

Trimdon Hill School

Former Bluebell Meadows Infant School, Trimdon TS29 6EY

Inspection date

16 June 2025

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)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h) to 2(2)(i)

- The school has planned a broad and well-ordered curriculum from early years through to Year 6. There will be four curriculum pathways to meet pupils' different needs. The school will adapt the curriculum further within those pathways to meet individual pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum will have a central focus on literacy, including phonics, and numeracy. It will be broadened and enriched through study of other early learning areas, physical education, the humanities, creative arts and technology.
- The planned curriculum includes personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). The school has developed a PSHE curriculum informed by a published curriculum from a national body for PSHE education. The school's PSHE curriculum includes content on the protected characteristics and fundamental British values. It is designed to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Paragraph 2A(1) to 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(1)(g)

- The school has appropriate plans in place to provide relationships education for pupils. The content of the school's proposed relationships education programme meets statutory guidance. The school plans to consult with parents about the content of its relationships education programme. It also intends to consult with parents about the resources it intends to use to support the teaching of the programme.

Paragraphs 3 to 4

- The school will assess pupils on entry to determine pupils' individual starting points. It will use pupils' starting points and, where relevant, pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to inform teaching. The school will check on pupils' progress in learning the curriculum and adapt teaching to meet pupils' learning needs. Pupils will be taught by qualified early years and primary school teachers. The school intends to provide teachers and teaching assistants with high-quality professional development in pedagogy and assessment. Pupils will be in small classes with two teaching assistants

per class. This should ensure that pupils experience expert teaching that meets their individual needs.

- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The school intends to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The school has integrated opportunities for SMSC development into its PSHE curriculum. It will also use its assembly programme to support pupils' SMSC development. Pupils will have opportunities to explore different cultures, faiths and beliefs. They will learn about fundamental British values and the protected characteristics in an age-appropriate way, or in a manner that is appropriate for their stage of development. Furthermore, the school plans for pupils to make positive contributions to the local community through a range of events and activities.
- The school knows it is responsible for ensuring that pupils are free from the promotion of partisan political views. It will ensure this throughout all school activities, including through the teaching of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7 to 7(b)

- The school has established the foundations for a strong culture of safeguarding. Its policy and proposed practices are informed by statutory guidance. The school's designated safeguarding lead has completed the relevant safeguarding training. The school will be supported by a safeguarding team that works across all the proprietor's schools. It has also established relationships with relevant external agencies. The school will use an online system for reporting and recording concerns. Staff will receive safeguarding training, including about reporting and recording, as part of their induction. They will go on to complete an annual cycle of safeguarding training. This should ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to maintain professional curiosity and to keep pupils safe.
- The school will teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including online. It will also work with parents and carers to raise their awareness of safeguarding risks.

Paragraphs 9 to 10

- The school has appropriate policies in place to inform a positive culture in which derogatory and discriminatory behaviour and bullying are not tolerated. It intends to make reasonable adjustments to its approach, informed by pupils' specific needs and where relevant, by pupils' EHC plans.

Paragraphs 11 to 14

- The school's health and safety policy complies with relevant health and safety laws. Its first aid policy includes information about staff responsibilities and the administration of first aid. The school has undertaken a fire risk assessment and

completed all actions required by the assessor. The school has received its final certificate to confirm that its buildings meet building regulations. The school's policies and proposed practices should ensure a rigorous approach to health and safety.

- The school has planned for the appropriate deployment of staff. Its staffing structure is sufficient for the proposed number of pupils and their needs. The school intends to reach its full capacity regarding pupil numbers in its second year of operation. At full capacity, the school intends to teach pupils in seven teaching groups of no more than six pupils per group. Each teaching group will be staffed with a teacher and two teaching assistants. The school will deploy additional support staff, including pastoral and clinical staff. The school has already recruited most of the staff it requires to operate at full capacity.

Paragraphs 15 to 16(b)

- The school has an appropriate admissions register, and electronic attendance register in place. The school knows how to maintain these registers in accordance with statutory regulations.
- The school has a risk assessment policy in place. It has identified a range of risks and completed rigorous risk assessments. This should protect and ensure pupils' health and welfare.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3)

- The school has completed all relevant pre-employment checks on those staff who have already been appointed. It takes a rigorous approach to these checks. No member of staff will begin working at the school before all relevant checks have been made. The school does not intend to use supply staff. However, if this intention were to change, the school knows and understands its role in relation to supply agencies and pre-employment checks on supply staff. It knows that it must receive written confirmation that relevant checks have been made on supply staff.

