

East Hall School

The Calf House, St Pauls Walden, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 8DL

Inspection date

9 August 2023

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)–(b), 2(2)(a)–(i), 2A(1)(a)–(g), 2A(2)

- This is the proposed school's fourth pre-registration inspection. Since the previous inspection, the proprietor body has applied to the Department of Education (DfE) to provide education for those only with a diagnosis of social, emotional and mental health needs. The proprietor body has also requested an increase in the proposed number of pupils who attend the school from 12 to 16.
- Leaders have developed their curriculum plans for all subjects. The planned school's curriculum is designed to support pupils to build their confidence and gain appropriate qualifications that will help them in the future. Greater detail has been added to the curriculum plans since the previous inspection. This is to ensure pupils have the prior and core knowledge they require to build their learning successfully.
- Pupils will learn a variety of subjects. These will provide a suitable breadth of learning as required by the independent school standards (the standards). This includes English, mathematics, science, art, information and communication technology and physical education (PE). Science and PE will be taught off site. Leaders will also provide opportunities for pupils to undertake studies in vocational and practical skills such as construction and horticulture.
- The proposed timetable for the curriculum includes an 'enrichment' session each morning. This is designed to provide pupils with therapeutic interventions allocated according to pupils' individual needs and their education, health and care plans (EHC plan). During this time, leaders plan to identify and provide interventions to support any gaps in pupils' learning.
- The proprietor body understands the school's responsibility to promote pupils' personal development. A detailed programme has been planned for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). The plan for PSHE includes an appropriate range of subjects to prepare pupils' independence and resilience. Leaders have made suitable plans for providing pupils with impartial careers advice and guidance. A component of the planned curriculum will have a focus on the world of work to help prepare pupils for their next stages of education.

- Further opportunities to enrich the curriculum are planned through a programme of themed events, trips and visitors. These are linked to leaders' planned curriculum and will include promoting pupils' deeper understanding of community and locality.
- Leaders' planned curriculum for delivering relationships and sex education takes account of statutory guidance. The school's policy states that there will be consultation with parents when pupils join the school. The curriculum ensures that pupils will learn about healthy and appropriate relationships.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a)–(j), 4

- Leaders have begun the process of recruiting well-qualified staff. Those already appointed are subject specialists and have experience teaching pupils. The headteacher has appropriate qualifications and knowledge to teach the curriculum, as well as having previous experience leading a school.
- New staff will participate in a planned programme of training as part of the induction process. The review of the curriculum has ensured that staff will have the information they need to deliver subjects effectively. Leaders' proposed curriculum plans take account of pupils' starting points by developing a baseline from a range of information about pupils' needs and aptitudes. Leaders have plans for checking the quality of curriculum delivery and providing support for individual members of staff as required.
- The headteacher has developed a system for assessing pupils' learning and social and emotional needs. There is planned use of formative and summative assessment processes to identify how plans for pupils' learning should be adapted if needed.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a)–(d)

- Leaders have mapped out how the curriculum will make provision for promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Alongside the teaching of PSHE, planned opportunities are woven through other subjects. Pupils will have opportunities for visits to promote an understanding of the role of public institutions and learn about different cultures.
- Plans also indicate that pupils will be supported to understand difference. The school's PSHE curriculum emphasises the importance of respect and tolerance. Leaders plan to make use of tutor time to discuss 'big questions' to further reinforce the need to listen and understand those with different viewpoints. School ambassadors will be elected to participate in the governance of the school. Leaders intend pupils to have a 'voice' in making decisions about the school environment and their learning.
- Pupils will be encouraged to consider and recognise different ways to help manage their own behaviour. They will be expected to follow the school rules and learn how to work alongside one another to build successful relationships.
- This independent standard is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The proposed school's policies that identify arrangements for welfare, health and

managing behaviours meet requirements. The safeguarding policy provides clear guidance regarding the identification, help and management of any concerns relating to a pupil's safety. The headteacher has received recent training as the designated safeguarding lead. Other named leaders for safeguarding have also been well trained.

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

- Leaders have drawn up an appropriate behaviour policy. They aim to promote positive behaviour and for staff to quickly spot when pupils may be facing difficulties managing their behaviours. The proprietor body plans to ensure all staff are well trained through the induction processes they will receive on being employed by the school.
- There is an appropriate anti-bullying strategy and exclusion policy in place.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13

- The proprietor body has ensured that there are suitable health and safety policies in place that provide a secure framework for staff and pupils. Two staff have key responsibilities for the checking and administration of first aid if it is needed. Leaders have ensured that the school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Leaders are mindful of the required checks they need to carry out on the building and linked services. Plans include the use of contractors to carry out checks and maintenance in a timely manner. Record-keeping systems are thorough for recording when these checks have been completed.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the effective deployment of staff. Their plans identify how staff will appropriately supervise pupils during the school day, including when outside or on trips.

