Pennine

182 Burnley Road, Todmorden OL14 5LB

Inspection date	3 December 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)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g) to 2(2)(i), 2A(1) to 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 4

- The proprietor intends the proposed school to cater for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. It is expected that most pupils will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and that many will have previously had disrupted or negative experiences of education, including periods of significant absence from school.
- The proprietor has set out a curriculum policy that confirms the school will offer a broad range of subjects in line with the requirements of the independent school standards (the standards). A carefully planned transition process will include baseline assessments for all pupils. Staff intend to use this information to create individual pupil profiles, capturing key information about each pupil's needs, including targets from their EHC plans and any required bespoke interventions, such as therapeutic support.
- School leaders recognise that many pupils are likely to have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. As a result, the school will prioritise literacy, numeracy and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. A validated phonics programme will be used for pupils who find learning to read difficult and staff will receive training in how to deliver this scheme effectively. The proposed timetable includes dedicated reading lessons each week, which is likely to support pupils well in developing secure reading skills.
- The schemes of work identify the key knowledge that leaders expect pupils to learn. Leaders plan to further adapt this curriculum to take account of pupils' differing needs and starting points. This approach is likely to enable pupils to make progress over time and to work towards appropriate qualifications, including functional skills and GCSEs.
- School leaders anticipate that most pupils initially on roll will follow a key stage 3 curriculum. However, they have also designed a post-16 options offer that includes

suitable qualifications and experiences to support progression into further or higher education, apprenticeships and employment.

- The school intends to provide a carefully planned careers education programme, ensuring that pupils receive impartial, up-to-date information, advice and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their next steps.
- The PSHE scheme of work is designed to help pupils understand the importance of not discriminating against people with protected characteristics, in line with the Equality Act 2010. It incorporates relationships and sex education (RSE), including specific teaching on personal safety and consent. School leaders intend to consult with parents and carers about the content of the proposed RSE curriculum as part of the induction process.
- The proprietor has appointed a headteacher and other senior staff. These staff understand how to adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEMH needs. Further staff will be recruited with the skills and expertise required to implement the curriculum effectively. The school will use the proprietor's existing systems for ongoing staff training and plans to draw on a team of internal and external specialists where needed. A rigorous quality assurance cycle is planned so that teaching of the curriculum is checked regularly and maintained at a consistently high standard.
- The school has clear procedures to help staff assess pupils' learning accurately. Staff will track progress towards both academic and personal targets, using this information to adapt schemes of work and select strategies that build on what pupils already know and can do. This approach should enable pupils to make steady progress from their starting points. Parents will receive termly reports so that they are kept informed about their child's attainment and progress.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is permitted to open.

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

Paragraph 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The proprietor has set out clear plans for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The proposed enrichment curriculum offers a range of opportunities to strengthen pupils' personal development, including educational visits beyond the school and input from external visitors. It is intended that the curriculum is used to help pupils understand the importance of not discriminating against people with protected characteristics, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- The proposed school's policies and schemes of work clearly set out how fundamental British values will be promoted. Values such as mutual respect and democracy are intended to be taught explicitly and revisited regularly. The PSHE curriculum is well developed and explains how teaching will support pupils to understand and take responsibility for their actions, helping them to become thoughtful, responsible members of the school and wider community.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is permitted to open.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7 to 7(b)

- The child protection and safeguarding policy is available to parents, if requested. It reflects the most recent statutory guidance. The policy will also be published on the website if the proposed school is permitted to open.
- The designated safeguarding lead has a secure understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm. The proposed staff induction programme includes a comprehensive safeguarding training offer for all staff. This will cover key areas such as recognising and responding to abuse, local and contextual risks that pupils may face and the school's whistleblowing procedures. Together, these arrangements are likely to help staff understand their responsibilities and respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns.

