

# Pushforward Primary School

The Stable Barn, Blackthorpe, Bury St Edmunds, Rougham, Suffolk IP30 9HZ

**Inspection date**

21 January 2026

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

- At the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection, the independent school standards (the standards) in this part were unlikely to be met. Although the proprietor has experience in meeting the needs of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans through the unregistered alternative provision it operates, key areas of the proposed school's curriculum were underdeveloped, particularly English and the creative subjects.
- Since then, the proprietor has taken decisive action to strengthen the curriculum. It has engaged an external consultant and directed staff from within the organisation to work together on curriculum development. This work has resulted in clearer and more coherent curriculum plans.
- Leaders, for example, have replaced the previous phonics programme with one that is designed specifically for older pupils. The reading books closely match the sounds pupils will learn and are age appropriate. Leaders intend this approach to maintain pupils' motivation and reduce the risk of pupils disengaging from reading.
- The creative curriculum is now more clearly defined. It covers subjects including art, design technology, food and nutrition, music and media. Clear 'I can' statements set out the knowledge and skills pupils will learn over time. These will build as pupils move from one creative project to the next. Curriculum-linked enrichment, such as educational visits, will further support pupils' learning.
- The proprietor has retained suitable schemes of work for relationships education and personal, social and health education. Pupils will learn essential content, including understanding different family structures and how to stay safe online. The curriculum aims to help pupils respect and understand themselves, and to recognise both similarities and differences between themselves and others. There are also appropriate plans for extra-curricular activities to complement this and the wider curriculum, such as using a nearby leisure centre for badminton and swimming. These activities are intended to promote healthy habits and positive attitudes to physical activity, supporting pupils' physical health and mental wellbeing.

## Paragraphs 3 to 4

- As at the first pre-registration inspection, the school has expertise and systems in place to meet the needs of pupils with an EHC plan. Leaders will guide staff to break down the long-term outcomes in pupils' EHC plans into specific, time-limited and measurable targets within individual learning plans. The proprietor plans to engage professionals, including speech and language therapists, to support staff in adapting the curriculum and in promoting pupils' wider development, such as their social skills. An online system will be used to monitor and assess pupils' progress against these targets and the curriculum goals over time, to capture achievement and inform teaching.
- Through induction and ongoing professional learning, leaders and staff will develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge. For example, staff will learn to use clear language, visual supports and structured routines for pupils with communication difficulties, and to reduce direct demands, offer choices, and plan learning to support engagement and emotional regulation for pupils with pathological demand avoidance.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

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

### *Paragraph 5 to 5(d)(iii)*

- Leaders will provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through concrete, planned experiences rather than abstract discussion. Pupils will practise democracy by voting in group work, take part in debates on topical issues and complete community projects from start to finish. Learning about crime and punishment, alongside visits to the police and emergency services, will help pupils understand how laws are made and enforced and why rules matter in everyday life.
- Pupils will explore difference and equality through explicit teaching about identity, protected characteristics and prejudice, supported by visits to places of worship and work with local communities and charities. Through approaches like restorative conversations, pupils will learn to empathise, respect others' views and understand their own rights and responsibilities. Staff will ensure that political issues are handled carefully and without bias so pupils can form their own balanced views within a safe and well-structured curriculum.
- 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

### *Paragraph 7 to 7(b)*

- The safeguarding policy is likely to meet requirements well because it follows statutory guidance closely and shows a strong understanding of the risks faced by the pupils the proposed school intends to serve. Its procedures give staff clear and practical steps for recognising concerns, responding to disclosures and managing high-risk issues such as sexual violence, online harm and child-on-child abuse, which should support consistent and confident practice.
- The wider safeguarding culture is also likely to be effective because leaders have put simple and robust systems in place that make it easy for staff to raise concerns,

including always having a designated safeguarding lead on site and using an efficient online reporting system that gives leaders full oversight. Induction, ongoing training and regular supervision should strengthen staff confidence and help maintain consistent practice. The proprietor's strong links with local authority children's social care, combined with its own arrangements such as pre-admission home visits, should further increase the school's capacity to act quickly and appropriately when pupils need help.

#### *Paragraphs 9 to 10*

- The behaviour policy is clear, structured and rooted in consistent routines. Staff are expected to log behaviours daily, record parent and carer contact, update risk assessments and seek leaders' decisions on suspensions and exclusions. This should create appropriate oversight and support consistent practice. Behaviour records will sit alongside safeguarding ones, helping leaders to build a holistic picture and take appropriate action. Recognising that some aspects of the policy could be misinterpreted, leaders have set out clear plans for training and supervising staff. This support should help staff hold restorative conversations confidently and apply natural consequences in a fair and consistent way.
- The anti-bullying policy is equally practical and supported by clear, preventative measures. It defines bullying precisely, identifies different forms of harm and sets out straightforward routes for pupils and parents to report concerns, with staff required to act and involve leaders. The school's small size, high staffing ratio and range of teaching and breakout spaces give leaders workable ways to spot issues early, prevent escalation and separate pupils when needed. The structured response process, combined with leaders' experience in teaching pupils about relationships and community in their alternative provision, suggests that bullying incidents will be managed effectively.

