

Grow Independent School

Lower Clough Business Centre, Pendle Street, Barrowford, Lancashire
BB9 8PH

Inspection date

16 August 2023

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, 2(1)–2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The proprietor body has prepared an appropriate curriculum policy. This outlines a sufficiently broad range of subjects for pupils to study. The details in the policy emphasise the contribution that each subject will make to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. This approach demonstrates leaders' intention to provide a flexible and personalised education for each pupil. The details in the policy also show that the active promotion of fundamental British values will be at the core of leaders' work. This includes values such as tolerance and respect, together with the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of being British citizens.
- The curriculum policy is supported by schemes of work for each subject. The schemes of work and examples of curriculum design are appropriate. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn during their time at the school. Leaders' curriculum design considers the specific and individual needs of pupils, all of whom will be pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- There is suitable importance placed on speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics in the curriculum. Additionally, there will be an appropriate emphasis on pupils studying subjects such as science, information and communication technology, religious education, history and geography. Subjects will also include art and design and physical education (PE).
- Pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education will be taught through timetabled lessons. Aspects of PSHE education will also be woven through the whole curriculum, including careers education. The development of pupils' emotional and well-being skills is considered an essential part of the curriculum by leaders. The topics to be covered are suitably wide ranging. Leaders have ensured that these pay particular regard to the protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d)–2A(1)(g), 2A(2), 2A(3)

- The PSHE education curriculum will include the development of pupils' understanding of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). Leaders have taken into consideration the relevant statutory guidance. They have drafted a policy statement, and they have considered how they will consult with parents and carers about the content of the RSHE curriculum. Leaders are aware that this statement should be placed on the school's website, should the school be approved to open.

Paragraph 3, 3(a)–3(j)

- The chair of the proprietor body will also be the headteacher. She is now in the process of recruiting other staff who will work at the school. Leaders have a clear idea of the calibre and expertise that they are looking for in their new teachers and in other staff.
- Templates have been created for short-term curriculum design. Leaders will ask teachers to include the content of lessons in these templates should the school be approved to open. Teachers will be expected to consider the needs of the pupils when designing lesson activities. The school is suitably resourced with a range of appropriate educational books and equipment that are relevant to the age range of the pupils whom the school proposes to serve.
- The proprietor body is committed to providing a good-quality education for pupils. The headteacher has sufficient knowledge, skills and experience to guide and support teachers. This should enable teachers to provide a suitable quality of education, should the school open.

Paragraph 4

- Leaders have a suitable assessment policy in place.
- Leaders will assess pupils' attainment and personal needs when they start at the school. Pupils' progress and attainment will be assessed regularly. Leaders understand the expected progression that pupils will make across each curriculum subject. They are mindful of the likely wide range of pupils' abilities and needs. Pupils' progress will be communicated regularly with parents and those responsible for governance. Teachers will use these assessments to inform their teaching.
- Where appropriate, pupils will complete a range of suitable qualifications, for example GCSEs.
- All the independent school standards ('the standards') in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b)–5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d)–5(d)(iii)

- Leaders' documentary evidence indicates that pupils' SMSC development is a thread that runs throughout the curriculum for the proposed provision. Pupils' SMSC development is central to the school's aims, policies and plans for enrichment activities.
- Aspects of SMSC development are threaded through schemes of work, showing that pupils will learn about democracy and different faiths. Enrichment activities will be offered to all pupils to ensure that they experience a diverse range of social and

cultural activities and traditions. For example, plans are in place to help pupils to be involved in charity work and local community events.

