

# Elmy Hall School

Hartford Manor, Greenbank Lane, Northwich, CW8 1HW

Unique reference number (URN): 152370

## **Pre-registration inspection report:**

19 February 2026

### **Overall outcome**

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards if it is registered

The purpose of this inspection was to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the proposed school's likely compliance with the independent school standards and associated requirements that are required for registration as an independent school.

### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

When we carry out pre-registration inspections of proposed independent schools, we report on the provider's likely compliance with part 8 of the independent school standards first. Under part 8, the proprietor is required to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards consistently. The standard in part 8 is intended to ensure that the quality of leadership and management at the school is sufficient for that purpose.

The proprietor has a proven track record in the leadership and management of independent special schools. The existing schools within the group have all been judged to be successful at their most recent Ofsted inspection. The proprietor has developed systems to check that the independent school standards are met. This is supported by a detailed training programme that helps ensure that staff have the expertise and knowledge to ensure that standards are met consistently.

The proposed school has a well-considered approach to safeguarding. This is enhanced by a curriculum for personal, social and economic education (PSHE) that reflects the context of the pupils that the school seeks to support. Through these aspects, the school demonstrates a commitment to the wellbeing of pupils.

The proposed school's leaders have significant expertise and experience in the leadership of independent special schools. Staff in the proposed school will be supported by a central team of expert staff in the group.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

## **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

### **Curriculum**

The proprietor has produced a curriculum policy aligned to the mission and ethos of the proposed school. The curriculum policy describes an ambitious and broad curriculum. The curriculum outlines how the school will support pupils to secure important skills and knowledge across the subjects taught. It has been designed to support older pupils to access appropriate qualifications.

The proposed school will admit pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The proprietor has carefully considered how schemes of work will be adapted to meet the needs of these pupils. This includes having access to a range of interventions for pupils who may need them. The proprietor recognises that many pupils who join the school will be at the early stages of learning to read. An approved phonics programme is in place, and all staff will be trained to teach phonics.

The proposed school has a detailed plan for careers education. These plans include the youngest pupils and build incrementally as pupils move through the school, focusing on employability skills as pupils get older.

The proposed school will deliver weekly religious education lessons to pupils, alongside planned assemblies to explore important themes. This will support pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain.

The proposed school has considered the statutory guidance when deciding what pupils will learn in the relationships, sex and health education curriculum. The school has developed systems to inform parents and carers of the content of the curriculum. Pupils may access many subjects at a level that is below their chronological age. However, the proposed school recognises that pupils need to acquire knowledge in personal, social and health education (PSHE) that is in line with their chronological age. The curriculum for PSHE includes age-appropriate teaching about the protected characteristics.

### **Teaching**

The proprietor and leaders who are already in post are experts in teaching pupils with SEND. They know how to adapt teaching to meet individual pupils' needs.

There are clear plans in place to train newly appointed staff to ensure that individual support plans are implemented consistently well. The proprietor has invested in a range of appropriate resources, for example sensory resources and calm spaces for pupils who need them.

Pupils will have many opportunities to revisit prior learning. This will support them to remember their learning over time. The proposed curriculum will support pupils' personal and emotional development alongside academic learning. Pupils will have plans tailored to them. These will contribute to pupils achieving the targets outlined on their education, health and care (EHC) plans.

The proprietor has developed a detailed induction process for new staff. This includes training staff on the proposed school's curriculum and teaching approaches. The proposed school will use the same approaches to monitor the quality of education that pupils receive, as used in other successful schools in the group.

### **Assessment**

The proposed school has well-considered assessment procedures in place to support pupils. These include 'key performance indicators' that the school has aligned to what pupils will learn. Staff will use these to check what pupils know and remember in each subject. Leaders recognise that many pupils joining the school are likely to have gaps in their knowledge. The 'key performance indicators' will be used to identify and address these gaps. Leaders in the group, and members of the governing body, will monitor pupils' achievement frequently.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

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

The proposed school has thought carefully about the expected curriculum for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The school has made clear where subjects link with aspects of SMSC. This will support staff to make these links explicit for pupils. The school's plans for PSHE and weekly assemblies actively promote fundamental British values. This curriculum is enhanced by other enrichment activities, such as visiting speakers.

The school's plans for SMSC are enhanced by opportunities for pupils to explore civic and community participation. Leaders have carefully considered how pupils will develop their independence and resilience over time. These aspects are deliberately planned for.

The proposed school has developed a calendar of assemblies that mark key days and celebrations. These will contribute to pupils' SMSC development and appreciation of fundamental British values.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

#### **Safeguarding**

The proprietor body and leaders across the group have the appropriate knowledge of safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Well-established recruitment processes are in place to ensure that the right staff are recruited to the school. The school's detailed induction process for new staff includes completing mandatory safeguarding training before commencing in post.

Leaders take their moral and statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils seriously. They have well-established procedures to report, record and monitor any concerns about pupils' welfare that will be applied to the proposed school.

The new headteacher of the proposed school and one other member of staff will be trained designated safeguarding leads. They will be supported by leaders in the central team, including the head of safeguarding.

#### **Behaviour and supervision of pupils**

The school has a suitable, written behaviour policy that reflects the needs of pupils that the school is likely to admit. This is supported by separate exclusions and anti-bullying policies. Training on these policies forms part of the staff induction process.

The school has systems to record all behaviour incidents. These records will be analysed to identify patterns and trends in behaviour. Appropriate support will then be put in place. Individual behaviour support plans will be used, when necessary.

