

Hove Micro-School

221 Manor Hall Road, Southwick BN42 4NR

Inspection date

5 June 2024

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) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) to 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2), 3 to 4.

- The proposed school is currently operating as a flexible education provision for children who are electively home educated. Parents can choose to send their children to the setting for up to 16 hours of teaching (Monday to Thursday). The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, intends for the proposed school to continue to cater for this group of children who will move on to the school's roll.
- The proposed school will provide the same education as is in place for the current setting. The curriculum and its delivery are designed to promote pupils' love of learning and independence. Pupils learn a broad and balanced range of subjects with an appropriate focus on early reading and mathematics, alongside other subjects including physical education, music and art.
- The existing curriculum is broadly aligned with the requirements of the national curriculum. Staff work with families to build an education programme for individual pupils. They tailor the curriculum so that it reflects pupils' interests and aspirations. Sequences of lessons and topics are adapted to suit pupils' abilities and particular needs, including where they have any gaps in their knowledge.
- The setting is currently catering for individual pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Staff work with parents and specialist external agencies to tailor the curriculum appropriately to meet these pupils' academic and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The proprietor has developed an appropriate policy for relationships education. Pupils receive relationships education as part of their personal, social and health education curriculum. The proprietor recognises that parents will not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education when they are formally on roll at the proposed school.
- The provision benefits from qualified teachers who are familiar with national curriculum requirements and have experience of working in mainstream schools.

These teachers will transfer to the proposed school's staffing structure. Classroom and teaching resources are plentiful and of good quality.

- A comprehensive programme of professional development is planned for all new staff as part of their induction. This is so that all staff acquire the knowledge and understanding they need to work in the proposed school's particular context and curriculum arrangements.
- The setting caters for pupils who attend full time and part time. The proprietor has ensured that the approach to teaching takes this into account. For example, each day, any work started is completed so that part-time pupils do not have to catch up or join in midway through a topic.
- The proprietor has established a system to assess individual pupils' progress and wider experiences. The proprietor ensures that parents have a very clear understanding of what their children have been doing and learning about. This enables parents to align their home education with the setting's curriculum if they choose to do so. The proprietor intends to continue using this system for the proposed school.
- The proprietor is aware of the requirement to provide pupils with good quality careers education. It has suitable arrangements in place to ensure that older pupils will receive independent careers advice and guidance.
- The independent school standard (the standards) in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

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

Paragraphs 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The proprietor describes a clear vision for the proposed school, with pupils' abilities, families, lifestyles and interests at the heart of the curriculum. It is intended that the proposed school will retain the existing setting's respectful culture, where pupils learn how to accept and celebrate diversity and about different religions, festivals and cultures.
- The existing curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils develop the confidence to play an informed and positive role in society. They learn about the protected characteristics and fundamental British values.
- Staff provide pupils with a breadth of experiences and opportunities to socialise and learn about the world around them. For instance, pupils take part in sports, music and drama to foster their aesthetic skills and creative talents. They visit the allotment nearby to learn about and experience planting and growing.
- All staff are expected to be positive role models for pupils. Through the extensive range of topics and themes they study, pupils hold fair debates and discussions. The proprietor intends to continue this arrangement for the proposed school. Exploring impartial presentations of views are essential features in teachers' established approaches.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 9 to 16(b), 34(1)(c)

