

Armley Grange School

4 Armley Grange Drive, Leeds LS12 3QH

Inspection date

20 October 2022

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), 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)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- A detailed written curriculum policy is in place, which explains the rationale for the choice and organisation of subjects at each key stage. The curriculum reflects leaders' ambition to prepare pupils to be as independent as possible in adult life.
- There are long-term plans in place to reflect the proposed age range of pupils who will attend the school. A broad range of subjects will be offered which meet the requirements of the independent school standards (the standards).
- Pupils will study English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, physical education, food technology, information and communication technology and music. Pupils in key stage 4 will be able to study GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, science, geography and history. BTEC and entry-level qualifications will also be offered. Pupils in key stage 5 will be able to access a range of accreditation and vocational opportunities, alongside the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness.
- Leaders have thought carefully about how they will meet the needs of a wide range of pupils. There are different pathways planned to match the aptitudes and abilities of the proposed pupils. Each pupil will have a bespoke approach to a pathway which best meets their needs. Pupils will work on achieving targets that are based on their education, health and care plans (EHC plans).
- Integrated therapy support from speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and educational psychology professionals will contribute to meeting pupils' needs. Thorough assessments and targeted support from therapists are planned. This will help pupils to achieve their next steps.
- A scheme of work is in place to ensure that pupils learn about and understand the fundamental British values of the rule of law, democracy, individual liberty, respect and tolerance for other faith and beliefs. Leaders are incorporating knowledge about the protected characteristics into the PSHE curriculum.

Paragraphs 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2), 2A(3)

- Pupils will receive independent careers advice and guidance. A comprehensive programme of careers education has been planned for each year group. This includes 'people we might meet' in Year 7 and mock interviews and work experience in Year 10. Vocational opportunities will be matched to pupils' interests and aspirations. Leaders plan to help pupils make informed choices about their futures. This reflects the school's ethos of preparing pupils for adulthood.
- The proprietor has ensured that the school fulfils the government requirements to provide a relationships and sex education and health education programme. A separate written statement for primary and secondary pupils will be published on the school's new website. Parents will be consulted regarding the content of the policy. Parents will be able to request that their child is excused from certain aspects of the programme.

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

- Leaders place a high priority on staff having a thorough understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils in their care. Staff will be trained to understand autism spectrum disorder. A comprehensive assessment of each pupil's needs will give teachers accurate information on which to base their curriculum plans.
- Leaders will provide staff with effective strategies to manage challenging behaviour. Strong relationships between staff and pupils, a relevant and interesting curriculum and work that is delivered at the appropriate level will be features of the new school.
- The standards in part 1 are likely to be met.

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)

- Leaders are placing a strong focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development throughout the curriculum. Teachers will be expected to include opportunities to extend pupils' SMSC development in their lesson plans. Assemblies will incorporate important themes such as understanding the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- A feature of the school's ethos is the importance of pupils becoming self-aware and self-confident. Pupils will be supported and nurtured to manage their behaviour. Leaders aim to prepare pupils to live and work in the community.
- The PSHE curriculum will teach pupils important life skills so that they are well prepared for their next steps in life. Relevant topics will be delivered around the main themes of relationships, living in the wider world and health and well-being.
- Policies indicate that pupils will be taught respect and tolerance towards people of different faiths and cultures.

Paragraph 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders have taken steps to ensure that when political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, they are presented with a balance of opposing views. This is written into the curriculum policy.

- The standards in part 2 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, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- A written safeguarding policy is in place. It is published on the new website. The policy sets out clear guidance to staff about what they should do if they are worried about the welfare of a pupil. Safeguarding arrangements are based on the most recent government guidance.
- Staff will receive safeguarding training and regular updates on safeguarding policy.
- Leaders' approach to behaviour is based on building caring and respectful relationships between pupils and staff. Staff will be trained to identify patterns in pupils' behaviour. An appropriate system for recording incidents of behaviour is in place.
- The anti-bullying policy states that bullying will not be tolerated. Staff will be trained to recognise different types of bullying and how to respond appropriately.
- The proprietor has considered health and safety legislation in the drawing up of the health and safety policy.
- The proprietor has complied with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. A fire risk assessment has been drawn up by a competent person. Actions for improvement were identified and acted upon. An additional fire risk assessment will be carried out on 10 November 2022 by an external consultant.
- Fire evacuations will take place regularly on a half-termly basis. The support that some pupils and staff might need to evacuate the building safely has been considered. Personal evacuation plans will be created when needed.
- Appropriate checks on fire extinguishers, fire alarms and fire doors will take place regularly.
- A first-aid policy has been prepared. All staff will receive emergency first-aid training. First-aid boxes are situated around the school and in the two school vehicles. Accidents will be reported in a suitable accident log.
- Proposed staffing levels indicate that pupils will be properly supervised throughout the school day.
- An admissions register is in place. Attendance registers will be maintained according to pupil registration regulations.
- A risk assessment policy is in place. Suitable risk assessments have been completed. Potential hazards to pupils are identified and measures put in place to minimise risks.
- The standards in part 3 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)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c)

- The proprietor has put in a place a system for checking and recording the suitability of staff to work with children.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff at the school. However, leaders know which checks to make if they decide to use supply staff in the future.

