

ALP Sittingbourne

60 Bell Road, Sittingbourne ME10 4HE

Inspection date

18 July 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

Paragraphs 1–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h)–2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d)–2A(2), 3–4

- Leaders have detailed and comprehensive plans for the education they intend the school to deliver. Most of the school's pupils are likely to have had an unsettled time in education, including periods of time out of schooling. The curriculum is designed to re-engage pupils with education.
- The curriculum policy illustrates leaders' aspirations for pupils. The overarching aim is to help pupils to become 'positive, responsible people who can work and cooperate with others while developing the knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to lead fulfilling lives'. The curriculum gives equal attention to personal development and academic success.
- The school intends to teach a suitably broad range of subjects, supplemented by a suite of enrichment activities. The academic curriculum focuses on supporting the development of academic skills in subjects including English, mathematics, science and computing.
- The vocational curriculum includes courses in subjects such as cookery and food preparation, horticulture, forest school activities and animal care. Courses will prepare pupils for nationally accredited qualifications, including functional skills, with the option of completing IGCSEs where appropriate.
- The curriculum includes carefully considered plans for the teaching of reading. Leaders aim to assess pupils' reading skills when they join the school. They intend to provide a reading programme which is tailored to pupils' needs.
- The school intends to follow a commercially produced personal, social and health education programme. The programme covers a suitable range of subjects, including statutory relationships and sex education. Pupils will access the programme at different points according to their age, needs and stage of development.
- Leaders have suitable plans in place to provide impartial careers guidance. They intend to arrange work placements and college visits as part of the careers

programme. Guest speakers will be used to provide insights about a range of jobs and careers.

- Leaders have given careful consideration to support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders intend to use pupils' educational health and care (EHC) plans, supplemented by discussions with parents and pupils, as a starting point for understanding pupils' needs. It is anticipated that all pupils will have an EHC plan. Leaders plan to use assessments to adapt the school's curriculum according to pupils' needs. A range of interventions will be used to support pupils' progress, such as animal therapy, speech and language therapy, and emotional and social skills interventions.
- The headteacher has suitable experience of SEND education. She has relevant subject knowledge in a range of curriculum areas, including specialist subject knowledge in the teaching of reading, as well as relevant leadership experience.
- The proposed school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- Leaders intend to give pupils' personal development a high priority. The curriculum is designed to support the development of pupils' personal awareness and responsibility. They will be encouraged and expected to behave well and to respect others.
- Leaders will promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the planned curriculum. Trips and enrichment days will be used to supplement the taught curriculum with a wide range of experiences. Events such as world space week, disability awareness day, UK Parliament week, and Guru Nanak's birthday are planned into the school's calendar. Leaders intend to use 'good morning' sessions and assemblies for pupils to consider and discuss a range of topics and themes.
- The school aims to develop 'five principles of positive behaviour and action': 'We look after ourselves; we look after each other; we look after our learning; we look after our school, community and world; we look after our futures'. Pupils will learn how to work with others, celebrate achievement and diversity, and develop an understanding of different beliefs. Subject policies reflect leaders' commitment to promote fundamental British values consistently across the curriculum.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part of the standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 6–7(b), 9–16(b)

- Leaders have developed rigorous safeguarding procedures. The proprietor intends to commission a regular external review of safeguarding arrangements, including online safety. Safeguarding will be a routine agenda item for staff meetings.
- All those involved in staff recruitment, including the managing director, head of schools and chair of the executive board, have completed safe recruitment training. The single central record is set up and complies with statutory requirements fully.

- The proprietor intends to use training to ensure that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and about how to report any concerns. A secure computerised system will be used to record and monitor observations or incidents. All staff will be trained in its use. The executive board will review safeguarding referrals regularly.
- The head of schools and headteacher will be designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy designated safeguarding lead. They intend to meet regularly to discuss safeguarding matters. The DSL has completed suitable training. The recently appointed headteacher is scheduled to complete safeguarding training in the next few weeks as part of the school's induction programme.
- The curriculum will include a strong focus on teaching pupils personal safety, including how to keep safe when using the internet. Leaders intend to use personal development lessons, assemblies and special events, such as online safety day, to enhance pupils' awareness of personal safety.
- The school's safeguarding policy provides comprehensive information and guidance. It includes clear procedures about what to do if a concern arises. The policy complies with statutory requirements and is published on the school's website. Leaders have also created a child-friendly version of this policy, along with a range of other policies, to support pupils' understanding and awareness. These policies are also available on the school's website.
- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are suitable. Leaders' aspirations to deliver high-quality education are reflected in the behaviour policy's aims: 'Pupils who are motivated, engaged and interested are more likely to manage their behaviour well'. Staff will be trained to understand the underlying causes of misbehaviour and some of the strategies they can use to intervene at an early stage.
- The school emphasises helping pupils to recognise and manage their own behaviour. Rewards and recognition of success are important features of the school's approach to behaviour management. Leaders intend to develop strong links with parents to support pupils personal development. Some pupils have individual behaviour plans to support their particular needs.
- Admissions and attendance registers will be maintained in accordance with paragraph 15 of the independent school standards. Leaders expect pupils to attend regularly and will monitor attendance closely.
- Leaders have appropriate plans in place for supervision of pupils. The school is located in a large modern building. All entrances to the school are secure. Internal areas are also secured appropriately.
- The school's health and safety and risk assessment policies are suitable. They comply with relevant statutory requirements. The headteacher will be responsible for the school site on a daily basis. The proprietor will commission external specialist input where appropriate, such as electrical checks.
- The proprietor has ensured appropriate attention has been given to fire safety. A detailed external fire safety audit has been completed. Induction training for new staff includes fire safety and fire warden training. Fire extinguishers have been checked and serviced properly. They are positioned in key locations throughout the building. Fire signage provides clear indication of procedures and exits.