Paragraphs 9 to 16

- The school has developed a behaviour policy in line with the company's principles. It sets out the approach to managing pupils' behaviour. This includes the use of rewards, sanctions and record-keeping of behaviour incidents. The policy focuses on building positive relationships and the use of restorative practice. Staff will be trained in these approaches as part of the induction and ongoing training programme.
- The anti-bullying policy provides clear guidance to help staff recognise, respond to and support pupils who may be affected by bullying. It sets out expectations for how concerns should be identified, recorded and monitored. The proprietor has also established defined processes for leaders to log incidents and follow them up systematically. These arrangements are likely to support a consistent, timely response to bullying and to help leaders track patterns over time.
- The proprietor has put in place a comprehensive set of measures to ensure that the premises are safe for pupils. An external fire safety company services fire alarms, extinguishers and related equipment and the proprietor has commissioned a full fire risk assessment to secure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. All high-priority actions identified in this assessment have been addressed, including ensuring that all fire doors close fully. Leaders have identified a suitable external assembly point and intend to hold termly fire drills for staff and pupils so that evacuation procedures become familiar and well-rehearsed. In addition, a structured schedule of daily, weekly and monthly checks has been established to monitor the condition and safety of the building on an ongoing basis. These arrangements indicate a proactive and systematic approach to premises safety.
- The proposed school has produced a suitable first-aid policy. A named member of staff will oversee the content of first-aid boxes. Existing staff have received appropriate first-aid training. The proprietor intends to train new staff in first aid as part of the induction process.
- The proprietor has set out appropriate plans to ensure that pupils are well supervised throughout the school day. Staff will be present to oversee pupils' arrival and departure, helping to maintain safety and order at these key transition times. Leaders also intend to recruit additional staff where necessary so that a high staff-to-pupil

ratio can be sustained. These arrangements are likely to support close supervision, swift response to any issues that arise and a calm environment for pupils on site.

- The proprietor's proposed software includes options for all of the required information about pupils' admissions and attendance to be recorded digitally. It follows the latest guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). An electronic register will record attendance twice daily. The school expects pupils to attend regularly. It has a robust system in place for addressing poor attendance, including weekly tracking and liaison with local authorities as appropriate.
- The proprietor has written risk assessments for the site, including for the use of the pool and safety around the pond area. These set out control measures to minimise risk. For example, rooms in the proposed school's physical education suite are locked to prevent pupils from gaining unaccompanied access.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c) to 21(6)

- The proprietor has ensured that a single central record is in place. It is fully compliant for those adults the school already employs. The single central record includes the prohibition of teaching and barred list checks. As new staff join the proposed school, the proprietor's human resources team will ensure that vetting checks are completed in accordance with statutory guidance.
- The director of education, headteacher and other senior leaders have completed safer recruitment training. They understand the checks that must be completed before any member of staff takes up employment. Checks for those in management roles have also been checked.
- The proposed school does not intend to use supply staff regularly. However, leaders are aware of the checks they would need to make in line with the relevant requirements.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the school is permitted 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 will occupy the ground and first floor of a building formerly used as a nursing home. It is located in Todmorden in the Pennine valleys. The plans feature five classrooms, specialist teaching spaces, intervention rooms, therapy and sensory rooms, a kitchen and dining area, breakout spaces and office areas. The buildings are suitable for educating the proposed number of pupils the school plans to admit. School leaders intend to use outside spaces to teach aspects of the curriculum.
- The school has toilets exclusively for pupils. These are lockable from the inside and intended for sole use.

- The school has suitable shower facilities on site. It intends for physical education to take place on site.
- The proprietor has ensured that accommodation is available to cater for pupils' medical needs. The school has created a dedicated and suitable space for a medical room. It is close to a toilet. The room features a bed, access to running water and a lockable cabinet and lockable fridge for storing medication.
- The school building has been refurbished to a high standard. The school is close to a busy main road. The proprietor has installed a substantial metal fence adjacent to the road to prevent pupils from accessing this area.
- The lighting and acoustics make a suitable learning environment for pupils. External lighting allows users to enter and exit the building safely.
- Classrooms are well lit for the activities that will take place. They benefit from natural light and blinds to control the amount of sunlight. Windows on the first floor are fitted with restrictors for pupils' safety.
- Pupils will have access to drinking water throughout the day from numerous mains supply locations. These are labelled appropriately. Hot water does not scald.
- The outdoor space is suitable for pupils to play, socialise and exercise.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f) to 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii) to 32(3)(a), 32(3)(c) to 32(3)(g)

