

The Derwen School

Whittington Road, Gobowen, Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 3NA

Inspection date

18 December 2018

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

Paragraphs 1, 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)(c), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j) and 4

- Leaders have ensured that a written curriculum policy, schemes of work and associated planning are in place. Themes such as 'the world around us' and 'scientific learning' are likely to provide pupils with a wide range of experiences in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education. The schemes have regard for the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. There are two main overarching schemes of work demonstrating progression in learning activities. One is for pupils up to age 14, and the other is for pupils aged 14 to 18 years.
- Schemes of work also support the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening skills. Schemes are well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils, who are likely to have an education, health and care plan due to their learning difficulties. The differentiated outcomes match the likely range of abilities of the pupils, from 'encountering' an activity through to active involvement and the application of knowledge and skills. Leaders have ensured that additional schemes of work are available to enable the most able pupils to achieve higher standards.
- All pupils will have the opportunity to gain relevant accreditation appropriate to their needs and abilities, from pre-entry level through to level two qualifications, including functional skills qualifications. Through the school's well-planned impartial careers advice and guidance offer, pupils will be able to gain a level 1 certificate in employability skills. Leaders have already begun forging links with the local specialist college of further education. Their collaboration is likely to broaden the learning opportunities on offer and prepare older students for transition into the wider community.
- The school's personal, social, health and economic education scheme of work promotes pupils' physical and emotional development and their mental well-being effectively. Pupils will be supported to develop their understanding of citizenship and

environmental issues that will affect them. Other learning activities focus on helping pupils gain appropriate knowledge and an understanding of life skills, including financial planning, travel training and how to develop the effective use of recreational and leisure time. There is a clear sense that leaders intend to promote and develop pupils' skills to enable them to live as independent a life as possible.

- Leaders are clear about how they will ensure high standards of teaching and learning in the school. They have already planned a cycle of learning walks, lesson observations and book trawls. Leaders have devised a classroom observation proforma to ensure that they apply consistent expectations and standards when carrying out lesson observations.
- Leaders have given thought to the school timetable and the way that activities are structured according to the pupils' abilities. Some lessons are relatively short, enabling pupils to focus on their learning and maintain their attention. The timetable provides pupils with a full-time broad offer of learning experiences.
- Policies set out clearly the additional support that some pupils may need. This is likely to be sourced from external agencies, such as for speech and language or occupational therapy. Also, leaders plan to provide some individual tuition or small-group support to provide pupils with the extra help they may need.
- Leaders have devised a suitable framework for assessment based on their schemes of work. They have also devised an initial baseline assessment process to be used with new pupils on entry to the school. Leaders are able to articulate clearly how the framework for assessment will be used to check that pupils are making progress. Termly progress monitoring meetings have already been planned.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 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), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii) and 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders have carefully identified activities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within the schemes of work. They have also ensured that the schemes provide frequent opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of British values, in an appropriate and meaningful way for the pupils.
- The school's curriculum policy has full regard for the Equality Act 2010 and the associated duties. There is a clear statement that British values will be respected, as well as other faiths and beliefs. Leaders have emphasised that their curriculum is 'non-partisan'. They make clear their expectations that staff will maintain a non-partisan approach in all aspects of their work.
- The schools' behaviour policy explains the school's planned use of rewards and sanctions. There is a strong emphasis on avoiding the use of sanctions whenever possible. Instead staff will help pupils to learn from their mistakes through reflection time. Leaders aim to help pupils learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 6, 7, 7(a), 7(b), 8, 8(a), 8(b), 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- The school's safeguarding policy is fit for purpose and reflects the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State. It is published on the school's website. The principal is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and is supported by a deputy DSL. An additional member of staff is due to be trained as a deputy DSL in the spring term.
- The safeguarding policy details steps that staff should take if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. The staff who have already been appointed to the school have completed a range of safeguarding training as part of their induction to the school. As well as level 1 training, they have completed additional modules on the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation and wider health and safety training. In addition, the school's code of conduct sets out clearly the expectations that the proprietor has for staff behaviour. A whistleblowing policy, also on the school's website, provides another route for staff to raise any concerns they may have about the school.
- Fire risk assessments have been carried out on the premises and, on the day of the inspection, an annual risk assessment was taking place. Health and safety records are up to date and evidence frequent checks on fire safety equipment, alarms and emergency lighting.
- The school's risk assessment policy is suitable and explains the importance of assessing risks for pupils and taking steps to reduce those risks. Leaders have completed a range of environmental risk assessments. They know that additional risk assessments, personalised to pupils' needs, will need to be completed once more information about these new pupils has been received.
- The proprietor has already appointed seven members of staff to the school, and further recruitment is taking place to ensure appropriate supervision for pupils. The school recently held a series of open days for recruitment purposes.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 17, 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(2)(f), 18(3), 18(4), 18(4)(a), 18(4)(b), 18(4)(c), 19(1), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 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(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b) and 21(8)

