

Graduately Developing Futures

Flourishing Fields Farm, Stonehouse Lane, Hopwood, Worcestershire
B48 7BB

Inspection date

24 April 2025

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards. It is currently operating without registration

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) to 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2), 3(a), 3(b)

- The proposed school has a clear vision for the curriculum it intends to provide for pupils. It has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum that is supported by well-sequenced schemes of work. The curriculum aligns with the breadth and scope of the national curriculum. There is also a strong focus on basic skills in English and mathematics as well as skills pupils will need in life.
- Pupils who attend the proposed school will have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum takes this into account, as well as the age of pupils.
- The curriculum is organised under three distinct pathways: academic, sensory and social. These pathways are flexible and some pupils are likely to follow different pathways in different areas of the curriculum. Consideration has been given to communication as some pupils are likely to be pre-verbal. Staff will be trained in signing as well as the use of symbols. Existing staff are very knowledgeable and experienced in working with pupils with SEND.
- Each pupil will follow a curriculum which is highly bespoke. The proposed school has planned a detailed and extensive transition programme for when pupils first join the school. This is intended to enable staff to get to know pupils, their needs and interests well in order to provide a learning experience which matches pupils' age, aptitudes and needs.
- The proposed school's ambition is that all pupils will learn to read well. There is a wealth of books available to pupils and a systematic synthetic programme available for pupils at an early stage of learning to read.

- Proposed links with local rugby clubs and businesses are planned to contribute to pupils' understanding of the community and the world of work. This is further enhanced by many of the planned on-site activities related to farming.

Paragraphs 3(c) to 3(g)

- The proposed school provides extensive opportunities and support for pupils to re-engage with education and develop their enthusiasm and motivation to learn. The planned use of the extensive outdoor space is one important element of this. The school intends for pupils to benefit from activities, including working with animals and a mass of opportunities to learn outdoors. The proprietor has ensured that both indoors and outdoors the school is extremely well equipped with high-quality resources.
- The proposed school will ensure that staff have expertise to meet pupils' needs. Staff will be highly qualified and experienced in working with pupils with SEND. A framework for assessing pupils' work as well as their social development has been designed. This level of detail will enable staff to further adapt learning to meet needs in a personalised way. It will also ensure that no pupils are discriminated against contrary to Part 6 of the Equalities Act 2010.
- Important therapy work will support pupils' academic education and help identify any barriers to learning that pupils might have. This will include pupils working with occupational therapists, educational psychologists and speech and language therapists.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

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

Paragraphs 5(a) to 5(d)(iii)

- The proposed school prioritises developing strong relationships between staff and pupils, which starts during the carefully designed transition into school phase. Pupils are likely to join the school with negative attitudes about themselves and their education. Many will have social, emotional and mental health needs. The school's 'EMI' ethos is to 'engage, motivate and inspire' pupils. The proposed school staff demonstrate an impressive passion and drive for fostering pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem through a meaningful education.
- The proprietor and leaders place a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' personal, social and health education and an age-appropriate relationships and sex education. Leaders have also ensured that there is suitable provision for the development of pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, including democracy and tolerance. They have ensured that learning about different cultures is threaded through the curriculum.
- The proposed school plans to make provision for a range of visitors from public institutions, including the police and fire services. These opportunities intend to help pupils learn about the rights and responsibilities of being a British citizen. A written policy is in place which outlines procedures to ensure that pupils are protected from partisan or extreme political views.

- The proposed school places great emphasis on the value of sporting involvement, particularly rugby. Close links with two local clubs, which both border the school site, will allow pupils to be involved in both sporting endeavour and with community outreach programmes.
- The proposed school will run a termly bursary system to provide parents with monies to enrol their children in clubs outside of school, such as sporting clubs. It will also help to pay for anything that will contribute to meeting pupils' targets on their education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7(a), 7(b), 9(a) to 10, 32(1)(c)

- Keeping children safe is key to the school's approach. Current staff bring significant experience in supporting vulnerable pupils.
- The proprietor has clear policies and processes in place to establish an open safeguarding culture at the school. These are published on the school's website. Staff receive specific and regular safeguarding training, including how to use the school's online recording system for reporting and recording concerns.
- The school will prioritise staff safeguarding training when new staff join the proposed school. Safeguarding will be a standing item at weekly staff meetings and an element of daily information sharing among staff.
- The proposed school has in place both a behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy. These link to the school values and emphasise the positive reinforcement of behaviours and the fundamental importance of staff and pupils forming positive relationships.
- Staff will be trained in behaviour management and physical intervention. This will be focused on de-escalation techniques to be used when pupils become emotionally heightened so will limit the need to intervene physically to keep pupils safe.

