

Sutherland House School Braithwell

The Old Rectory, Holywell Lane, Braithwell, Rotherham S66 7AF

Inspection date

21 May 2025

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely 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)(f), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The proposed school has a curriculum policy in place. The curriculum will have two pathways based on pupils' needs. Curriculum plans are in place for all subjects the proposed school intends to offer. These plans will be adapted to meet the targets in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- There are a wide range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, computing, art, music, physical education (PE), geography and history. Accredited qualifications will include functional skills, unit awards and GCSE qualifications. Sixth-form students will study a range of courses based on their needs. These will include preparation for adulthood, independent living skills, work experience and the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- The early years curriculum is likely to meet the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The school has an approved phonics programme in place and a range of books to support pupils in the early stages of reading. All staff will be trained to teach phonics. Guidance for staff includes the foundational knowledge pupils need to develop effective writing skills.

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

- The proposed school has a personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) policy in place. This is available on the proposed school's website. Parents will be consulted on the proposed school's PSHCE curriculum. The proposed school's PSHCE curriculum is likely to meet statutory guidance.

- The proposed school's therapy team will be involved in the proposed school's PSHCE programme to help ensure that it is implemented appropriately according to pupils' individual needs.
- The proposed school has plans in place to ensure that pupils receive accurate and up-to-date careers advice and guidance. A careers leader from the other school in the organisation, Autism East Midlands, will be shared across the two schools. The proposed school intends to check careers provision against the Gatsby benchmarks. There will be an annual careers event. Pupils of secondary age will participate in work experience.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a) to 3(j) and 4

- The proposed school has a range of resources in place to support learning. Not all of the teaching resources were in school at the time of this inspection. However, the school was able to provide evidence of resources that have been ordered and purchased. More classroom resources will be purchased, including tables and chairs for some classrooms, when the specific needs of pupils are known.
- Leaders intend to appoint staff who have qualified teacher status. Staff will be appointed who have expertise in the subjects that they will teach. New staff will be supported by teachers from the other school in the organisation. All staff will complete a two-week induction programme before joining the school. This will include training in communication and language, autism awareness, equality and diversity, and cognition.
- The proposed school has an assessment policy in place. This outlines how staff will assess pupils' work and progress through the curriculum.
- The proposed school's curriculum intends to support pupils' personal and emotional learning, in addition to their academic learning linked to the targets in pupils' EHC plans.
- The proposed school intends to monitor the implementation of the curriculum. Systems and procedures are in place, including checks from the organisation's director of children's services and those responsible for governance.
- The independent school standards ('the standards') in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 5, 5(a), 5(b) to 5(b)(viii), 5(c), 5(d)(i) to 5(d)(iii)

- The proposed school intends to actively promote the fundamental British values. These values are evident in the proposed school's policies and curriculum plans. The proposed school intends to teach British values throughout the curriculum and within weekly assemblies. The proposed school has developed a calendar of assemblies including celebrations of religious festivals, anti-bullying week and online safety week.
- The proposed school intends to ensure that the curriculum does not discriminate against pupils, contrary to part 6 of the Education Act 2010.
- Pupils will have a voice through the student council. The proposed school's speech and language specialist will be involved to ensure that pupils who are non-verbal are fully included and their voices are heard. There will be 'suggestion boxes' throughout the school to gather pupils' views.

- The proposed school has plans in place for pupils to learn about the public institutions and services in England. Leaders have already made links with the parish council and the fire service.
- The proposed school intends to ensure that pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. This will include visits to places of worship.
- Checks will be made on visiting speakers to ensure that they present a balanced point of view. There are procedures in place to check the content of any visiting speakers' presentations.
- The proposed school has plans in place to enable pupils to contribute to the local community, such as organising 'strawberry teas' for the village. Pupils will also be involved in raising funds for charity.
- Pupils will be taught about the protected characteristics in PSHCE lessons.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The proposed school has a safeguarding policy which meets current statutory guidance from the Secretary of State. This policy is available on the proposed school's website.
- The headteacher will be the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL has undertaken DSL training. During the inspection, the DSL organised enhanced 'Prevent' duty training. This will be completed before the proposed school opens. The deputy headteacher, when appointed, will also complete DSL training.
- The proposed school will have internet filtering in place before opening. This system will immediately alert leaders to any pupils or staff who attempt to access inappropriate online material.
- The proposed school understands the local safeguarding risks. Staff will receive training on safeguarding risks such as radicalisation and extremism.
- Staff will complete safeguarding training during the proposed school's two-week induction programme. This will include training in first aid, online safety, fire safety, health and safety, medication and food hygiene. The DSL intends to include weekly safeguarding updates for staff.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a) to (c)

- The proposed school has a behaviour policy and exclusion policy in place. These policies are available on the school's website.
- The proposed school has a system in place to log behaviour incidents.
- The proposed school's policy refers to the use of chemical restraint. During the inspection, the policy did not specify the protocols, procedures, guidance and training for staff on the use of chemical restraint. The proprietor had not considered fully the appropriateness of the use of chemical restraint in a school setting.
- These standards are unlikely to be met.