- The proprietor has ensured that suitable pre-employment checks, including medical fitness checks, have been carried out on new staff, prior to their appointment to the school. Checks have also been made on the proprietor's suitability. All pre-employment checks are recorded accurately on the school's single central record. Leaders do not plan to employ supply staff.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 23(2), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 24(2), 24(3), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 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), 29(2), 30, 31, 31(a), 31(b) and 31(c)

- The school site, previously used by the local specialist college of further education, is safe and secure. The school consists of two single-storey buildings, both of which are well maintained. Leaders have organised suitable learning spaces for pupils, including an art room and a room for small-group work. Displays around the well-lit, well-presented school complement the welcoming environment for pupils. Some displays incorporate additional symbols, designed to support the development of pupils' communication and language skills. The value leaders place on listening to the voice of the pupil is reflected in the displays around the school.
- The proprietor and leaders have put careful thought into the best use of the facilities. Class bases are fully accessible, as are the toilet, shower and first aid facilities. Leaders plan to make good use of the large dining area in one building at other times of day, for activities such as assemblies, music and drama.
- There is sufficient outdoor space for pupils' recreation. Leaders have negotiated the use of the local college's sports field and swimming pool to enable pupils to participate in physical education activities.
- Clearly labelled drinking water is available to pupils in the shared kitchen area. Leaders plan to supply additional jugs of water to each class base.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(e), 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)(i), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 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), 32(4), 32(4)(a), 32(4)(b), 32(4)(c) and 32(5)

- Leaders have ensured that all the required information is available to parents and carers. They have recently launched their new website and are in the process of ensuring that information has been uploaded. Some links to policies are not yet working but leaders have paper copies of these policies readily available in the interim.
- The school's admissions policy sets out admission arrangements for pupils and the importance of liaising with likely referring local authorities. Leaders stress the importance of liaising with other external agencies that have provided support to pupils in the past prior to admission, to ensure that they have accurate information about each pupil.
- Leaders have already created a template for a termly report to parents, so that parents can be kept well informed about their children's progress.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 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) and 33(k)

- The school's complaints policy and procedures are fully compliant with the independent school standards. The policy sets out each stage for the management of a complaint. The school also offers to provide an independent advocate to support the complainant, should they require one.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- Both the proprietor and the principal have good experience and understanding of education and care. They both have high expectations for the proposed new school. The school development plan sets out clearly the priorities for improving the school over the next year. Leaders have ensured that the proposed curriculum is suited to the needs of the pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and schemes of work and their associated activities are likely to promote further pupils' well-being.
- Since his appointment in August 2018, the principal has worked at pace to ensure that the school is appropriately staffed and resourced, in anticipation of its proposed opening. The proprietor and the principal have ensured that staff who have been appointed to the school have the relevant experience and qualifications for their roles. Leaders plan to recruit additional members of staff to the school, should it be approved for registration by the Department for Education.
- Leaders have purchased a range of resources and are awaiting delivery of others, including a range of information technology equipment.
- Leaders are developing links with the local specialist college of further education and staff from the school and the college have begun to participate in joint training events. Further training for staff, including sign language training, is planned for the spring term.
- The proprietor and the principal have a good knowledge of the independent school standards and have ensured that they are likely to be met.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have an accessibility plan for the school which reflects the further adjustments that they plan to make. The proprietor and the principal are fully cognisant of the requirements of part three of schedule 10 of the Equality Act and have applied these to the school's policies and proposed practice.

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	146522
DfE registration number	893/6037
Inspection number	10085986

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
School status	Independent special day school
Proprietor	Bryn Melyn Care Ltd
Principal	David Glaves
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,300
Telephone number	01952 504715
Website	www.thederwenschool.org
Email address	education.derwen@brynmelyncare.com
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	10-18	11-18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	40	36

Reason for inspector's recommendations

The proprietor and headteacher reviewed their original proposal during the inspection and clarified with the inspector that they intend to offer educational provision for pupils from key stage 3 onwards. As a result, they requested a change to the age range. They also requested a reduction in the number of pupils, from 40 to 36.

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	36
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	36
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	36
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	36

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	6	12
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2	12

Information about this proposed school

- The school is situated in a village in the north of Shropshire. The school is managed by the Bryn Melyn Care Group. The two school buildings previously belonged to the adjacent specialist college of further education. The premises consist of several class bases and group rooms, a multi-purpose dining area, art room, first-aid room, kitchen and office/administration area. Leaders have negotiated the use of the college's sports field and swimming pool for their pupils.
- The proposed school intends to offer up to 36 places for pupils aged 11-18 years, with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and specifically moderate to severe learning difficulties. These pupils are likely to have an education, health and care plan.
- It is proposed that local authorities will place pupils at the school.
- The school does not have a religious character.

Information about this inspection

- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection, carried out at the request of the Department for Education under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The inspector met with the proprietor and the headteacher to discuss their application for registration. The inspector conducted a tour of the premises and the outdoor space, accompanied by the proprietor. The inspector met with the assistant principal to discuss the school's proposed curriculum and framework for assessment.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school, including policies, schemes of work and teachers' planning. She also looked at the school's website. She considered health and safety and safeguarding information. The school's single central record was also checked.

Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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