#### *Paragraphs 11 to 14, 16 to 16(b)*

- The proposed school is likely to meet health and safety requirements well because the policy is detailed, practical and supported by clear systems for implementation. Leaders have set out specific routines such as daily oversight, monthly safety meetings and annual audits, and they use a qualified adviser to strengthen compliance and guide improvements. Specified staff training, clear expectations for reporting hazards and a structured programme of checks suggest that the proprietor understands its legal duties and has the capacity to maintain safe learning and working conditions.
- Fire safety arrangements also appear strong and are likely to meet the requirements of the Fire Safety Order. The policy sets out clear expectations for trained fire marshals, equipment checks and evacuation procedures, and it requires leaders to review arrangements after audits, near misses or changes. The fire risk assessment shows that the proprietor acts on professional advice promptly, with improvements such as fire-rated doors, safe refuge points, tested electrical equipment and installed emergency lighting already completed.
- The school is also likely to meet standards for first aid, supervision of pupils and risk assessment because leaders have created systems that are practical and proportionate to the setting. First-aid expectations are clear, with trained staff, suitable spaces and defined managerial responsibilities. Proposed supervision levels are high,

with 2 staff for every 3 pupils and additional trained adults available to respond to need, including covering staff absence. Risk assessments are already in place for a range of activities, and the policy explains clearly how dynamic risk assessment should be used to apply what is known about pupils or an activity to reduce risks in the moment.

#### *Paragraph 15*

- The proposed school's admissions register includes all required fields and is kept electronically in line with current guidance. Its attendance register is secure, uses national attendance codes, records both daily sessions and preserves all amendments in line with statutory timeframes. Clear procedures for following up absence, including prompt calls, checks with emergency contacts and home visits, further strengthen the school's ability to meet local authority expectations around prioritising pupils' attendance and following procedures for children missing in education.
- The standards in this part are 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), 19(2) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(6)*

- Owing to their training and the support of a specialist external organisation, the proprietor understands the requirements for pre-employment and vetting checks. Leaders know which checks must be completed and how these should be carried out. They also understand what information must be recorded on the single central record and which documents must be stored securely, including how long records should be retained.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff. If this is required, clear arrangements are in place. Supply staff and contractors would only be used where written confirmation of required pre-appointment checks has been received, and leaders would verify the individual's identity on arrival in line with statutory guidance. Volunteers will complete appropriate safer recruitment checks, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks where required, or would be subject to a written risk assessment and suitable supervision until checks are complete.
- The standards in this part are 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 proprietor has strengthened the premises even further, despite the standards already being met at the first pre-registration inspection. New secure fencing now surrounds the large outdoor area, which gives pupils plenty of space for activities such as bushcraft and for using equipment like the climbing apparatus. The site feels safer and more purposeful as a result. The medical room has also been upgraded, with a separate space that includes well-stocked and in-date medical supplies, a wash basin, a toilet and an adjustable bed, so that it meets the needs of any pupil with a physical disability.

- The building and outdoor space are well maintained and the size is suitable for 10 pupils and their staff. A large classroom downstairs and 2 smaller rooms upstairs give staff simple ways to group pupils so that teaching is focused and safe. Quiet breakout areas add further flexibility, with resources like ceiling-mounted swings and wobble cushions to support regulation, movement breaks and short catch-up tasks such as reading. The kitchen also supports the curriculum, with labelled drinking water, plenty of worktop space and facilities for cooking.
- The building has plenty of natural light, and the electric lighting is strong and reliable. Emergency lighting meets the requirements of the Fire Safety Reforms 2005. A clear schedule of daily, weekly, monthly and annual checks helps ensure that all systems continue to work as they should.
- There are separate, lockable toilets and showers for the sole use of pupils, and the hot water is checked weekly to avoid it posing a scalding risk.
- There is a neighbouring business that normally shares the driveway, but the proprietor has secured an agreement for the business to use a different access route during school hours. This keeps vehicle movements separate and reduces risk for pupils and staff. A clear and suitable risk assessment supports these arrangements and ensures they are managed safely.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f) to 32(1)(i), 32(2) to 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(d) to 32(3)(g)*