Paragraph 10

- The proposed school has an anti-bullying policy. This is available on the website. There are systems in place to log any bullying incidents.
- This standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The proposed school has a health and safety policy in place.
- When the proprietor purchased the building, a fire risk assessment was carried out by an external company. The proprietor has addressed the recommendations from this risk assessment. This includes the installation of new fire doors, emergency lighting, a fire alarm system, a smoke detector system and carbon monoxide monitors.
- All staff, as part of the induction programme, will be trained in fire safety. All staff will receive fire marshal training.
- There is a fire assembly point and fire evacuation signage around the school. Procedures are in place to ensure that weekly checks of, for example, fire equipment take place. Personal emergency evacuation plans will be implemented if necessary.
- The proposed school has a first-aid policy in place. All staff will receive first-aid training as part of their induction. There are suitable recording systems to record accidents and the administration of first aid. There are first-aid kits in each classroom, including the early years classroom.
- Pupils will always be supervised during breaktimes and lunchtimes. In lessons, staff will work one-to-one with pupils or with a small group of pupils. The proposed school has an education visits policy in place to ensure pupils are supervised appropriately on school trips. Pupils who participate in work experience will be accompanied by a member of staff from the proposed school.
- The proposed school has a risk assessment policy in place. There are a range of appropriate risk assessments. For instance, there are risk assessments for the school site, the use of school transport and swimming.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraph 15

- The school will use a management information system to record all statutory admissions information. The template for the admissions register meets statutory requirements.
- The proposed school has an attendance policy in place. The attendance register will be electronic. Attendance registers will be taken twice each day. The proposed school will use the attendance and absence codes as set out in the statutory guidance.
- This standard is likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6)(a) to 20(6)(a)(ii), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a) to 21(3)(b), 21(6), 21(7) to 21(7)(b)

- There is an electronic single central record in place.

- The only member of staff appointed at the time of the inspection was the headteacher. A statutory check had not been carried out on the headteacher. This was completed during the inspection. The proposed school understands the checks that need to be carried out before any further staff are appointed. Staff will not take up their posts until all checks are completed. The headteacher has completed safer recruitment training and will be supported by the organisation in appointing staff.
- Some staff will be shared between the proposed school and the other school that is part of the organisation. These staff were added to the proposed school's single central record during the inspection.
- Staff from the organisation's central team, who will also work in the proposed school, are included on the proposed school's single central record.
- Right to work checks for members of the board of proprietors were missing from the single central record. These checks were added to the proposed school's single central record during the inspection.
- The proposed school does not intend to use any supply staff. However, the proposed school is aware of the necessary checks that will be required if supply staff are used.
- The proposed school will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out before pupils attend work experience placements.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 20(6), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i) to 20(6)(b)(iii), 21(1) and 21(6)

- An overseas check on a proprietor had not been completed at the time of the inspection.
- The standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a) to 23(1)(c), 23(2)

- The proposed school has separate toilets for boys and girls. There are separate toilets for sixth-form students. There is an accessible toilet for staff and pupils.
- The toilets have been refurbished to a high standard. There are some fixtures and fittings that need to be installed in some of the toilets. The proposed school has a contract in place for the remaining fixtures and fittings to be installed before the proposed school opens.
- The proposed school does not have suitable changing accommodation and showers for PE for pupils aged 11 years or over.
- These standards are unlikely to be met.

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

- The proposed school has a medical room with a bed, a toilet, a sink and a locked fridge and cabinet for the storage of medication.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraph 25

- The building has been refurbished and decorated to a high standard.

