

Brook School

Pilgrims Close, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh SO53 4SD

Unique reference number (URN): 152282

Pre-registration inspection report:

4 March 2026

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

The purpose of this inspection was to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the proposed school's likely compliance with the independent school standards and associated requirements that are required for registration as an independent school.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

When we carry out pre-registration inspections of proposed independent schools, we report on the provider's likely compliance with part 8 of the independent school standards first. Under part 8, the proprietor is required to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards consistently. The standard in part 8 is intended to ensure that the quality of leadership and management at the school is sufficient for that purpose.

The proprietor body has substantial experience of opening and running 11 special independent schools nationally. Its background in education and leadership means that it consistently demonstrates a secure and appropriate understanding of the requirements of providing effective education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and meeting the independent school standards. The school proposes a steady and assured approach to enrolling pupils. It plans to admit an initial cohort of Year 7 and Year 8 pupils, who will start their education at the school. The school intends to increase the school pupil cohort by approximately 8 pupils each year over the next 5 years.

Leaders show a clear understanding of the potential for SEND education in the local area. They have consulted local authorities to tailor their proposal and address any gaps in local provision.

The proprietor's proposals are thorough and detailed. Working with leaders, they have established clear lines of oversight and accountability. Assurance systems are already in place and will be used to check that the school meets the standards consistently. Regular quality assurance cycles will be used to check that the school is working towards improvement priorities.

The proprietor has implemented suitable online systems to monitor safeguarding, performance data and health and safety compliance, both remotely and through assurance visits.

The proprietor body has set a clear ethos underpinned by values to provide the best possible outcomes for pupils. They aim to be a 'lighthouse for pupils and families, when everything else looks dark and uncertain'. The proprietor intends to provide an extensive period of well-considered induction training for new staff, so that they are confident and capable to consistently meet the needs of pupils. Proposals for ongoing training use evidence-informed approaches.

Directors of the proprietor body will provide governance of the proposed school. Proprietorial oversight will be supported by an established 'School Community Board', consisting of experienced individuals with appropriate expertise in education and leadership. It is intended that these individuals offer robust challenge to ensure the proprietor effectively holds schools accountable for acting in the best interests of pupils.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Curriculum

The school has an appropriate curriculum policy in place. This is supported by a suitably broad curriculum that anticipates the range of needs of potential pupils. It is intended that pupils will learn across a broad range of subjects commensurate with the requirements of the independent school standards. The proposed curriculum sequences learning carefully so that pupils build on prior knowledge and progress to suitable key stage 4 qualification pathways, including GCSE, functional skills and BTEC qualifications.

The school's curriculum assumes that many pupils will require targeted literacy support. The school has purchased phonics schemes and literacy programmes to support teaching. The proposed school intends to provide staff with training to implement reading support to close gaps in pupils' reading and writing knowledge.

The curriculum integrates personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education alongside relationships and sex education and health education. The curriculum is age appropriate, developmental and adapted for pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. It includes statutory and non-statutory components, such as sex, personal safety, relationships, citizenship and fundamental British values. A 'careers education and life skills' programme is woven into the curriculum from Year 7 onwards in recognition that pupils will require additional support to raise aspirations and prepare them for life. An impartial external professional will provide careers guidance. Proposals indicate that there will be opportunities for pupils to gain further accredited key stage 4 qualifications, for example a BTEC in Personal Growth and Wellbeing.

Teaching

The school intends to teach pupils in classes that reflect their cognitive stage, expecting that pupils will require additional support to access learning. Teachers will be provided with training to enable them to adapt the curriculum in response to pupils' needs. Typically, classes will consist of one teacher and one teaching assistant. The school intends to recruit qualified teachers or alternatively support unqualified teachers to gain teaching qualifications. To ensure that the statutory entitlements to educational support in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans can be fulfilled, the school intends to commission specialist support, such as speech and language therapy to provide expert therapeutic support.

Assessment

A thorough induction process has been developed to ensure that the needs of pupils are identified quickly upon arrival and that these needs and starting points are thoroughly understood by teachers. A cycle of regular assessment is intended to check how well pupils are making progress towards their curriculum targets and those set out in their EHC plans. It is intended that this information will be used to further shape support and intervention to enable pupils to overcome learning barriers.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

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

The curriculum promotes British values and the protected characteristics in a way that is intended to be meaningful to pupils, for example, through having a student council, mock elections and tutor time discussions about ethical issues.

