

# INNOV4TE Independent School

Blantyre House, Barrack Lane, Dudley, West Midlands B63 2UX

**Inspection date**

3 July 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

*Paragraph 2(1) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) to 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2), 3 to 3(j), 4*

- The proposed school has developed a curriculum to enable pupils aged 11 to 16 to make progress. It intends to use assessment to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. The curriculum will be organised so that pupils spend time catching up, for example in reading, but also learning content from the national curriculum appropriate for their key stage. The proposed school intends to form partnerships with other education providers so that pupils in key stage 4 can study a broad range of options and access examination courses.
- The proposed school has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. The written curriculum policy is supported by detailed schemes of work across all subjects that reflect the aims and objectives of the national curriculum. In designing their curriculum, leaders have given sufficient thought to the precise things they want pupils to learn at any given point in their education.
- The proposed school recognises that this curriculum will need to be reviewed and is likely to change once pupils begin at the school. This is to take account of pupils' starting points and needs from assessments, liaison with previous settings and education, health and care (EHC) plans if applicable. Pupils will study a full suite of subjects that meet the independent school standards (the standards).
- The proposed school has given much consideration to the individual needs of the pupils that it is likely to cater for. The planned induction pack is detailed and targeted to the previous educational experiences that pupils are likely to start with. The proposed school has clear systems planned for how the information gained through both the referral and induction process will inform curriculum starting points and pathways for pupils.
- Central to the proposed school's ambitions is that pupils will learn to read, develop a love of reading and understand the importance of reading as a life skill. The proposed school has considered a range of factors around this and is in the process of purchasing a reading programme that will include phonics. The proposed school has

identified special spaces that will become reading nooks. Leaders plan to train teachers in supporting phonics and reading.

- There are proposed systems to work effectively with parents and carers, as well as external agencies, to ensure bespoke support and plans are put in place that will meet the individual needs of pupils.
- The proposed school recognises that some pupils may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or speak English as an additional language. Appropriate policies are in place.
- The proprietor body has extensive experience and expertise in the areas of need that it is proposing to cater for. It has a clear understanding of its skill set and how it plans to recruit, extend and complement these skills so that both teaching and pastoral care will be equally effective.
- The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well designed. It includes the information that pupils need to keep themselves safe as they mature. The plans include appropriate content on relationships, sex and health education for secondary-age pupils. The proposed school has produced a written statement explaining this and intends to share this via the school's website.
- The proposed school has suitable plans in place to ensure that pupils receive up-to-date careers guidance. This will start right from the induction process where staff will gather each pupil's views around their aspirations and ambitions. These will be reviewed and revisited regularly. The proposed school intends that curriculum subjects will support pupils' knowledge and understanding of roles available within the subject. This will be enhanced through visitors into school and visits out of school.
- It is intended that pupils will be taught by suitably experienced staff who have subject-specific knowledge. The proposed school will have class sizes of up to six pupils with appropriate staff-to-pupil ratios. It is intended to build the pupil numbers gradually so that positive relationships are developed. This will support the establishment of and implementation of routines and expectations, so pupils learn how to act responsibly.
- The proposed school has set out clear expectations of what teachers will include in their lessons. Resources align with the identified schemes. New staff will be trained to ensure they choose activities that support the intended learning and make appropriate adaptations within lessons so that pupils can progress. An assessment ladder is in place and staff will be trained in its purpose and use.
- There are well-considered policies and practices ready to support pupils and teachers with the management of behaviour. Any barriers to learning and risks associated with pupils' behaviour will be identified on admission. Leaders intend to work with individual pupils flexibly to help them to manage their own behaviour and make the most of their schooling. There is intended to be a real focus on consequential thinking.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

