complaints policy is in place. It can be provided to parents on request. Each stage for dealing with complaints is clearly explained.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has not ensured that the arrangements for the proposed school are likely to meet all the standards.
- Leaders do not have a comprehensive understanding of the requirements of the independent school standards.
- Some policies and systems to ensure pupils' health and welfare are not in place.
- During the inspection, leaders acknowledged that the premises were not yet ready for pupils to use. Some delays to the completion of building and regulatory work were due to COVID-19.
- Leaders state that they intend to appoint staff imminently and ensure that necessary training is undertaken as part of their induction process.
- The proprietor is passionate about the type of provision she wants to provide for pupils with SEND. She has an ambitious vision for the school. She aspires for the school to provide pupils with a personalised, nurturing education in a calm, rural environment.
- The proprietor intends to resubmit the school's application at a time when she feels the proposed school is likely to meet all the independent school standards.
- The school is not likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has ensured the curriculum is designed to be inclusive. There is a suitable plan in place to improve access to the school environment for pupils, staff and visitors.
- The school is likely to meet the regulation in this part.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	147976
DfE registration number	925/6056
Inspection number	10171468

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	The Willow School Lincolnshire Ltd
Chair	Darryll Loizou
Headteacher	To be confirmed
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000
Telephone number	07833291866
Website	To be confirmed
Email address	info@thewillowsschool.com
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	5 to 11	5 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 an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	10

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	2
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this proposed school

- The Willow School intends to register as an independent special school for pupils with special educational needs. It is proposed that pupils' education will be enriched by frequent outdoor learning experiences.
- On the original application to register the school, the proprietor applied for the school to provide education for pupils aged 4 to 11. However, at the time of the inspection, the proprietor requested to alter the age range to 5 to 11.
- The school will provide education for five pupils initially, increasing to a maximum of 10.
- All pupils are likely to have a primary diagnosis of ASD, with some secondary associated needs, such as moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social development needs and speech, language and communication needs.
- It is likely that a significant proportion of pupils will have education, health and care plans.
- Most pupils are likely to be funded by local authorities. Some pupils will be privately funded.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education commissioned the inspection to check the provision's suitability to operate as a school.
- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- I met with the proprietor, the business and learning development manager and the incoming headteacher. I had a telephone conversation with the chair of the advisory board.
- I toured the site to check the suitability of the premises. I checked the school's health and safety and risk assessment policies and the fire safety procedures.
- I scrutinised a range of documentation, including schemes of work, policies and procedures.
- I checked the school's single central register and discussed the school's proposed approach to ensuring the safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of pupils.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.

- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.

- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including-
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
- 27(a) the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
- 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language;
- 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
- 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
- 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020