The proposed school sets out a clear policy to protect pupils from partisan views. The policy establishes clear expectations for staff and visitor conduct, ensuring balanced presentation of political issues.

To promote pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the proposed school has identified opportunities within the curriculum to build social skills through PSHE, therapeutic interventions and community-based experiences, such as participating in social sporting events. It supports spiritual development through outdoor learning. The school has fostered positive local links to provide opportunities to further develop pupils' understanding of spirituality and morality.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Safeguarding

The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school's safeguarding policy meets all statutory requirements. This is published on the school's website. The proprietor has appointed a member of staff to be the designated safeguarding lead. They are appropriately trained and have a thorough understanding of the role requirements and statutory duties around safeguarding.

Processes and systems to maintain proprietor oversight of safeguarding are robust. This oversight is intended to strengthen assurances that staff and leaders are following safeguarding procedures to maintain pupils' safety and wellbeing.

Behaviour and supervision of pupils

The proposed school has a clear and coherent behaviour policy in place. It sets out consistent expectations of how staff should support pupils to manage their behaviour. Leaders intend for all staff to have training so that they feel confident using de-escalation processes and, when absolutely necessary, restrictive physical intervention. Appropriate recording systems will be in place to monitor behavioural incidents and record staff actions to address them.

Anti-bullying

The anti-bullying policy clearly outlines the steps the school will take to manage any bullying incidents. The school recognises the increased vulnerability of pupils with SEND. The school has embedded preventive work through the intended PSHE curriculum as well as through the restorative pastoral support and social skills programmes. The policy promotes a safe, respectful and inclusive culture, emphasising emotional literacy, diversity and early intervention.

Health and safety, fire and first aid

The proposed school's health and safety policy commits to providing a safe environment for pupils and staff. The proprietor has ensured that all required checks on the school site are completed, including those related to water, electrical and fire safety. The fire risk assessment meets expectations of Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The proposed school has appropriate processes in place to ensure a safe evacuation from the site. Leaders demonstrate an understanding of how to implement Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans.

The proprietor intends to provide staff with first-aid training. These intentions are supported by an appropriate written first-aid policy. First-aid equipment is readily available, including the use of 'grab bag' first-aid kits for off-site visits.

Admissions and attendance

The intended school demonstrates a clear understanding of its attendance policy and how it will be applied in practice. Leaders are knowledgeable about the legal requirements for maintaining attendance and admissions registers. The school has set up appropriate electronic registers to fulfil these legal duties.

When pupil first join the school, leaders may use reduced timetables while pupils settle into school life. The school has a clear understanding of how to record the use of these timetables in the attendance register in accordance with statutory expectations. Leaders intend to work in partnership with the local authority service to support positive attendance.

Risk assessment

The school intends to create personalised risk assessments for pupils, when they first join the school. These assessments will set out the strategies staff should use to keep pupils safe and manage their behaviour positively.

The intended school's risk assessment policy clearly sets out how risks to pupils and staff will be identified, managed and reduced. The risk assessment process will be dynamic to reflect the potential changing needs of the pupils the school serves.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

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

The recruitment checks made on staff, supply staff and the proprietor

The proposed school's policy sets out how the school will fulfil legal obligations, when recruiting new staff, supply staff and checking on the suitability of the proprietor. Staff charged with recruitment have up-to-date safer recruitment training to ensure that they are knowledgeable when conducting these checks.

The single central record of these recruitment checks

The proprietor and leaders have extensive experience of recruitment in schools. Staff have already been employed for the proposed school. Consequently, the proprietor can demonstrate that recruitment processes are rigorous and that all pre-employment checks are recorded on the proposed school's single central record.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Toilet and washing facilities, water supply, changing accommodation and showers

There are sufficient separate toilets for pupils that have a supply of hot and cold water at a suitable temperature. There is a suitable area for changing and showering. There are also separate toilet facilities for staff as well as an accessible visitor toilet that can be used if required.

Drinking water is appropriately labelled. A drinking fountain can provide accessible water to pupils at all times.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

Medical room and accommodation for pupils' therapy needs

A supervised medical room is available with handwashing facilities and specialist medical equipment, such as eye-washing facilities. This room is located close to a toilet. There are adequate first-aid supplies available, including a fridge for medicine storage.