- The setting's written safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance. It is published on the proposed school's website and is available on request. The proprietor has appointed a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who is suitably knowledgeable about what this role involves and has undertaken relevant training.
- Existing staff complete safeguarding training regularly. This ensures that they understand the potential risks to pupils and what to do if a concern arises. This training is further enhanced with weekly staff briefings which are used to share important information, including revisiting key aspects of the safeguarding policy. All safeguarding concerns are recorded on a centralised electronic system in a timely manner. The proprietor intends to complete routine checks on staff's safeguarding knowledge once the proposed school is open.
- The proprietor is aware of the recruitment and vetting checks that need to be made and recorded on the single central record. The proprietor has undertaken training in safer recruitment and ensured that safer recruitment processes, as set out in part 3 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023', are consistently followed in practice. For example, the proprietor has taken up references for all staff and retained all information considered in the decision-making process.
- Staff are alert to the potential risks to pupils, including around online safety. Curriculum planning provides ongoing opportunities for pupils to learn about how to make sensible choices that help keep them safe. The focus on developing trusting relationships will ensure that pupils feel confident to tell an adult about any worries they have that potentially put them at risk.
- Appropriate plans are in place to identify and help pupils who may be at risk of harm. Arrangements for record-keeping are suitable. These help the DSL to promptly identify where they may need to act to keep a pupil safe.
- The proprietor has drawn up a combined behaviour and anti-bullying policy that is suitable and likely to meet the requirements of this part of the standards. The policy outlines how parents will be fully involved in supporting positive behaviour. Staff support pupils' positive behaviour and consideration for each other through collaborative and restorative approaches. There is already a system in place to record incidents of poor behaviour and staff's responses to them. This is likely to contribute effectively to the implementation of the proposed school's policy.
- The proposed school's health and safety and risk assessments policies are suitable. They comply with relevant statutory requirements and provide a secure framework for staff and pupils. The proprietor has carried out appropriate risk assessments for the premises and for off-site activities. They are specific to the age of the pupils who attend the existing provision.
- The proprietor has put in place an appropriate first-aid policy. It has also ensured that staff are first-aid trained. The proprietor demonstrates secure knowledge of how medicines will be accounted for, stored and administered if required. First-aid equipment is strategically situated and readily accessible. A medical room has been identified and is suitably furnished.

- The proprietor has undertaken appropriate work to ensure the premises are compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. For example, it has made the necessary improvements to ensure that the building now complies with recommendations from the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service following its visit to the premises in April 2023. The proprietor has ensured that all fire detection, alarm systems and emergency lighting have been externally certified.
- A high pupil-to-staff ratio ensures that pupils are appropriately supervised in the setting and during off-site activities.
- The proprietor has appropriately completed records of pupils' admissions and attendance, in accordance with paragraph 15 of the standards. It understands the importance of maintaining these records carefully if pupils join or leave the proposed school.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

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

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(6)

- The proprietor has carried out appropriate checks to ensure that all staff who are employed at the current setting are suitable to work with children. These staff will transfer over to the proposed school if it is granted permission to open.
- The proprietor uses a range of external providers to provide before- and after-school clubs. It has ensured that these individuals have been subject to the appropriate level of recruitment and suitability checks.
- The proprietor does not intend to employ supply staff at the proposed school. However, it is aware of the checks it would need to make should this be the case.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(1)(c), 24(1) to 24(1)(b), 24(2), 25 to 29(1)(b)

- The proposed school is located in the proprietor's former residence, which has now been vacated. The living room and three rooms upstairs have been converted into classroom spaces for each phase of the proposed school. The proprietor's aim in setting up a school in a residential home is to provide an educational setting for children who might be overwhelmed or uncomfortable in a more formal school setting and to give parents more choice in how and where their children are educated.
- During the pre-registration inspection, it was identified that the property is not suitable to accommodate 30 pupils as originally requested. Therefore, during this inspection, the proprietor accepted the recommendation to admit up to 22 pupils aged five to 14.
- The property is clean and safe and maintained to a high standard. The classroom spaces are attractive, bright and comfortable for pupils. Interior spaces are well

ventilated and light. There is external lighting at the front of the property to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the premises.

- There are adequate toilets and washing facilities for pupils and staff. The temperature of hot water is regulated appropriately. Drinking-water is available and labelled as such.
- There is suitable accommodation for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. There is access to water and toilet facilities nearby.
- The property has a small garden for pupils to use during the school day. Physical education is taught at a local park and the allotment nearby. Pupils come to the provision in clothes that are appropriate for physical education and are not asked to change on site.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(g), 32(1)(j) to 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(d) to 32(3)(d), 32(3)(f) to 32(4)(c)