- The school's first aid policy and procedures are fit for purpose. Staff will complete first aid training as part of the induction programme.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements of this part of the standards.

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

Paragraphs 17–18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3)(b), 21(6)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders are knowledgeable about requirements for completion of suitability checks on staff and those responsible for governance. Leaders demonstrate understanding of the requirements of Part 4.
- The single central record complied fully with statutory requirements at the time of the inspection.
- The school is likely to meet the requirements in this part of the standards.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- The proposed school will be located in a modern building which has been refurbished throughout. It shares the school site with a privately-run nursery school. The school has its own secure entrance.
- Classrooms and teaching spaces are newly refurbished to a high standard. They are light, airy and well ventilated. The school is suitably equipped, including interactive boards in the classrooms and hall. The number and size of rooms ready for use is suitable for the number of pupils leaders intend to admit in the first instance.
- Leaders have refurbished the main kitchen to ensure that it can be used to teach pupils cookery and food skills.
- Toilet and shower facilities are appropriate. Leaders intend pupils to have their own drinking bottles. Drinking water is also readily available from the school's kitchens.
- The medical room is suitable for purpose. It includes handwashing facilities with a toilet nearby.
- The school has a large hall which will be used for a range of activities, including physical education (PE). Leaders intend to use local leisure centres to deliver elements of the school's PE curriculum, as well as providing additional sports activities. The school also has two small outdoor courtyard areas.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–2(1)(d), 32(1)(f)–32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii)–32(5)

- Leaders are clear about the range of information they are required to make available to pupils and parents to ensure compliance with the independent school standards. The website is easy to navigate and already provides a wide range of information, including policies and procedures.
- Leaders have suitable procedures in place to report pupils' progress and attainment to parents, including annual reviews of pupils' EHC plans. The headteacher has completed the national award for SEND coordinators.

- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33–33(k)

- The school's complaints policy complies with statutory requirements and is published on the school's website.
- The complaints policy gives clear timescales for the management and consideration of any complaint. It includes the opportunity to consider any complaints informally in the first instance.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(2)

- Leaders have extensive relevant experience in teaching, leadership and governance. This includes experience of leadership in maintained and independent special schools. Procedures for recruiting staff were at an advanced stage at the time of the inspection.
- Members of the executive board represent a wide range of skills and expertise. Leaders are in the process of recruiting a local management board.
- Leaders are likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have an equality policy and a helpful accessibility plan that meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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	149202
DfE registration number	886/6175
Inspection number	10242917

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	ALP Schools Ltd
Chair	Gemma Gosden
Headteacher	Jenny Thomason
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,408–£71,876
Telephone number	020 3137 3631
Website	alpsittingbourne.co.uk
Email address	richard.johnson@alpschools.org
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	7 to 19	7 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	21
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- ALP Sittingbourne intends to cater for up to 40 mixed gender pupils between the ages of 7 and 19.
- It is expected that pupils will have an EHC plan for social, emotional and mental health difficulties or associated needs. All pupils will be placed in the school by local authorities.
- The proposed school will have a proprietor body. The school will also have a local management group. The chair of the proprietor body is also the chair of the local management group.
- The proposed school will occupy a refurbished modern building in Sittingbourne.
- The proprietor operates four registered independent schools: ALP Leicester; ALP Nuneaton; Park View Academy; and Pierview Academy.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to an application from the proprietor body to open a school.
- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school. The purpose of the inspection was to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014. Schools must comply with the independent school standards to be registered.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the independent school standards, as well as safeguarding procedures and Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, managing director, head of schools, chair of the proprietor body and the finance director. The inspector discussed the school's aims and ambitions for the proposed school and scrutinised a wide range of documentation.
- The inspector toured the main school building and the outside space and facilities.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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