Paragraph 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(4), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a single central record in place. All the required checks that need to be made on prospective staff are listed on the record. All new staff will be entered onto this record. Effective systems are in place so that the single central record is kept up to date as the school expands.
- The standards in part 4 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), 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)

- There are suitable toilet and washing facilities in both school buildings. These are for the sole use of pupils.
- An accessible toilet is available in both buildings. This will also be available to staff and visitors to the school.
- Facilities for obtaining drinking water are available from taps in each classroom.
- There is an adequate supply of hot and cold water in toilet and washing facilities. The temperature of the hot water supply does not pose a scalding risk to pupils.
- Accommodation for changing and showering is available for use after physical education lessons.

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

- A well-resourced medical room provides accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils. The room contains a bed, a sink, a lockable refrigerator and a lockable medicine cabinet. The medical room is positioned near a toilet facility.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- Both school buildings have been refurbished to a high standard. There are extensive grounds with grass and hard surface areas for pupils to enjoy. Fences enclose the parts of the grounds where pupils will have access. External doors are operated by keypads and fobs to provide suitable safety to pupils.
- The proprietor has made improvements to the sound insulation in several areas of the school. This has ensured that acoustic conditions are suitable for the activities that will take place.

- The lighting in each room is appropriate. External lighting is situated around both buildings so that people can enter and leave the premises safely.

Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- Pupils will participate in physical education in the school hall. Swimming will take place at a local leisure centre.
- The standards in part 5 are likely to be met.

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(1)(j), 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 proprietor has prepared a draft website for the proposed school. Relevant policies will be published on this website. Policies for behaviour, anti-bullying, health and safety, first aid, admissions and attendance and exclusions meet with requirements.
- The school's safeguarding policy will be on the website for parents to access.
- Parents will receive an annual report which details the progress that their child has made across the subjects of the curriculum. Leaders have plans to communicate regularly with parents, through newsletters, termly progress reports, annual review meetings and events.
- An annual account of income and expenditure incurred by the school will be provided to local authorities.
- The school's address, telephone number and name of headteacher will be published on the new website, as will the details of the proprietor.
- The education and welfare provision the school will make for pupils with EHC plans is clear. Information for parents about the school's provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language will be accessible on the new website.
- The school's academic performance for the preceding school year will be published on the website.
- The standards in part 6 are likely to be met.

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)

- A complaints policy has been written and will be available to parents on the new website.
- Clear time scales are set out for the different stages of the complaint's procedure. The policy outlines the informal and formal stages of the complaints process.
- Where the complainant is not satisfied, the complaint can be heard by an independent panel of three, where one panel member is independent of the school.

- A written record of each complaint and any resulting actions will be recorded. A copy of these findings will be provided to the complainant. All records will be kept confidentially and securely.
- The standards in part 7 are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor is a well-established provider of care and education for pupils with complex special educational needs.
- The proprietor body provides challenge and support to the existing schools within the group. There is already a system of checks and balances in place within the organisation. Leaders are well placed to take swift action when needed. A central team of leaders can provide expertise and support for the school in areas such as health and safety, behaviour management, therapy and professional development for staff.
- A governing body is in place. The chair of the governing body is a regional director within the organisation. The board are made up of colleague headteachers from other schools within the group. The governing body has a clear remit. It will operate within the support and accountability network that the proprietor already has in place.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the independent school standards. They have ensured that these are met.
- The standards in part 8 are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has written an equality policy which sets out leaders' responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. An accessibility plan has been produced. It reflects the school's statutory requirements to improve access to the premises, the curriculum and communication for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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	149399
DfE registration number	383/6017
Inspection number	10252673

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 school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	P Bloom Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	April Boyd
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000 to £90,000
Telephone number	0113 826 7709
Website	www.armleygrangeschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@armleygrangeschool.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	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	40	40

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	40

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	40

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	30

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is situated in a suburb of Leeds city centre. The school comprises two buildings. One of which is an early 19th-century mansion house, which is a Grade II listed building. It was previously used as a school. The property has been refurbished to a high standard by the current owners. There are extensive grounds, which provide grass and hard surface areas for pupils to spend their leisure time.
- The proposed school is owned by Options Autism. It is one of over 50 other schools situated around the country.
- The school proposes to admit pupils with neurodiversity, communication and associated complex needs. All pupils will have EHC plans.
- The proposed school does not intend to use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine if the school is likely to meet the independent school standards prior to opening as a registered school.
- This is the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held a discussion with the chair of the proprietor body. The inspector met with the regional director of education and the headteacher. The inspector was accompanied on a tour of the premises by the property development manager.
- The inspector looked at a variety of documents, such as policies, schemes of work, the single central record, the behaviour policy and health and safety documentation. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked.

Inspection team

Suzette Garland-Grimes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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