

The Fitzroy Academy

Cruckton, Shrewsbury SY5 8PR

Inspection date

12 January 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 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)(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), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j) and 4

- The proposed school will operate within the New Reflexions Group. The education team in the group is well established and already operates other independent schools for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- All pupils that join the proposed school will have SEND. The school's curriculum is based largely on the national curriculum. Leaders have devised schemes of work that take account of prospective pupils' needs. They are aware that further curriculum adaptations may be required subject to pupils' starting points. Staff have extensive experience in supporting pupils with SEND. They have used their experience to consider relevant and appropriate content and how schemes of work will be taught.
- Schemes of work are detailed and encompass a wide range of subject areas. For example, the mathematics scheme details programmes of study for pupils at primary and secondary stages of learning. Plans specifically emphasise the importance of pupils gaining fluency in fundamental skills. Leaders have set out the essential knowledge that they expect pupils to secure at each stage. The curriculum also extends to sixth-form study. A-level and other qualification routes are in place for older learners.
- The level of detail exemplified in mathematics plans is evident in other areas of the curriculum. Leaders have given much thought to what content will be taught and why. History schemes of work are focused on enquiry questions. These carefully selected questions are likely to provide learning with a clear focus.
- Leaders have made use of established schemes of work from their sister schools in the wider Reflexions group. They have also joined subject associations to support staff with areas of non-specialism.
- The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme takes account of government guidance. The high-level aims from government guidance have been

broken down into smaller chunks and sequences of learning. Leaders have also devised a PSHE policy which explains how they will consult with parents as pupils are inducted into the school. The policy also takes account of potential requests from parents for pupils not to be taught specific aspects of the programme.

- The school intends to appoint an external careers specialist. A careers guidance policy has been written which sets out the national benchmarking tools and resources that leaders will use to help audit provision. Given the potential needs of prospective pupils, leaders have devised programmes to help pupils prepare for adulthood. These programmes include bespoke plans that target specific skills and knowledge that will help pupils to fully consider career prospects and promote independence.
- Leaders have recruited several staff with specialisms. These specialisms include post-graduate qualifications in special educational needs and environmental science.
- The school's education base is very well equipped. Pupils will have access to a science laboratory, drama room, computing suite and further bespoke spaces for the arts and design and technology. The resources and equipment that have been purchased are of a high quality and are matched to the programmes of study.
- The school intends to adopt an assessment system that tracks the curriculum in detail. Leaders anticipate that some pupils are likely to have been out of education for some time and may have significant gaps in their learning. The assessment system therefore focuses on baseline assessing pupils when they arrive. Initial assessments will then be used to make adaptations to the curriculum that pupils receive.
- 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), 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)

- The school has undertaken an audit of the curriculum and its wider provision to consider how it will promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The curriculum, principally through the teaching of PSHE, is likely to ensure that pupils develop their self-esteem and self-confidence. For example, leaders propose that younger pupils will learn about personal strengths and setting goals. Older pupils will learn strategies to manage pressure and peer approval.
- Leaders have also devised a recovery plan to support pupils with the challenges presented by COVID-19. The plan is aimed at supporting pupils' well-being following any bereavement and the significant disruption to their lives. Leaders intend to assess pupils' needs and support families who need specific help. The school plans to undertake well-being questionnaires throughout the school year to ensure that pupils are making progress in light of the impact of the pandemic.
- Leaders have devised a list of events and celebrations that will be explored with pupils throughout the academic year. These are likely to include holocaust memorial day, mental health awareness week and supporting charities such as the Red Cross.

- The school has interwoven the teaching of the protected characteristics into the curriculum. Pupils will be taught the importance of challenging stereotypes and will develop an understanding of specific issues that affect certain groups of people.
- Leaders have also taken account of how the curriculum will promote fundamental British values. Leaders intend to establish a school council to help teach principles of democracy. Aspects of individual liberty and tolerance will be taught directly through the PSHE curriculum. For example, pupils will be taught about what contributes to who we are, rights and responsibilities, and friendships and diversity, including tackling prejudice.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(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 appropriate and references the most recent government guidance. Importantly, given the designation of the provision, the policy also details the additional safeguarding challenges that can be faced by pupils with SEND. Leaders plan to launch a school website soon. The safeguarding policy is currently available on request. Leaders have substantial experience in safeguarding and the headteacher is an experienced designated safeguarding lead.
- The school's behaviour policy sets out appropriate sanctions and rewards. It details plans for record-keeping and monitoring of any pupil misbehaviour. The policy takes account of pupils' needs and states that 'all students at Fitzroy Academy are treated with dignity and respect at all times and are at the heart of everything we do'. The school has also written an effective anti-bullying strategy.
- The health and safety policy is fit for purpose. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of different staff and procedures for recording any accidents. Leaders have devised a programme of weekly safety checks for all aspects of the school site. These include temperature probe checks, water flushing cycles, checks on emergency lighting and the safe storage of substances that may be harmful to health.
- The school has commissioned professional contractors to undertake a fire risk assessment of the site. Given the size and scope of the buildings and grounds, the assessment and any necessary actions have been broken down into smaller parts. Remedial actions following the risk assessment have been completed.
- The first-aid policy is suitable and includes detail relating to staff training and the recording of any accidents.
- There are enough staff proposed within the structure to ensure that pupils are properly supervised. The school has purchased software to make sure that admissions and attendance information is correctly recorded.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 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(3), 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)(i)(dd), 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)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)

