

# Achieve Beyond Schools, Stafford

The Stables, The Hollies, 120 Newport Road, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST16 1BY

Unique reference number (URN): 152510

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

14 May 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**

The proprietor has established a coherent framework that is likely to secure consistent compliance with the independent school standards (the standards).

The vision for the proposed school is clear and purposeful. It is focused on providing a specialist setting for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. This vision is supported by a suitable range of policies, curriculum plans and operational systems that reflect a secure understanding of statutory requirements and the needs of the intended cohort.

Leadership roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Strategic oversight rests with the proprietor. There are appropriate plans to appoint a substantive headteacher to lead the day-to-day running of the school. The proprietor demonstrates a secure understanding of their responsibilities, including those relating to safeguarding, staffing and the quality of education.

Systems to monitor compliance are well considered. The use of an independent school standards regulations document, alongside a planned cycle of review of the standards, provides a clear structure for checking that requirements are met over time. Planned activities, including work scrutiny, learning walks and compliance

checks, indicate that leaders are focused on evaluating effectiveness of the school's work.

The proprietor has also taken appropriate steps to secure external oversight. Plans to establish a quality advisory panel are intended to provide additional challenge and support. This strengthens the proposed accountability arrangements. During the inspection, the proprietor responded constructively and promptly provided the requested documentation. This indicates appropriate organisational capacity.

The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

### **Curriculum**

The proprietor has developed a broad, ambitious, and well-sequenced curriculum that is likely to meet the standards.

The curriculum is underpinned by a clear 'stage not age' principle, ensuring that pupils access learning appropriate to their developmental stage. This also includes, for example, the relationships and sex education curriculum. This approach is well-suited to the intended cohort and is likely to enable pupils to engage in learning and make progress from their individual starting points.

Plans demonstrate appropriate breadth across key stages 1 to 3, with a clear focus on building knowledge cumulatively over time. The curriculum includes structured approaches to reading, writing and mathematics, including the use of a recognised phonics programme. These arrangements are likely to support pupils in developing secure literacy and numeracy skills.

The curriculum is further strengthened by the planned integration of therapeutic approaches and external services. This reflects a clear understanding of pupils' needs and is likely to support engagement and readiness to learn.

### **Teaching**

The proprietor has established a clear and appropriate teaching model. Teaching is intended to be structured, adaptive and responsive to pupils' needs, supported by small class sizes, team teaching and targeted one-to-one support.

The planned use of diagnostic assessment, including initial and end-of-unit tasks, demonstrates that teaching will be informed by pupils' starting points and progress. This is likely to support effective learning over time.

Staffing plans and professional development arrangements indicate that leaders have considered how teaching will be delivered effectively from the outset.

### **Assessment**

Assessment arrangements are coherent and well planned. The proprietor intends to use formative assessment and ongoing tracking systems to monitor progress and inform teaching.

Leaders demonstrate a well-considered approach to the use of education, health and care plans, recognising their importance while also using assessment to ensure provision meets pupils' current needs.

Although these arrangements are not yet implemented, they provide appropriate assurance that pupils are likely to acquire knowledge and make progress.

The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

The proprietor has developed a coherent and well-integrated approach to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).

SMSC is embedded within the curriculum through planned lessons, assemblies and enrichment opportunities. The inclusion of personal, social, health, and economic education (PSHE), a focus on British values and explicit teaching about protected characteristics ensures that pupils are likely to develop an appropriate understanding of life in modern Britain.

The proprietor has identified opportunities for pupils to engage with national and international awareness events, learn about different religions and participate in community activities. These experiences are likely to support pupils in developing respect for others and an understanding of diversity.

The school's core values of respect, acceptance, inclusion, support and empowerment are consistently referenced and are intended to underpin all aspects of school life. This provides a strong foundation for pupils' social and moral development.

There is no evidence that the proposed provision would undermine fundamental British values.

The proposed school is likely to meet the standard in this part if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

#### **Safeguarding**

The proprietor has established safeguarding systems that are aligned with current statutory guidance. Policies are in place and reflect appropriate expectations, and leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of safeguarding responsibilities.

Safeguarding is embedded within the proposed curriculum and daily routines, including through PSHE, structured opportunities for pupil voice and the development of trusted relationships between staff and pupils. This is likely to support the establishment of a positive safeguarding culture.

The proprietor has planned appropriate training and induction for staff, and safer recruitment processes are in place. While these arrangements are not yet tested in practice, there is sufficient evidence that leaders understand requirements and intend to implement them effectively.