Paragraph 11 to 16(b)

- The proprietor has ensured that suitable policies have been prepared for all required aspects of health and safety, including fire safety. The proprietor has arranged for electrical safety checks to be carried out by a competent person. Fire exits are clearly marked and fire extinguishers are readily available in each building.
- The proposed school will be well staffed to ensure effective supervision of pupils. A comprehensive first-aid policy has been formulated and equipment is already in place to administer it.
- The information on the school's admission and attendance registers will be maintained in accordance with requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The proprietor will maintain an electronic attendance register and understands the need to follow up any absence.
- An appropriate risk assessment policy is in place and is used effectively. This identifies the potential risks and hazards posed to pupils and adults in the school and when

using different types of equipment. The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

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), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii)

- The proposed school has a rigorous approach to the safe recruitment of staff. The proprietor, a proposed governor and several other leaders have completed safer recruitment training.
- The single central record contains all the required information for appointed staff in line with the latest guidance in 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- The school does not intend to use supply staff but understands fully the procedures to follow in checking suitability of supply staff if necessary.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(1)(b), 24(1) to 24(1)(b), 24(2), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1)(a) to 28(1)(d), 28(2) to 28(2)(b)

- The proposed school occupies a large site on farmland. Buildings are predominantly log cabins, which have been finished to a high standard with full electrics, insulation and heating. Buildings are suitable as classrooms, providing natural light and good acoustic qualities. Electrical lighting and emergency lighting are in place in all structures. Electricity is provided by extensive solar cells on site, with back-up generators as and when needed.
- The proprietor intends to admit a small number of pupils in the first instance and grow gradually to the proposed capacity of 36. Although buildings and toilets are already sufficient for the proposed number of pupils, the proprietor is in the process of increasing the number of structures on site to offer even more variety and flexibility.
- There is a supply of mains water on the site, along with heated water for hand washing. Although the mains water is suitable for drinking, the proprietor intends only to use bottled water for staff and pupils.
- There are appropriate toilet facilities. These are housed in portable units, which are lockable from the inside. All toilet and washing facilities have an adequate supply of running water. The hot water in the hand basins does not pose a risk of scalding to pupils.
- The medical room is appropriate for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. At the time of the inspection, handwashing facilities were next to the medical room rather than within it as specified in the independent school standards (the standards). The proprietor was able to provide assurance to the inspector that the washing facility would be plumbed into the medical room within days of the inspection.

Paragraphs 29(1) to 29(1)(b)

- The outdoor space available to pupils, including for playtimes, is vast. It provides a range of opportunities including working with farm animals.
- The site is surrounded by a secure fence. Pathways and fencing within the property are well lit and demarcated.
- Physical education activities will be regularly timetabled in accordance with the school's curriculum requirements. Some of these sessions will be conducted at a local rugby club, which is a short walk from the proposed school. There is a written agreement in place for renting the club's facilities. Leaders will have risk assessments in place to ensure pupils' safety when walking to and from the club.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(i), 32(2) to 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(d) to 32(3)(g)

- The proposed school's website contains statutory policies and other information that is required by the standards. This information will be useful to parents and prospective parents.
- The proposed school will work with appropriate external agencies to review pupils' EHC plans. Regular planned meetings with parents, along with regular information sharing with parents, will feed into this process. It will provide information to local authorities about pupils' EHC plans.
- The proposed school has a detailed format for annual pupil reports to parents and carers. These will provide parents with detailed academic and personal development information.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33(a) to 33(k)

- The complaints policy is available on the school's website. It outlines what parents should do if they have a concern about any aspect of the proposed school's work. It details processes for informal and formal complaints. Each stage is clearly explained and the policy provides the likely timeframe for each.
- Parents who are not satisfied with the way the school has dealt with their complaint can request a panel hearing that will include a panel member independent of the management of the proposed school.
- The school will retain written records of complaints and the actions taken in response to them.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor and leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the standards. They demonstrate knowledge and skills that will enable them to fulfil their roles. This is particularly evident in terms of the extensive experience that existing staff have of working with pupils with SEND.
- The proprietors and leaders demonstrate the knowledge required to set up and run this independent school successfully. They have a clear commitment to providing an effective quality of education and for promoting the well-being of pupils.
- The proprietor has made effective use of external quality assurance and guidance from an independent advisor and intends to continue to do so.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school's accessibility plan is suitable. It includes all the requirements, including how leaders will ensure the site, curriculum and documentation are made accessible.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the regulation in this part.

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	151427
DfE registration number	885/6094
Inspection number	10378811

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	GDF Consultancy.com Ltd
Headteacher	James Gregory
Annual fees (day pupils)	£58,000 to £96,000
Telephone number	07854 434 575
Website	www.graduatelydevelopingfuturesmidlands.co.uk
Email address	jag@gdfconsultancy.com
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	0
Number of pupils of compulsory school age who have an education, health and care plan, or who are looked after by a local authority	0
Total hours operating as a school per week	0
Total hours of teaching provided per week	15

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	6 to 14	6 to 14	6 to 14
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	36	36

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	36
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	36
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	36
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	36

Staff

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

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located on farmland in the Worcestershire village of Hopwood. The proprietor intends to open with a small number of pupils and grow gradually to ensure quality is established and sustainable.
- The proposed school intends to provide full-time education for boys and girls aged 6 to 14. All pupils will have SEND and are likely to have EHC plans. Pupils' needs will include autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Pupils who attend this school are likely to have experienced a disrupted education and some may have been excluded from other settings.
- The proposed school is expected to run with a local governing board, which will include parents and members who are independent from the management of the school.
- The proposed school currently runs as an alternative provision for pupils with SEND. Places are commissioned by local authorities.
- The proposed school is unlikely to make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to determine if the school is likely to meet the standards if the DfE registers the school.
- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher. He also met with senior leaders and other staff members.
- The inspector made a tour of the proposed school site, both internally and externally, to check the suitability and safety of the premises.
- The inspector scrutinised and evaluated a wide range of documents provided by the school, including safeguarding information, statutory policies and the proposed school's curriculum.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the standards, safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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