

The Mulberry School

St George's House, William Street, Leicester LE1 1RW

Inspection date

24 June 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

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)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 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

- Leaders have ensured that there is a written policy for the curriculum. The policy is supported by a range of subject plans and schemes of work. Leaders intend for the curriculum to be personalised and to be in line with the requirements for each pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- Leaders intend for pupils to follow their own individual pathway for learning and personal development. They aim for pupils to achieve academically and socially. Therapeutic strategies will be used to support pupils to understand and manage their autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Leaders are determined that the school will achieve their ambition to be 'an environment where all children's voices are heard, and educational needs met'.
- The school's curriculum is based on the national curriculum. Pupils can obtain functional skills in English and mathematics. They can access accreditations to GCSE level, where appropriate.
- Leaders understand the process to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are children looked after receive frequent reviews of their provision and personal targets.
- The policy to support careers guidance echoes leaders' aspirations for pupils. Leaders aim to prepare pupils for transition to life after they leave The Mulberry School. Leaders have used the Gatsby benchmarks to structure their guidance. The proprietor has established effective relationships with businesses and service providers in Leicester, to give pupils real-life learning opportunities.
- Leaders are recruiting staff who have relevant experience of working with pupils with SEND. They are keen to ensure that teachers have the necessary subject knowledge

and expertise. Leaders intend for teachers to adapt curriculum plans to meet individual pupils' needs.

- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 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 know that pupils who will attend the school are likely to be particularly vulnerable. They have a suitable policy in place that is designed to ensure that learning opportunities and enrichment activities will support pupils to grow in confidence and learn independence.
- Leaders' proposed personal, social, health, economic and citizenship programme is suitable. Pupils will be taught strategies to help them to manage their behaviour and understand their emotions. They will build their knowledge and understanding of British values, equality, diversity and the wider world. Planned units of learning include a wide range of topics, such as resilience, health and well-being, relationships and sex education, rights and responsibilities, and internet safety.
- Curriculum plans and school policies show a strong focus on developing pupils' self-esteem and preparing them for adulthood. The proprietor states these as some of the main reasons for setting up the school.
- Leaders intend to provide a nurturing, small-school environment where pupils can build positive and lasting relationships. The proprietor aims to make the move from the school into the wider world less daunting for pupils by developing effective links with the local community.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Safeguarding arrangements are likely to be strong because leaders, including the proprietor, have a good understanding of statutory guidance. They have implemented a comprehensive system to record concerns and share information appropriately. Leaders are experienced and know how and when to make referrals to external agencies.
- There is a pertinent safeguarding policy in place. The proprietor has ensured that two senior leaders are qualified designated safeguarding leads. Staff are to be trained to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Curriculum plans show that pupils will learn about potential risks and how to keep themselves safe.
- Policies for managing pupils' behaviour and incidents of bullying are in place. Strategies for managing the behaviour of pupils are planned with consideration of the potential needs and vulnerabilities of pupils in mind.

- The health and safety policy is comprehensive. The policy details the systems and processes that will be in place to ensure the safety of staff and pupils. For example, regular checks are planned to test the quality and temperature of water.
- A suitable first-aid policy details how staff will care for pupils who may have accidents or need basic medical care while at school. Leaders intend to ensure that staff are qualified in the administration of first aid. Staff will also receive relevant training to support pupils with medical conditions such as epilepsy.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place. An electronic system will be used to check assessments of risk and the actions taken by leaders to reduce risks for pupils.
- The school is compliant with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. A fire-risk assessment has been carried out. The fire-alarm system is in good working order. The system will be tested weekly. Plans are in place to train staff as fire marshals. Evacuation procedures will be practised often with pupils.
- Admissions and attendance information will be recorded electronically. This will enable leaders to check the attendance of pupils closely. Leaders understand the requirements to record any absence using proper Department for Education (DfE) codes.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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. This specifies the necessary checks that will be carried out before staff are employed, by whom and when.
- Leaders understand their responsibilities with regard to safer recruitment. Senior leaders have received appropriate training in safer recruitment.
- The school does not intend to use supply teachers. However, leaders are aware of the procedures they should follow if this should become necessary 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), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2), 24(3), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The proposed school premises were previously home to a nursery school. Leaders have taken appropriate action to refurbish the facilities so that the building is suitable for use as a school for primary- and secondary-aged pupils.