- The premises are secured by perimeter fencing.
- There are systems and procedures in place to check that the building continues to be maintained well.
- This standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a) to 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- There are suitable acoustics and lighting in each classroom.
- The proposed school also has a sensory room.
- There is external lighting to ensure safe entry and exit from the premises.
- The proposed school has suitable drinking water facilities. There is a water fountain in the dining room. Drinking water is clearly marked.
- There is an adequate supply of hot and cold water in the toilets. The proposed school has systems in place to check that the temperature of hot water does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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

- The proposed school has a suitable outside space for PE lessons and for pupils to play outside. This includes a den, green space and a garden area for pupils to grow vegetables.
- 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)(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)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f)

- The proposed school has a website. This contains the information and policies that the proposed school is required to publish.
- The proposed school will provide an annual written report to parents and carers. This will include progress and attainment information for all subjects.
- The proposed school intends to publish on its website details of the proposed school's academic performance, including the results of public examinations.
- Staff from the proposed school will attend and provide information for pupils' annual EHC plan reviews.
- The proposed school understands that an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect to a pupil funded by the local authority will need to be provided to the local authority.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a) to 33(k)

- The proposed school's complaints policy fulfils the requirements of this part. The policy is in writing and is available on the proposed school's website. The policy allows

for a complaint to be considered on an informal basis before a formal complaint is made. A written record will be kept of all complaints.

- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- There is another non-maintained special school in the organisation. Therefore, the proprietor, Autism East Midlands, has experience of providing education for pupils with autism.
- The director of children's services and the headteacher have experience of school leadership. This includes experience in schools with children in the early years and sixth-form students. The proprietor has many years of experience of providing support and a range of services for adults and young people with autism, and their families. However, at the time of the inspection, leaders did not have a secure enough understanding of all of the independent school standards to demonstrate that all of the standards are likely to be met.

Paragraph 34(1)(c)

- The proposed school intends to actively promote pupils' well-being. This will include a timetabled lesson of PE three times each week and opportunities for outdoor learning. Pupils will be taught about mental health, well-being and healthy relationships. The proposed school intends to provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local community.
- Some of the standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has a suitable accessibility plan in place. This meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- This requirement is likely to be met.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- The proposed school's curriculum is likely to meet the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage. The early years curriculum will be personalised based on the targets from children's EHC plans. The curriculum in the early years will also include therapeutic support. The proposed school intends to appoint a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist to support pupils, including in the early years.
- There will be no more than six pupils in the early years classroom to meet the indoor space requirements. There is an outdoor space, secured by a fence, which is exclusively for children in the early years.
- All toilets, with the exception of toilets solely for the use of sixth-form students, have a step to enable children to reach the sinks.
- The proposed school has an intimate care policy in place.
- The proposed school will ensure that children are adequately supervised when eating and are in sight and hearing of a member of staff.

- All staff will complete infection prevention control, food hygiene and nutrition and hydration training as part of the proposed school's induction programme.
- The headteacher, and another member of staff when appointed, will complete paediatric first-aid training to ensure that there is always a member of staff on site who has paediatric first-aid qualifications. During the inspection, the headteacher organised to attend paediatric first-aid training before the proposed school opens.
- The proposed school has public liability insurance. This will need to be renewed before the proposed school opens.
- The statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage are likely to be met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	151340
DfE registration number	371/6018
Inspection number	10373158

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	Autism East Midlands
Chair	Robert Woodford
Headteacher	Gill Fotheringham
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,792
Telephone number	07880 382 755
Website	www.shsbraithwell.org.uk
Email address	ann.stewart@aem.org.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	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

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	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	14

Information about this proposed school

- This proposed school is located in Braithwell. The proposed school is located at The Old Rectory, Holywell Lane, Braithwell, Rotherham S66 7AF.
- The purposed school was a former rectory. The building has undergone extensive work for use as a school building.
- The proposed school will be an independent school for pupils with autism. All pupils with have an EHC plan. Places will be commissioned by the local authority where a pupil lives.
- The proposed school will provide education for pupils from the ages of 3 to 19.
- The proposed school is part of Autism East Midlands.
- Autism East Midlands runs one other school in Nottingham.
- The chair of the board of proprietors at the time of the inspection differed from the chair of the board of proprietors named on the school's application form.
- The chair of governors is a member of the board of proprietors.
- The proprietor has appointed a headteacher.
- The proposed school does not intend to use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the standards should the DfE decide to register the proposed school. The inspection was conducted with two days' notice.
- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector met with the proposed school's headteacher, the director of children's services for Autism East Midlands, the chief executive officer of Autism East Midlands and a trustee. The inspector also held a virtual meeting with the chair of the board of proprietors.
- A range of documentation and policies relevant to the independent school standards were reviewed.
- The inspector toured the proposed school's site to check if the school is likely to meet the independent school standards related to premises and accommodation.

Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively;

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

- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if-
 - 20(6)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the Chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB-
 - 20(6)(b)(iii) where, by reason of MB's living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish MB's suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Chair of the school considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation each member ("MB") of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;

- 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently;

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