- Leaders of the proposed school know which information must be shared with parents in order to meet the standards, including contact details for the headteacher and the chair of the proprietor body. They intend to publish this information on the school's website once it is launched. The proprietor plans to use the established website format and core content already in place for its other schools, adapting this as necessary for the new setting.
- Leaders understand what information needs to be provided to local authorities regarding income and expenditure for pupils funded with an EHC plan.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standard in this part is likely to be met if the school is permitted to open.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33 to 33(k)

- The proposed school's complaints policy sets out clear, staged procedures and timescales for handling concerns. It explains how issues can first be raised and explored informally, with an explicit commitment to mediation and conciliation wherever possible. Where parents remain dissatisfied, the policy describes how a complaint can move to the formal stage, including the right to request a panel hearing and to be accompanied for support.

- The policy makes clear that the chair of any panel will be independent of the school's management, ensuring impartial consideration.
- Leaders intend to maintain secure written records of all complaints and their outcomes, which will be available for inspection.
- Taken together, these arrangements provide reassurance that complaints will be managed fairly, transparently and in line with the requirements of the standards.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standard in this part is likely to be met if the school is permitted to open.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor, and leaders at all levels, articulate a clear and shared vision for registering Pennine as an independent special school. They express a strong moral purpose centred on improving the life chances of vulnerable pupils and providing an education that supports long-term success. Placing pupils' emotional wellbeing and safeguarding at the heart of the school's offer is a consistent theme in their plans and discussions.
- Without a governing body, an experienced director of education alongside externally appointed education advisers will provide additional layers of quality assurance to the proprietor through regular on-site visits and reporting. The school will adopt a comprehensive tracking document, through its compliance team, to satisfy the proprietor that the standards will be met securely and consistently if the proposed school is granted permission to open.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school's accessibility plan is likely to be suitable in meeting duties under the Equality Act 2010. The bespoke plan considers pupils' access to the curriculum and physical environment.

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	152186
DfE registration number	381/6029
Inspection number	10425132

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 special school
Proprietor	Associated Wellbeing Limited
Chair	Kevin Jones
Headteacher	Sara Webb
Annual fees (day pupils)	£76,000
Telephone number	017 0639 9787
Website	www.associatedwellbeing.co.uk
Email address	s.webb@associatedwellbeing.co.uk

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	10 to 18	10 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	60	60

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	60
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	60
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	60
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	60

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school seeks to provide full-time education for up to 60 mixed-gender pupils aged between 10 and 18 years. Pupils who will attend the proposed school will have special educational needs and disabilities, mainly with SEMH needs. Pupils will have an EHC plan. A number of local authorities are likely to commission and fund places.
- The proposed school will operate from a single site. It is located at the following address: 182 Burnley Road, Todmorden OL14 5LB.
- The proprietor is Associated Wellbeing Limited.
- The proposed school does not have a governing body. The directors will provide a direct line of accountability alongside the proprietor.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first pre-registration inspection for the proposed school. The DfE commissioned the inspection to determine whether the school would be likely to meet the independent school standards if it were permitted to open.
- The inspection was conducted with two working days' notice.
- Inspectors met with the director of education, headteacher and curriculum leaders to discuss the proposed school.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements, including the school's policy, procedures and plans for training and monitoring. They also scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting processes.
- Inspectors had a tour of the school site to check the likelihood of the proposed school meeting the standards. They reviewed risk assessments carried out by the school.
- The inspectors spoke separately with the two directors of Associated Wellbeing Limited, one of whom is proprietor and chair of the board.

Inspection team

Marcus Newby, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Stephenson	His Majesty's Inspector

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