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

The proprietor has established a behaviour approach that is appropriate to the needs of the intended cohort and is likely to meet the requirements of the standards. The approach is therapeutic, focusing on supporting pupils to regulate their behaviour through consistent routines, clear expectations and strong relationships with adults.

Planned staffing levels, including high staff-to-pupil ratios and small class sizes, are likely to ensure that pupils are appropriately supervised throughout the school day. Leaders have also considered supervision during transitions and less structured times.

These arrangements provide appropriate assurance that pupils will feel safe. The proposed systems are likely to meet the requirements of the standards.

#### **Anti-bullying**

The proprietor has developed an anti-bullying approach that reflects the school's therapeutic ethos and is likely to meet the requirements of the standards. The

policy sets clear expectations for how bullying will be prevented, identified and addressed. Planned curriculum content, particularly through PSHE and SMSC, supports pupils in understanding healthy relationships, respect, and difference, which is likely to reduce the risk of bullying behaviours. Leaders also place a strong emphasis on adult support, early intervention and restorative approaches, which are appropriate for the intended cohort. These arrangements are likely to ensure that any incidents are addressed promptly and effectively.

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

The proprietor has taken appropriate steps to ensure that health and safety arrangements are likely to meet the requirements of the standards. The premises are generally well-maintained and suitable for the intended provision. Leaders have obtained a fire risk assessment and have identified the actions required to ensure full compliance. Where work remains outstanding, including aspects of fire detection and safety systems, there is clear evidence that this is scheduled and being addressed. Arrangements for first aid and staff training are in place, providing reasonable assurance that pupils' needs will be met. Health and safety policies and procedures demonstrate an understanding of statutory expectations and how risks will be managed on a day-to-day basis.

### **Admissions and attendance**

The proprietor has established appropriate systems for admissions and attendance that are likely to meet the standards. There are clear plans for maintaining admission and attendance registers in the required format, in line with statutory expectations. Leaders demonstrate an understanding that all pupils will be of compulsory school age and that attendance must be monitored closely, particularly given the expected needs of the cohort, including those with a history of disrupted education. The proposed approach to transition and induction, including phased entry where appropriate, is likely to support pupils in establishing regular attendance.

### **Risk assessment**

The proprietor has developed a range of risk assessments that demonstrate a secure understanding of the risks associated with the proposed provision. Risk assessments identify key hazards and set out appropriate control measures, with a strong emphasis on supervision and staff vigilance. Leaders also plan to use individual pupil risk assessments to respond to specific needs.

The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

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

The proprietor has established a structured, well-considered approach to recruitment and vetting that is likely to meet the standards. Clear processes are in place to ensure that pre-employment checks, including references and online checks, are completed appropriately. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of safer recruitment requirements and the need to complete all checks prior to employment.

Members of the proprietor body have completed safer recruitment training, which strengthens oversight.

These arrangements provide appropriate assurance that only suitable staff will be appointed.

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

The proprietor has established a single central record that reflects statutory requirements.

The record is appropriately structured and demonstrates a clear understanding of the checks that must be recorded. Leaders recognise the importance of maintaining accuracy and keeping the record up to date.

The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

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

The proprietor has ensured that appropriate toilet and washing facilities are in place and are likely to meet the requirements of the standards. Facilities are sufficient for the intended number and age range of pupils and are appropriately located across the site, enabling easy access throughout the school day. Leaders have implemented measures to manage water temperature and minimise the risk of scalding, which demonstrates an appropriate approach to safeguarding pupils' welfare. The availability of shower facilities further supports the needs of the cohort, where required. Overall, these arrangements are suitable and are likely to ensure that pupils' dignity, health and hygiene are appropriately supported.

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

The proprietor has provided a designated space for medical use that is likely to meet the standards. The room includes appropriate facilities, including access to washing provision and is suitable for the short-term care of pupils who may become unwell. While the space is relatively small, it is sufficient for the intended cohort, particularly given that the school does not plan to admit pupils with complex medical needs. The proprietor has also planned to integrate therapeutic services into the provision, including occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. These arrangements demonstrate an appropriate understanding of pupils' needs and provide reasonable assurance that both medical and therapeutic needs will be supported effectively.

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

The proprietor has taken appropriate steps to ensure that the premises and associated arrangements are likely to support pupils' health, safety and welfare. The site is generally well maintained, clean and organised, which contributes positively to a safe learning environment. The proprietor has identified potential risks across the site and has taken appropriate action to manage these, including controlling access to areas not currently in use. This demonstrates a proactive and responsive approach to maintaining safety standards.

