

Blackwater Academy

23–31 Vittoria Street, Birmingham B1 3ND

Inspection dates

6 September 2018

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(c), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- Leaders propose to admit pupils who are aged 12 and 13. This is because they have had an increasing number of referrals from schools and local authorities for pupils of this age. Leaders have effective curriculum planning for pupils in these age groups.
- Leaders have prepared lessons and resources for younger pupils in subjects across their broad and balanced curriculum. They have made effective arrangements for pupils who lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. For example, they intend using level 1 functional skills material to support pupils in Year 8 and Year 9. They have sufficiently well-trained staff and teaching assistants to give small-group support and one-to-one teaching to help pupils catch up on any learning they have missed.
- Leaders' curriculum plans are intended to offer challenge. They plan to help pupils to be well prepared for high-quality academic qualifications as soon as they are ready to take them. Qualifications include GCSEs in English, mathematics, combined science, religious studies and sociology. Consequently, pupils are likely to be well prepared for later stages of their education, employment or training.
- Timetable plans that pupils will follow allow sufficient time for them to study for their GCSEs. For example, there are four hours a week each given English, mathematics and science.
- Curriculum planning is likely to be effective. Consideration has been given by leaders to the development of the knowledge, skills and understanding of younger pupils. For example, in Year 8 and Year 9, pupils in mathematics will learn about integers and place value, factor and prime numbers at the start of their learning. Leaders have planned increasing challenge in pupils' learning. For example, in mathematics, when they are ready, pupils will learn about quadratic equations and similarity and congruence in two-dimensional geometry.
- Leaders have effectively considered how to assess pupils. For example, in physics,

there are opportunities for pupils to learn about gravitational potential energy stores, to explain this to others and then to take tests that are designed to tell teachers what pupils need to do next.

- Planning for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is strong. In literacy, for example, there are well-designed resources for helping pupils understand the basics of accurate writing. Reading material is appropriate, varied and challenging for younger pupils who find reading difficult. Leaders have considered the low reading ages that some pupils are likely to have. Leaders' arrangements for pupils with education, health and care plans are likely to result in successful matching of resources to their needs.
- Leaders already have well-designed systems for reviewing the individual planning for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have adapted their strong personal, social, health and economic education curriculum to make it suitable for younger pupils. For example, there are plans to teach anti-bullying strategies to younger pupils that promote the reporting of any bullying. Leaders have given effective consideration to maintaining good behaviour.
- Leaders' existing curriculum plans show that the quality of education is effective. For example, at the end of the last academic year, a small number of pupils left in Year 11. All these pupils made strong progress from their starting points and the GCSE grades they achieved ranged from grade 6 to grade 9.
- The school is likely to continue to meet all of the requirements for this standard.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The school has an effective safeguarding policy which is fit for purpose and complies with current guidance from the Secretary of State. There are two designated safeguarding leaders, who are appropriately and regularly trained. Leaders train staff well in how to implement the school's safeguarding and child protection policies.
- Leaders have planned well for the safe and secure storage of confidential documentation on the new site. At the heart of the school site, there are rooms planned for safeguarding meetings and counselling for pupils. The school has efficient systems to share appropriate information about pupils in order to keep them safe. Leaders have good relationships with parents, carers, local authority colleagues and other agencies to help pupils in a timely manner.
- The single central record meets the requirements of the Secretary of State. Leaders are effectively trained in safer recruitment protocols.
- Leaders place the highest priority on health and safety. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and helpful to staff. For example, it requires there to be daily checks of the new school site by leaders and immediate improvements made where necessary. Leaders and staff record their checks of electrical equipment, heating, water temperature, first aid and the car park. They make records of any defects they find and who has made the required improvements.
- Risk assessments are a strength of the school. They are up to date and regularly

monitored by leaders. Staff say they use them when planning lessons and arranging activities out of school. For example, the risk assessments for the use of the local recreation centre are completed in meticulous detail. Staff make regular checks of the standard of the playing surfaces, age-appropriate sports equipment, pupil welfare, showers, changing facilities and slip hazards. Staff ensure that any issues that need attending to are dealt with effectively.