- Leaders' schemes of work cover the development of pupils' wider knowledge and skills. Leaders will provide opportunities for pupils to discuss important local and national events. Leaders' schemes of work show how staff will offer pupils experiences that will give them a balance of opposing views. Pupils will be encouraged to put into practice the values that are fundamental to living in modern Britain.
- The school's policies include appropriate and detailed references to all the protected characteristics as set out in legislation.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The proprietor body has paid attention to the current statutory guidance for safeguarding pupils. A suitable and up-to-date safeguarding policy is in place. Leaders have introduced all the necessary arrangements to keep pupils safe and to promote their welfare at the school.
- The headteacher will be a designated safeguarding leader (DSL). It is intended that other senior staff will also be trained at DSL level. All new staff will receive an appropriate induction programme. They will also receive suitable safeguarding training and regular updates on areas such as radicalisation and extremism, sexual exploitation, and sexting and e-safety.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a)–9(c), 10

- The proprietor body has a detailed and suitable behaviour and exclusion policy in place. The policy includes appropriate and proportionate sanctions. There is also a suitable anti-bullying policy. Any incidents of poor behaviour will be recorded. Leaders intend to cross-reference these with any other concerns so that they can gain a full picture of an individual pupil and respond quickly to any additional needs that arise.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The proprietor body has a written health and safety policy that is tailored to the premises of the proposed school. The policy complies with all relevant laws. Regular fire safety checks of the premises are planned. The proprietor body will ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The proprietor body has an appropriate first-aid policy in place. It is intended that all staff will undergo first-aid training should the school be approved to open.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place. The risk assessments that have already been completed show that leaders plan to take appropriate actions to minimise risks to pupils. These include risk assessments for the school building, for staff, for events and for individual pupils. There are also suitable risk assessments in place to take account of the school's immediate outside environment. For example, leaders have considered how pupils will walk to and from the communal car parking area. They have also considered the potential dangers that may arise from the river that is located opposite the school site.

- Leaders have made appropriate arrangements to ensure that the school's computer network has appropriate monitoring and filtering systems in place. This is to assure pupils' safety when they are working online.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils will be adequately supervised, including at breaktimes, when arriving at school and on leaving the school premises.

Paragraph 15

- Leaders have appropriate systems in place to register pupils' attendance and to allow them to monitor pupils' absences effectively. Leaders will report on attendance on a regular basis through the governance arrangements at the school.
- The proprietor body has published a suitable admissions policy for the school. Systems are in place to ensure that records of admissions will adhere to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- All the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c)–18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa)–19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b)–19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i)–20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)–21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7)–21(7)(b)

- The single central record (SCR) is in place and meets the requirements for the information that it must contain. Leaders understand the need to complete all the required checks on the suitability of staff before they take up appointment.
- Records relating to members of the proprietor body and the chair of governors are included on the school's SCR. All the suitability checks, including those relating to the leadership and management of a school, have also been carried out.
- The headteacher has completed appropriate training to support the recruitment of staff. Teaching and support staff are still to be appointed. The induction documentation for new staff makes it clear that they will undergo a full suite of safeguarding, and other relevant training, on appointment.
- Leaders are aware of the procedures that they should follow in the event of employing agency staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.
- Leaders may engage volunteers. They are clear about their responsibility for checking the suitability of volunteers who may work with pupils.
- All the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a)–23(1)(c), 28(1)–28(1)(d), 28(2)–28(2)(b)

- The proposed school is situated within a unit on a small industrial estate. The good-sized building has been refurbished by the proprietor body to an appropriate standard.

The accommodation comprises of a few small teaching rooms, a communal or large teaching space, a kitchen, a reception area and a suite of offices.

- There are appropriate toilet facilities. All toilets can be secured from the inside. There is running hot and cold water. The hot water is at an appropriate temperature. There are signs indicating that the water is not suitable for drinking. Pupils will have access to drinking water throughout the day.
- There are no separate changing facilities for boys and girls and there are no shower facilities on the proposed school site. However, the local fitness and athletics centres that the school intends to use for their weekly PE sessions have suitable, separate changing and shower facilities. The inspector saw evidence to confirm that the school will have access and sole use of these facilities when visiting these centres.

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

- A medical room has been set aside with suitable washing facilities in the room. There is easy access to a toilet. A bed and first-aid kit were in the medical room at the time of the inspection.

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

- The accommodation throughout is of an appropriate standard and it meets all requirements for the health, safety and welfare of pupils. This includes suitable acoustics and lighting. The teaching rooms, and the other rooms that will be used, have a suitable source of natural light. The exterior and interior lighting is of an appropriate standard. Access through the main doorways will be via keypads and coded locks.