### *Paragraphs 5 to 5(d)(iii)*

- 'Learning to be, learning to do, learning to know and learning to live together' are four pillars that the proposed school has threaded through its intended vision and underpins the planned curriculum.
- The proposed school has thought carefully about how these pillars will uphold all of school life, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The proposed school has considered strands of SMSC within each subject's curriculum plans.
- PSHE is intended to form a strong and continual focus through the structure of the day and the week. The proposed school's projected timetables show that social times will form a key part of the day and will be carefully coordinated and supervised. A daily focus of 'motivational Monday', 'topic Tuesday', 'wisdom Wednesday', 'thoughtful Thursday' and 'friendship Friday' are expected to provide a safe space to discuss, debate, decide and give dedicated time to developing a sense of self-worth and self-esteem within the context of the wider world.
- The proposed school has a clear teaching and learning policy and a visitor policy that focuses on having mechanisms in place to ensure that a balanced point of opposing views is always presented to pupils. Relevant teaching resources that meet this criterion are specified within the curriculum plans.
- These standards are likely to be met.

## Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

### *Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10*

- The proposed school's safeguarding policy, which will be published on the website, is comprehensive. The proprietor body is knowledgeable about the guidance from the Department for Education and reflects this in its policies.
- The proprietor body has ensured that it meets statutory guidance in defining who the designated safeguarding leads are and making sure it is not the chair. It has appropriate plans to train further staff into this role, once they are recruited, to further strengthen the open culture of safeguarding.
- The proposed school intends to work in partnership with external professionals. It is intended that many of these partners will routinely visit the school, for example the local authority. This is likely to help the proposed school to establish an open culture, which will help to safeguard pupils.
- A member of the proprietor body is highly qualified in safeguarding. They deliver a range of safeguarding training on behalf of local authorities. They are well placed to deliver training to staff once they are in post.
- The proprietor body intends to be the executive leadership team in the first instance. They have shown thoughtful consideration as to what might lead to a closed safeguarding culture and have addressed this through clear lines of accountability within policies. They have also ensured that each member of the proprietor body has received safeguarding training through external providers.

- The proprietor body has a strong understanding of the local risks to pupils, as well as the risks associated with their individual needs. For example, it knows that there are attendance risks for pupils who will be dual-registered. It has put in place clear systems for staff to follow with set timescales at the start of the day that will be implemented.
- The proprietor body has arranged for the proposed school to use a digital system for recording safeguarding concerns. Staff will receive detailed training in this area.
- There are clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies in place. Leaders intend for every pupil to have an individual risk assessment. These profiles will provide information about how teachers should best manage pupils' behaviour, including information about the triggers for misbehaviour. The proposed school intends to review these plans regularly and adjust them where new triggers and new behaviours become apparent. The proposed school plans that pupil voice will be a key part of this process to help pupils understand and take increasing responsibility over time for their behaviour.
- In line with the behaviour policy, leaders plan to keep records of sanctions imposed in response to poor behaviour. Leaders intend to use this information to identify trends and patterns in pupils' behaviour and update pupil profiles accordingly.
- The school intends that staff will be trained in de-escalation. They say that the focus will be on staff being supported to develop strong positive relationships based upon knowing each pupil well. From this, staff will be well placed to intervene early or utilise a range of techniques that fit the behaviour of the moment being displayed. The proposed school aims for daily briefings to be an intrinsic part of behaviour management across the school.
- The proposed school recognises the barriers and negative experiences around education that pupils coming to them may have. Leaders have constructed a simple but clear system based on attendance, communication, honesty, independence, enjoyment, voice and excellence (Achieve) that will underpin the behaviour system. The points awarded will be reported onto a computerised system and monitored regularly by leaders for trends and patterns at both an individual and school level.
- The proprietor body has a range of expertise in mentoring. It plans to utilise this to provide regular mentoring sessions for pupils on a one-to-one basis as part of the pupils' personal development. This is to develop an understanding of, and how to manage, their own behaviour. The four pillars of learning will be woven together so pupils know who and how they want to be and know what to do in different situations so that they can live together harmoniously.

*Paragraphs 11 to 16(b)*

- The proprietor body has ensured that there is an appropriate health and safety policy in place. They intend that all staff will receive health and safety training during induction that is updated regularly.
- The proprietor body has made sure that appropriate risk assessments are in place. They are specific to the age of the pupils who will attend the proposed school. They are site specific to the context of the school building.