- Very recently, leaders have ensured that an independent fire-risk assessment has been conducted on the new site. There were two minor issues raised by the assessor that the school should address. The school has plans to do so immediately. They know they should do this before admitting pupils. The school has good escape routes and fire exits that are clearly signed. The fire assembly points are easily accessible. The fire extinguishers are new and have been installed throughout the school, and leaders know that these must be regularly tested. Leaders will use a well-planned routine for practising emergency exits from the building. They have already completed trials of such practices during the summer break with volunteer members of staff.
- First-aid provision is effective. New first-aid kits are readily accessible at key points around the site. Staff are well trained and there are sufficient numbers of first aiders. The medical room is equipped well enough to meet the relevant independent school standard.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils will be well supervised. Leaders are not seeking to increase the number of pupils beyond its registered number in the immediate future.
- The school is likely to continue to meet all of the requirements for this standard.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f) 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- The single central record is efficiently checked by leaders on a weekly basis and the leader responsible for its maintenance is exceptionally well informed about guidance relevant to safeguarding from the Secretary of State.
- Staff who are involved in appointing staff have been well trained in safe recruitment practices.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements for this standard because the procedures are clearly understood and continue to be implemented appropriately.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 24(2), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The proposed new site is fit for purpose. It has nine classrooms and three smaller rooms for small-group and one-to-one teaching. Storage is suitable so that resources are easily at hand for teachers and pupils. Leaders have completely refurbished the entire premises and, as a result, standards of cleanliness and decoration are high.
- The site is near an industrial estate. Leaders have already made contact with local businesses in the area with a view to negotiating work experience placements.
- All the classrooms, offices, meeting rooms and corridors are well lit. Leaders have ensured that the soundproofing is adequate. The entrance to the school is well lit inside and out, and leaders have made it secure. This means that visitors can be checked efficiently. The main entrance is the only means into the school and is not shared with any other premises. Leaders have made arrangements for efficient and secure checking of visitors' identities.
- Classrooms are well equipped with resources for the school's broad and balanced curriculum. For example, pupils will have access to music facilities to help them enjoy making their own work and understanding the music of others.
- There is a small external space for pupils to take breaks. It is easily supervised and has secure fencing and a fire escape. Leaders have planned to improve this space still further with seating and roofing.
- Leaders have planned a medical room that is fit for purpose. Water and a sink are available in the room and toilets are close.
- Toilet and washing facilities are in good working order and ready for use. They have been refurbished and redecorated over the summer break. There are separate toilets for girls and boys. Leaders have installed showers that are fit for purpose and secure.
- The rooms planned for science teaching allow pupils to learn GCSE combined science. These classrooms have secure storage spaces to allow leaders to meet Control of Substances Hazardous to Health regulations.
- The school is likely to continue to meet all of the requirements for this standard.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32, 32(1)(c)

- Leaders have ensured that the safeguarding policy and child protection policy are easily found on the school website. Leaders regularly monitor these policies, which are fit for purpose and comply with the guidance of the Secretary of State.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements for this standard.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- Leaders have clear and effective plans for the new site. For example, leaders require increased rooming capacity. They want more space so that there is more opportunity for small-group teaching, one-to-one counselling and the withdrawal of pupils for basic skills teaching. The new site gives them this space. It has been well chosen. It is clean, modern and business-like. Leaders have planned for the safety of pupils well. Their training and leadership of safeguarding were effective at the previous inspection and are likely to continue to be strong.
- Leaders are committed to giving pupils the chance to make effective improvements in their progress and attainment. Most pupils leaving in June this year gained high grades in demanding GCSEs. The curriculum they have in place has been well adapted for any pupils who are admitted at the ages of 12 and 13.
- Leaders plan to advertise for a substantive appointment of headteacher and this is likely to further stabilise leadership at the school. The current acting headteacher has been inspiring his staff and pupils successfully since the school opened in 2016.
- The school is likely to continue to meet all of the requirements for this standard.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school meets the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, as leaders have accessibility planning in place.

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 that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	143039
DfE registration number	330/6026
Inspection number	10077517

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Secondary
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Blackwater Academy Ltd
Chair	Andra Iordache
Headteacher	Adeel Tassawar
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,000–£10,000
Telephone number	0121 238 0758
Website	www.blackwateracademy.co.uk
Email address	info@blackwateracademy.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	22–24 May 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	14 to 16	12 to 16	12 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	60	60

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	60	60
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10	10
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	10	10
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	10	10

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	13	13
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	5	5

Information about this school

- Blackwater Academy is currently situated at Vittoria Road in Birmingham. Leaders plan to move the school to a new address nearby on Cecil Street. They propose to admit pupils to the new site in September 2018. The new site was formerly used for office and administrative purposes.
- The school had a standard inspection on 22–24 May 2018.
- The school opened in 2017. It provides alternative provision for pupils at risk of being excluded or permanently excluded from mainstream school.
- The inspection took place during the school holidays so there are no pupils currently on its roll. Leaders register pupils during the school year as a result of referrals from mainstream schools or local authorities.

- The school is registered with the Department for Education to admit up to 60 pupils aged 14 to 16. Leaders have recently applied to the department to change this age range to 12 to 16.
- Leaders accept referrals to the school when they believe pupils will benefit from small-group learning.
- Pupils stay on the roll of the schools who have referred them and this is why the number on roll appears as two in the Department for Education's 'Get information about schools' portal.
- The school does not have a religious character.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place over one day during the school holidays when there were no pupils present.
- Leaders have applied to the Department for Education to change the site of the school to a site in Cecil Street, Birmingham. Leaders have also applied to change the age range of the pupils they admit from 14 to 16 to 12 to 16.
- The inspection took place on the proposed site for the school in Cecil Street, Birmingham. The inspector scrutinised all the internal and external spaces on the proposed new site.
- The inspector had meetings with the acting headteacher.
- There were meetings with the deputy headteachers, the designated safeguarding leader and other teaching staff.
- The school's plans for the proposed new site were inspected. The inspector scrutinised a range of other documentation, including policies for teaching and learning and health and safety, the school's improvement plan, curriculum plans and arrangements for assessment.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the single central record, the school's safeguarding policy and associated policies and arrangements for keeping pupils safe. These included risk assessments for activities conducted by the school.

Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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