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

- The pupils will have access to an outdoor area that is safe. It will be an appropriate space in which pupils can play when not in lessons. Suitable risk assessments have been completed to ensure that pupils' safety is considered when using the outdoor space. PE activities are regularly timetabled in accordance with the school's curriculum requirements. The proprietor body has made arrangements for pupils to access PE sessions at local fitness and athletics centres. The inspector saw evidence to confirm that the venue has been booked for regular use by the school. Leaders will have risk assessments in place to ensure pupils' safety when travelling to and from and using this site.
- All the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(k), 32(2)–32(2)(d), 32(3)–32(3)(g)

- The proprietor body intends to set up a school website that will contain all the required information. The proprietor body is fully aware of the information that a school should publish on its website.
- In the meantime, there is a suitable range of information available for prospective parents, carers and pupils, including a school prospectus. A comprehensive range of policies for parents is in place, including information on admissions, behaviour, the curriculum and safeguarding. All these documents will be made available for parents

on request from the school office, as well as being available on the school's website when it has been set up.

- Leaders intend to provide termly and annual reports on pupils' progress and attainment to parents. Reports will be detailed and provide a holistic picture of a pupil's progress. They will also report on a pupil's personal development. Leaders are aware that any inspection reports and examination results need to be made available once released.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–33(k)

- The complaints policy is appropriate. It outlines all the required stages. It includes appropriate timescales and information about the storage and sharing of written records. The policy is detailed, and it ensures that the school's intended complaint procedures are transparent.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The proprietor body has an appropriate understanding of the standards. The proprietor body has plans in place to monitor compliance with the standards regularly.
- Leaders demonstrate the knowledge required to set up and run this independent school successfully. They have experience of, and a commitment to, providing an effective quality of education for pupils. They are likely to fulfil their responsibilities to promote the well-being of pupils.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's accessibility plan fully reflects statutory requirements.

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	149952
DfE registration number	888/6132
Inspection number	10298898

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
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Grow Schools Limited
Chair	Sarah Hawthorne
Headteacher	Sarah Hawthorne
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,000 to £48,000
Telephone number	01282 541 949
Website	None
Email address	pendle@growtuition.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	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	12	12

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	12
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	Not known
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	12
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Not known
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Not known

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	4
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	3

Information about this proposed school

- This proposed independent school is in Barrowford, Lancashire. It is housed in an old mill that has been converted into several industrial units. The proposed school will be in one of these units and will be located at Lower Clough Business Centre, Pendle Street, Barrowford, Lancashire BB9 8PH.
- It is proposed that the school will provide full-time education for up to 12 mixed-gender pupils aged between 11 and 16 years. Leaders anticipate that all pupils will have SEND. Some pupils may have an education, health and care plan. The majority of pupils will have social and emotional needs. Additionally, some pupils may have specific learning needs, autism or other neurodiverse conditions.
- It is intended that the proposed school will cater for pupils who are struggling to cope with mainstream education by providing them with a smaller, nurturing environment. Leaders aim to engage pupils in personalised educational and vocational pathways, ultimately with the intention that pupils will successfully gain future college places or employment. Referrals will be taken from Lancashire County Council and other neighbouring local authorities.
- The proprietor body has a limited company called Grow Schools Limited. The proprietor body is made up of two directors, one of which will be the headteacher. The proprietor body has already appointed governors, including a chair of governors.
- The chair of the proprietor body already runs a tutoring service called Grow Tuition from the same address as the proposed school. This has been set up as a separate company under the name Grow School Support Limited. Pupils attend for no longer than one or two hours of tuition a week. It is intended that if the proposed school opens, pupils attending the tuition service will only attend after the proposed school's working hours.
- The proprietor body does not intend to use any 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 independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the request to register this school.
- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with the chair of the proprietor body who was also the headteacher and DSL. She also spoke to the chair of governors and a teacher who had contributed to developing the proposed school's curriculum.
- The inspector had a tour of the school to check the suitability of the proposed premises against the relevant standards. She looked at a wide range of documents and policies, including those relating to the curriculum, behaviour and health and safety. She also checked documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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