As the intended school does not propose to take pupils with complex medical and physical needs, separate accommodation for therapy has not been designated. However, the school does have a sensory movement space for pupils to use as part of their provision.

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils

The site was previously used as a nursery provision. The school provides sufficient space for the proposed number of 65 pupils. It comprises of 8 classrooms. These are set out for a maximum of between 6 and 9 pupils per class with suitably sized tables and chairs for the ages. There are additional spaces, including a sensory movement room, a well-equipped food technology room and an appropriately sized indoor hall. Corridors are wide and bright, allowing pupils and staff to move between areas safely.

The school has established appropriate checks of the site to ensure it is maintained to an appropriate standard.

Lighting and acoustic conditions

Rooms are specifically designed to reflect the needs of pupils. Therefore, they have been created to reduce stimulation with minimal potential distraction. Classrooms are clean and well-lit with internal and natural light. Temperature and air quality is regulated well. High-quality resources have been purchased to support learning, including a laptop computer for each pupil to use to support their learning.

Outdoor space

The school provides 3 outdoor areas, where pupils can play and socialise. In addition, there is an astroturf multi-use games area for pupils to play and take part in physical education. The school includes a playground and space that leaders intend to turn into a sensory garden space. The spaces are sufficient for the proposed number of pupils and provide varied opportunities for recreation and social interaction.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

Part 6. Provision of information

The intended school's website provides the key information required to be compliant with the independent school standards (the standards).

The proprietor intends to report on pupils' progress every half term through parent consultations. The school will issue parents with written reports 3 times per year. These reports will cover pupils' progress towards academic and personal development targets as well as behaviour and attendance information. These reports will also encompass pupils' progress towards targets set in their EHC plans.

The proprietor has clear systems in place for reporting on expenditure for pupils placed by local authorities. The school can demonstrate how it will work with local

authorities to update and review pupils' EHC plans. There are appropriate and established processes in place to facilitate the sharing of pupil progress information.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The proprietor's suitable complaints policy meets the relevant requirements of the standards. The policy clearly explains how the school will manage complaints through informal and then formal stages. It sets out appropriate arrangements for a panel hearing as part of the complaints process. The policy sets out clear timescales for managing complaints. This policy is published on the proposed school's website.

Leaders recognise the need to support some parents and carers so that they understand the complaints policy. They intend to communicate the complaints process through regularly sharing updates to the policy on the school website. If parents need further support to understand the policy, the school intends to meet in person with parents so that they understand their right to complain.

Leaders have made appropriate provision for recording, analysing and responding to complaints should they arise. Leaders are aware of their duty to ensure that complaint records are kept confidential.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

The school's accessibility plan

The proprietor has in place an accessibility policy and plan that covers accessibility in relation to the required areas of curriculum, physical environment and written information for the proposed age range.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools.

Inspectors checked the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors checked the suitability of the new premises during their site check. They met with the headteacher and a range of other staff. The inspectors met with the 2 directors of the proprietor body, including the chair.

Inspectors reviewed documents in relation to the curriculum, teaching and learning, the provision for pupils with SEND, recruitment, safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment.

Inspectors also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The proposed school will operate from Pilgrims Close, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh SO53 4SD. The building was previously used as a nursery. The school does not intend to use any off-site premises.

The school intends to cater for pupils with a primary need of social, emotional and mental health needs and associated autism and moderate learning disabilities.

The school does not intend to use alternative provision.

Lead inspector

Michelle Payne	His Majesty's Inspector
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Team inspector

Catherine Old	His Majesty's Inspector
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About this proposed school

Proprietor/Chair of the proprietor body	Brook School Limited
Headteacher	Jess Wrigley
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
Capacity	65
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	Provider's proposal: 65
Number of part-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	Provider's proposal: 0

Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities on roll	Provider's proposal: 65
Number of pupils on roll who have an education, health and care plan, or who are looked after by a local authority	Provider's proposal: 65
Age range of pupils	Provider's proposal: 11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Provider's proposal: Mixed
Total hours operating as a school per week	Provider's proposal: 30
Total hours of teaching provided per week	Provider's proposal: 25
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Provider's proposal: 13
Number of part-time teaching staff	Provider's proposal: 0
Annual fees for day pupils	£47,350 to £79,350
Email address	henrietta@melroseeducation.com

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