Paragraphs 15, 16

- The headteacher has set up registration systems for the admission of pupils to the school. These comply with the statutory requirements. Leaders intend to use an online system to record pupils' attendance. They will use the information to monitor and track pupils' attendance to identify any concerns so that support can be provided swiftly.
- Leaders' relevant policy has outlined the requirements for carrying out risk assessments. Risk assessments for the school site have been written. Leaders plan to make individualised risk assessments of pupils once they have been admitted to the school.
- The standards in this part 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), 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)

- There is an electronic single central record in place. It contains the required checks that need to be completed for staff who are employed by the school. It also includes relevant checks carried out on those who have positions of management

responsibilities such as the directors of the proprietor body.

- Leaders do not intend to make use of supply staff at the school. However, they are knowledgeable about the procedures to follow should they wish to use supply staff in the future.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The proposed school's building has an appropriate number of toilets for the sole use of pupils. There is an accessible toilet that is available for staff and visitors. Toilets have washing facilities, with water provided at a suitable temperature.
- There is an adequate supply of drinking-water that is available for pupils.
- The medical room includes a bed and washing facilities. It contains a lockable medical first-aid cupboard and is located close to the toilets.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a)–(b)

- The school building has two established teaching spaces. There is a lockable storage area and a school office. The classrooms are well decorated to a high standard, and there are adequate teaching resources and facilities. The building has appropriate lighting, heating, acoustics and ventilation.
- There is a secure outside area with provision of seating. Leaders intend pupils to make further decisions about the type of play equipment they wish to use outdoors.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met by the proposed school.

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)

- During the inspection, leaders were able to provide all information required for the above-specified standards. Leaders intend to open a school website once the proposed school has received its registration from the DfE.
- The proprietor body understands the information it needs to provide regarding the expenditure of public monies where pupils are to be funded by the local authority.
- Leaders intend to provide parents with regular reports regarding pupils' academic and social development. There is a developed reporting format that leaders intend to use for this purpose.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met by the proposed school.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–(k)

- The proprietor body has put in place an apt policy for handling complaints. They plan to make it available to parents on the school's proposed new website.
- The policy provides guidance regarding the different stages for making a complaint, how this will be dealt with and timescales for managing the complaints process. There is a system prepared for maintaining records of complaints and leaders' responses to them.

- The standard in this part is likely to be met by the proposed school.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)–(c)

- The four directors who make up the proprietor body have taken the right actions to ensure that the proposed school will be likely to meet the standards. Since the previous inspection, the proprietor body has appointed a new headteacher. Leaders have sought the use of external support to help put in place appropriate policies and procedures. The proprietor body plans to continue to use the consultant's expertise to work as an improvement partner to ensure that the standards are consistently met.
- Leaders have a planned programme of professional development to ensure that staff understand how to meet the needs of pupils well.
- This part of the standards is likely to be met by the proposed school.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has put in place an equalities policy that identifies leaders' responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. There is an appropriate accessibility plan in place.

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	150044
DfE registration number	919/6023
Inspection number	10304458

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	East Hall School Limited
Chair	Joanne Richardson
Headteacher	Laura Perry
Annual fees (day pupils)	£70,000 to £80,000
Telephone number	07725053252
Website	None
Email address	joanne@easthallschool.org
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	14 to 16	14 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	16	16

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	16

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	16
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	5	9
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	Not yet determined
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	4

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located in a rural setting on a farm. An alternative provider that provides pupils with therapeutic support through equine care currently operates from nearby facilities. The proposed new school plans to make use of these facilities as part of the provision for pupils.
- The proprietor body seeks permission to provide education for up to 16 pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils may be placed at the school by the local authority or through parental referral. Not all pupils will have an EHC in place.
- The proprietor body consists of four directors, three who are executive directors and one who is a non-executive director.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the DfE to determine a fourth application to open an independent school for pupils aged 14 to 16. The first pre-registration was carried out on 20 October 2020, the second pre-registration was carried out on 2 June 2021 and the third pre-registration was carried out on 27 July 2022.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and the proprietor body, including the chair. The inspectors made a tour of the premises with the headteacher and the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspectors reviewed a variety of documents such as policies, schemes of work, the single central record and a range of health and safety documentation.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

Nathan Lowe

His Majesty's Inspector

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