- The proprietor has developed a school website that clearly sets out the proposed school's ethos and aims. It has ensured that safeguarding information and other key documentation, including the complaints policy, are published on the website.
- In addition to providing a formal termly progress report, the proprietor ensures that parents are continually updated about their children's learning, progress and attainment. It intends to continue this arrangement for the proposed school.
- For pupils with EHC plans, the proprietor intends to provide the necessary information to the responsible local authority for the annual review of the EHC plan.
- The proprietor is aware that following any inspection, copies of the inspection report must be provided to parents and published on the school's website.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33 to 33(k)

- The proposed school's complaints policy and formal complaints log are likely to be suitable. The policy takes a graded approach, from initial informal resolution to convening a formal panel hearing if necessary. The planned written record includes the stage of resolution and any action taken as a result.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor is knowledgeable and suitably experienced with a background in education. It has a clear vision for the setting and the pupils it intends to serve. The proprietor has appropriate knowledge of the need to safeguard pupils and the guidance and statutory requirements to protect the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff at the proposed school.
- The proprietor's commitment to this school is unquestionable. It demonstrates a high degree of integrity and a clear moral purpose. Discussions with the inspector during the inspection were open and honest. This was particularly the case when some areas of the suitability of the school's accommodation and planning permissions were discussed. The headteacher has promptly addressed the areas that were identified as not met at the previous pre-registration inspections.
- The proprietor is clear about the need for impartial, independent advice to support school leaders. It employs the services of an advisory board and an education coach who provide external challenge and support.
- It is likely that the requirements of this standard will be met, should permission be given for the school to open.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a suitable accessibility plan in place. The proprietor intends to update the plan at appropriate intervals and as required to take into account the school's pupils and staff. The school is likely to meet paragraph 3 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	150990
DfE registration number	938/6021
Inspection number	10352958

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	Day school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Hove Micro-School Ltd
Chair	Rachael Ammari
Headteacher	Rachael Ammari
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,800 to £15,200
Telephone number	01273 549 022
Website	www.hovemicro-school.com
Email address	rachaelammari@hovemicro-school.com

Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	14
Number of pupils of compulsory school age who have an education, health and care plan, or who are looked after by a local authority	3
Total hours operating as a school per week	16
Total hours of teaching provided per week	16

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 14	5 to 14	5 to 14
Number of pupils on the school roll	14	30	22

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- The school's premises are suitable for a maximum of 16 pupils at any one time. The headteacher anticipates that some pupils will take up a place on a part-time or flexible basis, while the remainder of their education is provided at home. A maximum roll of 22 pupils would enable the school to offer full-time and part-time places on a flexible basis.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	16
Number of part-time pupils	14	Up to 30
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	3	Up to 30
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	3	Up to 3
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	1	Up to 3

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	2	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	3	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is currently operating in a house owned by the proprietor, with three rooms converted to classrooms. Children are already attending on a part-time basis. All children currently attending are on the elective home education roll of the local authority.
- During the pre-registration inspection, the proprietor submitted a full planning permission application to the local council requesting to change the use of the building from a 'dwelling house' to an 'educational setting'.
- The school proposes to have three classes: one for key stage 1, one for key stage 2 and one for key stage 3.
- The proposed school will offer a mixture of full-time and part-time provision on a flexible basis. A maximum of eight pupils will attend each class at any one time.
- It is likely that all pupils who attend the proposed school will be educated by their parents at home if they do not attend the proposed school full time. The headteacher does intend to offer a small number of places for pupils with an EHC plan.
- The proposed school provides a personalised curriculum for individual pupils that is selected and planned in collaboration with pupils and their parents. The curriculum is aligned with, and underpinned by, the national curriculum and by appropriate schemes of work.
- The proposed school will be led and managed by the headteacher, who has qualified teacher status. Five additional qualified teachers and three teaching assistants will make up the rest of the teaching staff.
- The school will not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the third 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) Regulations 2014. Schools must comply with the standards to be registered.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the standards, safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector held a range of meetings with the headteacher to discuss the proposed school. The inspector toured the school premises. She visited classrooms during lessons. She reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, policies and curriculum and assessment information.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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