- The proposed school has an appropriate first-aid policy and will ensure that there are several staff who are first-aid trained. First-aid equipment is strategically situated and readily accessible throughout the school building. School leaders are aware of their responsibilities for the storage and administration of medicines, if required.
- Leaders have undertaken appropriate work to ensure the building is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Suitable fire doors have been installed throughout the building. Leaders have also ensured that an appropriate fire safety and evacuation policy is in place. Leaders have ensured that all fire detection alarm systems and emergency lighting have been certified.
- There is a system in place to record admissions and attendance. These arrangements, if implemented effectively, are likely to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation 2006.
- The supervision of pupils during lessons, at breaktimes and lunchtimes has been carefully considered. It takes account of the small playground area, the use of social spaces and the potential use of a local park. If implemented as intended, it is likely that these supervision arrangements will be appropriate.
- The proprietor proposes staffing arrangements that are likely to provide suitable supervision for the number of pupils admitted. Leaders have carefully considered how they will safely supervise pupils on arrival and departure; they show due regard for the risks posed by the site of the school being on a roadside. If implemented as intended, it is likely that these supervision arrangements will be appropriate.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

*Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c), 21(6)*

- The proposed school's electronic single central record contains all relevant and necessary information in line with government guidance. The directors of the proprietor body have completed safer recruitment training. They clearly articulate the importance of the recruitment processes as a crucial element of providing a safe school culture. It is likely that any new staff appointed to the proposed school will be recruited in line with safer recruitment guidance.
- The proposed school does not intend to use supply staff, but it is aware of the checks it would need to make should this be the case.
- Personnel files for staff will be organised so that they contain staff's qualifications, references, identity checks and a medical fitness questionnaire.
- These standards are likely to be met.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(1)(c), 24(1) to 24(1)(b), 24(2), 25 to 27(b), 28(1) to 29(1)(b)*

- The building of the proposed school was formerly a children's centre. It sits over two floors. There is an accessibility plan in place and appropriate risk assessments for different parts of the building and site.

- The school comprises a range of classrooms, meeting rooms and social spaces. These are well lit with both natural and artificial light. The rooms also contain appropriate desks and chairs. Classrooms are suitable for teaching and learning. They have good acoustic conditions. The windows open outwards. Leaders are in the process of purchasing window locks. With these locks fitted, the windows will be safe.
- The proprietor body intends that physical education lessons will be taught at a local leisure centre and a local park with a range of sporting and physical fitness equipment. They have carried out a risk assessment for the use of this space. Showers are available at the leisure centre.
- There is a purpose-built medical room. The room has two sinks available. The toilet facilities are a short walk along a corridor.
- There is adequate external lighting that covers key areas of entrance and egress.
- Well-presented toilet facilities are provided for pupils and staff. These comprise individual cubicles for girls and an individual cubicle and two urinals for boys. Leaders are in the process of purchasing privacy screens for the urinals. There is a separate provision for disabled persons. Hot and cold water is readily available. It was not possible to test the temperature of the hot water on the day of the inspection due to some plumbing difficulties that had happened overnight. Scrutiny of documentation provided showed that the water temperature had previously been acceptable and that the plumber was due back in. If the repairs are implemented as intended, these arrangements will likely be appropriate.
- The proposed school intends to organise lunch provided by an external provider. Staff will have the relevant food safety and hygiene training to provide breakfast, and deliver the food and cookery curriculum. Systems are in place to regularly record and monitor fridge and freezer temperatures and for a hygiene routine to be in place.
- The proprietor body has put up clear signage to denote water that is not suitable for drinking and is in the process of purchasing drinking water signs also. The proposed school intends that pupils will have their own drinking water bottles that they will refill from a water dispenser throughout the day.
- There is a small outside area that will be used as a space for recreation. The proprietor body is currently waiting for the builders to secure the external fencing and gates. They have appropriate plans in place to ensure the space will be fit for purpose. This part of the school will not be accessible to pupils until it is fully refurbished and safe for their use. If these plans are carried out, the space is likely to meet the standards.
- The outside area for recreation is small. The proprietor body has given due consideration to this. It is their intent that smaller groups would use the space on a carousel system alongside social spaces and indoor games alongside accessing the local park, a few minutes' walk away. A risk assessment is in place for the park. Proposed staffing arrangements are sufficient to ensure adequate supervision across the carousel of activities.
- These standards are likely to be met.

## Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(c), 32(1)(f) to 32(1)(i), 32(2) to 32(2)(b), 32(b)(ii), 32(2)(d), 32(3) to 32(3)(g)*

- The proposed school's website is prepared but not yet live. It will contain statutory policies and other information that is required by the standards. This includes term-time and holiday contact information.
- Leaders understand the requirement to publish any future inspection reports to parents.
- Parents will be able to request paper copies of policies and documents if needed.
- The proposed school has clear systems in place to monitor the progress of pupils with SEND and to support the annual reviews of pupils with an EHC plan. Leaders plan to work closely with parents, the relevant local authority, as well as school staff, to ensure the information in these reports is as accurate and as helpful as possible. Regular pupil progress reviews will support building a picture of pupils' development, both educationally and socially and emotionally.
- Leaders have an appropriate system in place to record both income and expenditure for all pupils with SEND paid for by local authorities. This will be available on request.
- These standards are likely to be met.

## Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraph 33 to 33(k)*

- A clear complaints process will be published on the school's website. This is fully compliant with the requirements of the independent school standards.
- These standards are likely to be met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)*

- All three directors of the proprietor body have extensive experience and expertise spanning many years in working with vulnerable pupils who have a range of additional needs.
- All three directors of the proprietor body have prior experience in working in an independent school in the specialist sector. The proprietor body plans to arrange for external guidance and accountability to be provided through critical friends. They are open to the quality assurance processes and feedback that referring schools and local authorities will give as part of the placements.
- The proprietor body has the relevant skills and knowledge from previous roles to understand accountability in many forms. Directors have organised a range of proposed policies, systems and structures that if implemented are likely to meet the standards consistently. The proprietor body demonstrated a secure understanding of the standards.
- These standards are likely to be met.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have ensured that the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.



## **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 | 150921   |
| DfE registration number | 332/6016 |
| Inspection number       | 10352355 |

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               | INNOV4TE Education and Training |
| Chair                    | Carlo Franco                    |
| Headteacher              | Not known                       |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £39,000 to £55,000              |
| Telephone number         | 01384 889288                    |
| Website                  | Not known                       |
| Email address            | stacy@innov4te.co.uk            |

## Pupils

|                                     | <b>School's current position</b> | <b>School's proposal</b> | <b>Inspector's recommendation</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Age range of pupils                 | Not applicable                   | 11 to 16                 | 11 to 16                          |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 0                                | 42                       | 42                                |

## Pupils

|  | School's current position | School's proposal |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Gender of pupils   | Not applicable            | Mixed             |
| Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age  | 0                         | 42                |
| Number of part-time pupils   | 0                         | 0                 |
| Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities                              | 0                         | 42                |
| Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan                               | 0                         | 30                |
| Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan | 0                         | 30                |

## Staff

|   | School's current position | School's proposal |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff | 3                         | 10                |
| Number of part-time teaching staff            | 0                         | 0                 |
| Number of staff in the welfare provision      | 0                         | 3                 |

## Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school will be located within a large property in Cradley. The school is situated on a main road. The proprietor leases the property and the school site. The building was previously used as a children's centre.
- The proposed school intends to cater for boys and girls aged 11 to 16. Pupils will be referred to the school by local secondary schools and local authorities.
- The proposed school intends to educate pupils with SEND, including those with education, health and care plans. It intends to cater for pupils with cognition and learning needs; autism; social, emotional and mental health needs; moderate learning difficulties; and specific learning difficulties.

- The proprietor intends to admit pupils gradually, initially opening for 18 pupils, rising gradually to 42 once the first pupils are settled and as staff are recruited.
- The proposed school does not have a religious character.
- The proposed school does not intend to make use of any alternative provision.

## **Information about this inspection**

- The pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the standards if it is given permission to open. This is the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspection was conducted with two working days' notice.
- The inspector held discussions with the three directors of the proprietor body.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the standards, safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector visited all parts of the proposed school premises. She also looked at a wide range of documents and policies.

## **Inspection team**

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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