- The school's checks on the suitability of staff meet requirements.
- Leaders have devised systems to ensure that any supply staff are also appropriately checked.
- The school has further recruitment to undertake. Leaders are very familiar with safer recruitment principles and carefully track and check the details of all new starters.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2), 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) and 29(1)(b)

- The school is set in large grounds in a rural setting. An 18th century hall and stables have been converted into classrooms. The site also accommodates the head office of the New Reflexions Group.
- Classrooms have been designed and resourced to support the intended curriculum. For example, the main education base includes a fully equipped science laboratory, drama room and food technology facilities. The school also has a sensory room with special lighting and furniture.
- Toilet and washing facilities are fitted to a high standard. Drinking water is marked as such. The vast majority of hot water taps have been fitted with temperature mixing valves (TMVs) and do not present a risk of scalding. However, there are several sinks in the food technology room that still require TMVs so that water temperature is controlled. The chief executive officer has plans to address this aspect of the premises imminently.
- The on-site gym has been redecorated and fitted with showers. There is ample space for outdoor physical education in an adjoining field.
- The medical room is clean and spacious, and has a bed and a sink. It is located next to an accessible toilet.
- The acoustics and lighting, including external lighting, are suitable and in working order.
- The standards in this part 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)(ii), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e) and 32(3)(f)

- Given leaders' wider experience in the independent sector, they already have a website and a wide range of proformas and policies to ensure full provision of information. Subject to the school's application being successful, an additional page will be added to their main group's website to host information about Fitzroy Academy. Documentation, including the safeguarding policy, is currently available upon request.
- Leaders have adapted a proforma that they intend to use to report on pupils' progress and attainment. This is detailed and is matched to the content in the intended curriculum.
- The school's prospectus contains relevant contact information, including the address of the proprietor board. The document also contains appropriate information about admissions, behaviour and exclusions.
- Leaders have also created documents that will capture the progress that pupils make in relation to the outcomes set out in education, health and care (EHC) plans. This information will be used to support discussions at pupils' annual reviews.
- The standards in this part is 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 complaints policy is detailed and includes the required information. For example, timescales are outlined, it is made clear that complaints can be first considered on an informal basis and there is scope for a panel hearing where a complainant is not satisfied with the school's response following a formal procedure.
- 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) and 34(1)(c)

- Leaders are experienced and enthusiastic people. The headteacher has a background in leading independent special schools and has been a special educational needs coordinator for the majority of her career.
- The proprietor board have experience of running other successful schools. They are committed to establishing a setting that can meet the needs of pupils with SEND. The New Reflexions Group have invested in a well-equipped site. Classrooms have been resourced and decorated to a high standard.

- Policies pay particular attention to the well-being of pupils. For example, leaders are alert to the impact of COVID-19. They have plans in place to assess and respond to the impact on pupils' lives and their education.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's accessibility plan sets out how leaders intend to increase participation in the curriculum and improve the physical environment and the delivery of information. For example, ramps have been fitted to several classrooms, the play area is fitted with an accessible basket swing and there are plans to adapt internal signage.

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	148831
DfE registration number	893/6044
Inspection number	10209431

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 school
Proprietor	Reflexion Care Group Ltd
Chair	Amanda Clarke
Headteacher	Kim McConnell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£70,200
Telephone number	01939 210040
Website	Not applicable
Email address	kim.mcconnell@newreflexions.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	7 to 18	7 to 18
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	Up to 40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 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	0

Information about this proposed school

- The school is located in a site that was a former independent school for pupils with SEND.
- The school does not intend to use any off-site space or alternative provision.
- The school proposes to provide education for pupils with SEND. Most pupils are likely to have an EHC plan.

Information about this inspection

- This is the school's first pre-registration inspection. The inspection was commissioned to determine if the school is likely to meet the independent school standards if it is given permission to open.
- The inspection was conducted on site.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including: the curriculum policy; schemes of work; health and safety policies; the safeguarding policy; the single central record; admission and attendance registers; information relating to the regulatory reform (fire safety) order 2005; and the school's accessibility plan.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the human resources manager, the chair of the proprietor board and the chief operating officer.
- The inspector visited all parts of the premises to make checks on the standard of accommodation.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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