#### **Anti-bullying**

Pupils will learn about bullying through the PSHE curriculum and the assembly programme as well as through planned links with other subjects. Pupils will also learn about discrimination and diversity through their exploration of fundamental British values.

## **Health and safety, fire and first aid**

The proposed school has produced a health and safety policy. This sets out how the school will comply with relevant health and safety laws. The proposed school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The proprietor has acted swiftly to address the recommendations from the fire risk assessment. This includes, for example, making sure that fire doors meet relevant standards.

There is a suitable first-aid policy in place. The proprietor intends that all staff will be trained in first aid so that there will always be several adults on site who can administer first aid. Leaders have identified staff who will be responsible for the maintenance of first-aid kits. The school has an appropriate system for recording accidents and injuries.

The proposed staffing structure will ensure that pupils are adequately supervised at all times. Within the school building, there will be one adult to every three pupils. When supervising pupils outdoors, there will be one adult to every two pupils.

## **Admissions and attendance**

Effective systems are in place for admissions and monitoring attendance. The template for the admissions register shows that statutory information will be held about each pupil. Attendance registers will be taken twice each day. The proposed school will use the Department for Education's register codes.

## **Risk assessment**

The school has a risk assessment policy. This takes account of a range of risks that pupils and staff may encounter and how these risks will be managed. There are several risk assessments that underpin the policy. These include risk assessments for the building and outdoor play spaces. These risk assessments include details of daily site checks to make sure that pupils are safe.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

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

### **The recruitment checks made on staff, supply staff and the proprietor**

The proprietor has trained several staff on safer recruitment procedures. Someone with this training is involved in the recruitment process. Leaders understand the required checks that must be made on new staff, volunteers, contractors, governors and members of the proprietor body. They know that these checks must

be completed before staff are appointed. Where appointments have already been made, these processes have been followed in full.

The proposed school is not intending to use any supply staff.

### **The single central record of these recruitment checks**

The proposed school has an electronic single central record. This contains details of the proprietor body, governors and the staff who have already been appointed. In addition, it shows leaders in the group who will support the proposed school. All appropriate checks have been made on these staff, proprietors and governors. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the single central record. Staff from the central team check it regularly.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

## **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

### **Toilet and washing facilities, water supply, changing accommodation and showers**

The premises have suitable toilet and washing facilities that are adequate for the proposed number of pupils. There are separate facilities for boys and girls and for younger and older pupils. There are three disabled toilets and one shower.

The school has ample space indoors and outdoors for the teaching of physical education. There is adequate space in the school to provide changing spaces for pupils should this be required.

Throughout the proposed school there are drinking water points that pupils can access. These are correctly labelled.

### **Medical room and accommodation for pupils' therapy needs**

Leaders have created 2 medical rooms for short-term use by pupils. There is one for older pupils and one for younger pupils. The rooms have a bed, sink and are near toilet facilities. Each has a well-stocked first-aid kit.

### **Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils**

Leaders and the proprietor body have established systems in place to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the school premises to a high standard. Daily premises checks help to ensure pupils' safety and welfare. The premises are surrounded by secure perimeter fencing. There is adequate external lighting that ensures safe access to the premises.

### **Lighting and acoustic conditions**

The premises are completed to a high standard. Classrooms are light and bright and have appropriate acoustics. Each classroom is fitted with an interactive whiteboard. There are several smaller rooms that can be used for teaching or interventions. Pupils will have access to a science room, an art room and food technology room. There is also a separate room for music teaching. The proposed school has 2 libraries. One is resourced for older pupils and the other for younger pupils.

### **Outdoor space**

There are several large outside spaces attached to the proposed premises. One of these areas has play equipment, while others have seating areas for pupils to socialise. There are 2 outdoor sports pitches. There is adequate space for pupils to access outside play and physical education lessons.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

## **Part 6. Provision of information**

The website for the proposed school contains links to the required range of policies required in the standards. These include the proposed school's safeguarding and child protection policy, behaviour policy, health and safety policy and admissions policy. In addition, there are links to curriculum information.

The proposed school's website contains contact information for both the school and the proprietor.

The proposed school will use the same template for reporting to parents as other schools in the group. This is designed to provide the full range of detail required.

Leaders are aware of the requirement to publish inspection reports and examination results on the school website. There is a space on the website for when this information becomes available.

The school can demonstrate how it will account for the funding it receives for pupils to relevant local authorities.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

## Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The proposed school has produced a complaints policy, which clearly sets out how complaints will be handled, including timescales for investigation. This includes the option of a panel hearing for parents.

Leaders are aware of the requirement to record and store complaints and report on the number of complaints received each year.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is registered.

### The school's accessibility plan

The proposed school has a written accessibility policy and action plan. The accessibility plan fully reflects how the proposed school will fulfil its statutory responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

### About this inspection

The inspector carried out this inspection under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools.

The inspector checked the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspector spoke with the head of quality assurance, the executive headteacher and the chair of the proprietor body during the inspection.

### Lead inspector

Jen Sloan

His Majesty's Inspector

### About this proposed school

Proprietor

Polaris Children's Services Limited

Headteacher

Neil Hewitt

Type of school	Other Independent Special School
Capacity	100
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> 100
Number of part-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> 0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities on roll	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> 100
Number of pupils on roll who have an education, health and care plan, or who are looked after by a local authority	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> 100
Age range of pupils	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> 5 - 18
Gender of pupils	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> Mixed
Total hours operating as a school per week	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> 32.5
Total hours of teaching provided per week	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> 32.5
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> 20
Number of part-time teaching staff	<b>Provider's proposal:</b> 0
Annual fees for day pupils	£65,000
Email address	catherine.beard@polariscommunity.co.uk

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