## **Lighting and acoustic conditions**

The proprietor has ensured that lighting and acoustic conditions across the school are appropriate and are likely to meet the requirements of the standards. Classrooms and shared spaces benefit from natural light and are suitably illuminated to support teaching and learning. Acoustic conditions are appropriate for the intended cohort, providing an environment that minimises excessive noise and supports pupils who may be sensitive to sensory stimuli. These conditions are likely to contribute positively to pupils' ability to engage in learning and feel comfortable within the environment.

## **Outdoor space**

The proprietor has ensured that suitable outdoor space is available and is likely to meet the requirements of the standards. The current outdoor provision is safe, enclosed and appropriate for pupils' physical activity and social interaction. Risk assessments are in place and demonstrate an understanding of how the space will be used safely.

The proprietor has identified additional outdoor space that may be used in the future; however, this area is currently not in use and is appropriately secured, as it is not yet ready to meet the independent school standards. This indicates that the

proprietor is taking a cautious and appropriate approach to risk management. Overall, the available outdoor space is suitable and is likely to support pupils' physical development and well-being.

The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

The proprietor has established appropriate systems to ensure that the required information is available to parents and carers, and other stakeholders.

All requested policies and documentation were provided during the inspection and are intended for publication on the school's website. Policies are current, aligned with statutory guidance and include appropriate review cycles. This demonstrates that leaders understand their responsibilities regarding transparency and information sharing.

Previous gaps in documentation identified prior to inspection have now been addressed. This provides increased assurance that the required information will be available and kept up to date.

The proposed school is likely to meet the standard in this part if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

## **Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled**

The complaints policy is comprehensive and meets statutory requirements. It provides clear stages, including informal and formal procedures, defined timescales and arrangements for escalation. The inclusion of an independent panel member ensures that complaints can be considered impartially.

The proprietor has established systems for recording and monitoring complaints, including a complaints log and clear oversight processes. The involvement of the proprietor body and planned external input provides additional assurance of appropriate scrutiny.

These arrangements are well considered and are likely to ensure that complaints are handled effectively and in line with requirements.

The proposed school is likely to meet the standard in this part if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

## **The school's accessibility plan**

The proprietor has developed an accessibility plan that is likely to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The plan demonstrates a clear understanding of the duty to improve, over time, access to the curriculum, the physical environment, and information for pupils with disabilities. Leaders have also established an approach to reviewing and updating the plan as the cohorts' needs become clearer over time.

## **About this inspection**

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. Inspectors 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 the updated inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspector visited the proposed school site at The Stables, The Hollies, 120 Newport Road, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST16 1BY. During this inspection, inspectors spoke with members of the proprietor body and senior leaders, and reviewed a wide range of documentation, including policies relating to safeguarding, behaviour, curriculum, staffing, risk assessments, health and safety and premises. Inspectors also reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment checks and considered documentation relating to admissions and attendance.

Inspectors visited the school's premises and viewed classrooms, the outdoor area, toilet, washing facilities and the designated medical room. The inspection included checks on the suitability and safety of the premises, including fire safety documentation, site security arrangements and facilities intended to support pupils' needs.

At the time of the inspection, no pupils were on roll. Inspectors were therefore unable to evaluate the implementation of policies and systems in practice. The inspection focused on whether the proprietors' proposed arrangements are likely to meet the independent school standards if the school is registered.

The proposed school, Achieve Beyond Schools, Stafford, is seeking registration as an independent special school for pupils aged 5 to 13, with a proposed maximum capacity of 18 pupils. The school intends to admit pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with autism, social, emotional and mental

health needs, and moderate learning difficulties. All pupils are expected to have education, health and care plans and to be placed and funded by local authorities.

The proposed school intends to operate from an adapted commercial unit within a small business park setting. The building had previously been used as a pupil referral unit for Staffordshire County Council. The building is shared with a commercial company, but appropriate measures separate the two parts via a securely locked door.

### Lead inspector

Chris Pollitt

His Majesty's Inspector

### About this proposed school

<b>Chair of the proprietor body</b>	Patrik Foster
<b>Headteacher</b>	Patrik Foster (executive headteacher)
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>Capacity</b>	18
<b>Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: 18</b>
<b>Number of part-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: 0</b>
<b>Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities on roll</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: 18</b>
<b>Number of pupils on roll who have an education, health and care plan, or who are looked after by a local authority</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: 18</b>
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: 5 to 13</b>
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: Mixed</b>
<b>Total hours operating as a school per week</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: 27.5</b>
<b>Total hours of teaching provided per week</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: 15</b>
<b>Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: 8</b>
<b>Number of part-time teaching staff</b>	<b>Provider's proposal: 0</b>
<b>Annual fees for day pupils</b>	£45,000 to £65,000
<b>Email address</b>	information@abschools.uk

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