- The proprietor shows a clear understanding of the information it must publish, including key policies and plans that explain how the proposed school will meet its duties. Most of this information is already on the company website, and hard copies are available on request. If the school is registered, the proprietor plans to add a dedicated page so that school-specific information is easy for parents and carers to find.
- Because the school plans to admit pupils funded by the local authority, the proprietor has made sure leaders have simple and workable systems for deciding how funding will meet each pupil's needs. These systems draw on current practice in the organisation's unregistered alternative provision and on the role staff currently play in annual EHC plan reviews. It demonstrates that decisions about funding and record-keeping will be clear and effective.
- The online assessment framework and the annual report template give assurance that parents and carers will receive clear information about their children's progress. The annual report will cover attendance, academic achievement and behaviour, among other personal achievements, including those that link to a pupil's EHC plan.
- 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

### *Paragraph 33 to 33(k)*

- The complaints policy sets out clear written guidance and straightforward timescales for how the proposed school handles complaints. It strengthens early resolution by giving space for informal discussion while also providing a firm written route for formal escalation and, when needed, an impartial panel hearing with an individual independent of the school. It shows strong procedural fairness by allowing parents to attend with support and by ensuring that panel findings are shared appropriately and remain available for review. It also evidences robust accountability through its secure record-keeping, which the policy states capture outcomes and actions in every formal case.
- 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

### *Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)*

- At the first pre-registration inspection, the standards in this part that relate to the leadership knowledge and insight expected of the proprietor and those they appoint, and to the consistent fulfilment of their responsibilities to secure the standards, were deemed unlikely to be met.
- Since then, the proprietor has worked at pace, using the systems-driven approach established across the wider organisation to set up a governing body with the necessary experience and expertise. This included defining roles and terms of reference clearly, which supported the recruitment of volunteers with relevant backgrounds in areas including children's social care and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) advocacy. They have also introduced ongoing training and begun to codify key processes, including how the standards will be audited. If implemented well, these developments should provide a strong framework for celebrating, checking, challenging and supporting leaders and staff to meet the standards securely over time.
- The part about actively promoting pupils' wellbeing, judged likely to be met at the first pre-registration inspection, remains likely to be met. The proprietor has a proven track record in advocating for vulnerable pupils through its unregistered alternative provision. Leaders have a clear moral purpose and aim to address a local need in provision for pupils with an EHC plan. They also seek and act on feedback. These actions indicate a thoughtful approach to shaping the proposed school so that it is well placed to support pupils' needs.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school is granted permission to open.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- There is a clear accessibility plan. It sets out current and planned objectives to strengthen access to the curriculum, access to the physical environment, and access to information. For example, staff will be trained to use symbol-supported communication for those pupils who need it.

- This requirement is likely to be met should the proposed school open.

## **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	152350
DfE registration number	935/6041
Inspection number	10434645

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	Pushforward Primary School Ltd
Chair	Lyndsey Edwards
Headteacher	Lyndsey Edwards
Annual fees (day pupils)	£79,800
Telephone number	0330 8180186
Website	<a href="http://www.pushforward.uk">www.pushforward.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@pushforward.uk">enquiries@pushforward.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>	<b>Inspector's recommendation</b>
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	7 to 11	7 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	10	10

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	10
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	10
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	10
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	10

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	5
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 proprietor consists of 3 directors and is registered as Pushforward Primary School Limited. These same individuals also serve as directors on several companies that provide unregistered alternative provision and youth support across Cambridgeshire and Suffolk for pupils of primary and secondary age and for post-16 students. They also have a pending application to establish a secondary school for pupils with SEND in key stage 4 as the directors of Pushforward Secondary School Limited.
- The proposed school is located at The Stable Barn, Blackthorpe, Bury St Edmunds, Rougham, Suffolk IP30 9HZ.
- The proprietor seeks registration for the school with the Department for Education (DfE) as an independent special school. The proprietor plans for the school to cater for pupils with a range of needs, including cognitive and learning needs; speech, language and communication needs; autism, and social, emotional and mental health needs. The school also seeks to cater for children who are looked after by the local authority. All pupils will have an EHC plan, and local authorities will commission school placements.
- The proprietor will use alternative provision when this is needed to meet a pupil's needs.

## Information about this inspection

- The DfE commissioned this pre-registration inspection to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the standards if permitted to open. This is the proposed school's second pre-registration inspection.
- The school's previous pre-registration inspection took place on 31 July 2025.
- This inspection was conducted with two days' notice.
- The inspectors met with the managing director, director of education, group finance and administration director, head of school and two primary delivery practitioners.
- The inspectors reviewed documents and policies linked to the independent school standards. The lead inspector also had a tour of the school premises with the director of education.

## Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Smith

His Majesty's Inspector

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