Paragraphs 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(6)

- All relevant pre-employment checks on members of the proprietor body have been completed. The dates of these checks are recorded on the school's single central record.

Paragraphs 21(1) to 21(3)(b)

- The proprietor maintains an electronic single central record of all the pre-employment checks on staff. The school has recorded all relevant checks and the dates of those checks on staff who have already started to work at the proposed school.

Paragraph 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c)

- The school does not intend to employ supply staff. However, it knows what information it must record on the school's single central record should it decide to employ supply staff.

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

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 28(2)(b)

- The school has received its final certificate confirming compliance with building regulations. The school buildings and site provide pupils with a high-quality environment that will meet their needs and keep them safe. The school has appropriate toilet, washing, shower, and medical care facilities. These facilities will accommodate the number of pupils proposed by the school.

Paragraph 29(1) to 29(1)(b)

- The school's premises include appropriate outdoor space for physical education and play. Pupils will benefit from fixed climbing equipment and from areas that allow for a variety of outdoor activities. The school's outdoor space is secure from the public.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f) to 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii) to 32(4)(c).

- The school knows and understands what information it has a duty to publish and provide for parents, the Department for Education (DfE) and other bodies, as required. The school has constructed a website that contains such information. It is ready to be published should the DfE decide to register the school.
- The school understands its responsibilities regarding contributions to annual reviews of pupils' EHC plans. It will also provide local authorities with the financial information required.
- The school has prepared a template for reporting to parents, at least annually, about pupils' progress.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33 to 33(k)

- The school has a written complaints policy in place. This sets out the school's complaints process and procedures. It gives appropriate information regarding informal and formal complaints procedures. It also provides information about timescales, complainants' rights and the school's responsibilities.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has ensured that leaders appointed to the school have the requisite knowledge, skills and experience through a rigorous recruitment and selection process. Once appointed, there is an extensive professional development programme to support leaders in fulfilling their respective roles effectively. In addition, school leaders will be supported by an experienced executive headteacher.
- The proprietor has ensured effective oversight of school leaders' performance through the appointment of a chair of governors. The proprietor will use a coherent quality assurance system and set of processes that are already used across the proprietor's other schools, to monitor and evaluate the school's provision and ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently over time.
- Furthermore, the proprietor has demonstrated that the school will prioritise pupils' welfare above all else.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an accessibility plan in place. The plan details how the school will ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum, information and the physical environment.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- The school's plans regarding the early years curriculum and its implementation give assurance that the school will meet the statutory learning and development requirements. The school's proposed curriculum covers the seven areas of learning. It intends to have one class of no more than six four-year-old children. The school plans to staff its early years class with one teacher and two teaching assistants. These staff will have the relevant knowledge and skills to teach and care for early years children.
- The school has established the foundations of a strong safeguarding culture. Its proposed safeguarding systems and processes are rigorous. These should ensure the safeguarding of early years children. The staff to child ratio is sufficient to meet children's health and welfare needs and keep children safe.
- The statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are likely to be met.

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	151708
DfE registration number	840/6023
Inspection number	10395317

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 day school
Proprietor	P Bloom Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Victoria Muir
Annual fees (day pupils)	£62,500 to £85,000
Telephone number	07966270005
Website	None
Email address	nicholas.simpson@ofgl.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	4 to 11	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	42	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	36
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	42
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	42
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	42

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	9
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is in Trimdon, Durham. It proposes to operate from premises at Former Bluebell Meadows Infant School, Trimdon TS29 6EY.
- The school proposes to cater for pupils with autism. It will cater for pupils whose primary needs are autism but who also have other needs including social, emotional and mental health needs, moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs and specific learning difficulties.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned Ofsted to carry out this pre-registration inspection. The purpose of the inspection was to determine whether the proposed school was likely to meet the independent school standards should the DfE decide to allow the school to open.
- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, regional director and a member of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors discussed the proposed school's curriculum with school leaders and looked at curriculum plans and schemes of work for all proposed subjects.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record keeping, including the single central record.
- Inspectors toured the school site and scrutinised a wide range of documentary evidence to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jessica McKay

His Majesty's Inspector

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