- There are appropriate washing and toilet facilities for pupils. An accessible toilet is provided. A suitable medical and first-aid room is available for the care or examination of injured or ill pupils.
- Indoor and outdoor spaces for physical education (PE) lessons to take place are limited. However, there are suitable outdoor spaces for pupils to play, socialise and take part in small team games. There is a small outdoor area for pupils to sit and relax. An indoor classroom will be used for yoga lessons. Leaders intend that pupils will be taught PE off site at a local leisure centre. This will have suitable showering and changing facilities that will be available for pupils to use. A shower facility is also available within school, if required.
- Air conditioning is installed in classrooms. Internal and external lighting is fit for purpose.
- Adequate running water is supplied to the school. Leaders are fitting thermostats to ensure that the temperature of the hot water does not pose a risk of scalding at the point of use.
- Water suitable for drinking is available from a water cooler. Suitable signage to indicate drinking water has been ordered.
- The school premises are in good condition. The proprietor ensures that any maintenance work is carried out swiftly. Appropriate consideration has been given to the health and safety of staff and pupils. The site is secure. Leaders plan to further increase security of the site by replacing existing electronic mechanisms with a key-fob entry for staff.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 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)

- Leaders can provide the relevant policies and school prospectus to parents and carers on request.
- The school's website is under construction. Leaders are aware of the information they should publish on the school's website. They intend to make the necessary information available for parents through the website when it is launched.
- There are appropriate policies in place that detail how pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language will be supported.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 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 a thorough complaints policy in place. The policy is accessible to parents. Procedures are explained and timescales clearly stated.
- Leaders know their responsibility to keep written records of complaints and the action taken to resolve them.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Leaders have extensive experience of working within education, health and social care services for children and adults with SEND. They are aspirational for the education they want the school to provide for pupils.
- Leaders are determined to improve the life opportunities for pupils who may previously have had poor experiences of school. They have carefully thought about the possible needs of pupils and have a clear vision for how they can meet them in school and in the local community. The proprietor is able to supply a range of health and care services to the school.
- Leaders have considerable experience of working with children looked after. They have set up effective relationships with a range of external agencies to support pupils in their education and well-being.
- The proprietor is clear about how leaders and staff will be held to account for the performance of the school. Plans are in place to establish a board of governors to provide increased levels of challenge and support.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the independent school standards. They understand their roles and responsibilities. They plan to carry out regular checks to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for, and make good progress with their learning and personal development.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- There is a suitable accessibility plan in place. Leaders have considered arrangements to improve access for pupils to the school's environment, curriculum and written information.

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	148650
DfE registration number	856/6033
Inspection number	10197170

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	IBC Children's Services Ltd
Chair	Nizam Bata
Headteacher	Zoe Kirby
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000
Telephone number	0116 482 6937
Website	www.mulberryschool.co.uk
Email address	zoe.kirby@ibchealthcare.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	8 to 16	8 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	36	36

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	36

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	36
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	36
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	36

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor is part of IBC Healthcare, which is a health and social care provider for young people and adults with learning disabilities, complex needs, ASD and mental health needs.
- The school proposes to open to pupils during mid-September 2021. Initially, leaders intend to admit up to six pupils each term during the first year.
- The school proposes to admit pupils with ASD and moderate learning difficulties.
- The large majority of pupils who will attend the school are expected to be children looked after.
- All pupils will have an EHC plan.
- Most pupils are likely to be funded by local authorities.

Information about this inspection

- The DfE commissioned the inspection to check the provision's suitability to operate as a school.
- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector met with the chair of the proprietorial body, the headteacher, the head of IBC children's services and the leader for systems and compliance.
- The inspector toured the school site to check the suitability of the premises, as well as the school's health and safety and risk-assessment policies and the fire-safety procedures.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including schemes of work, policies and procedures, and plans for the proprietor's school website.
- The inspector 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

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