

Unity School

Cartwright House, Broad Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST1 4EU

Inspection date

9 April 2019

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are 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)(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)(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) and 4

- The school wishes to admit pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It is anticipated that all of these pupils will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The headteacher has produced a comprehensive curriculum policy. The curriculum policy covers all compulsory areas of learning. The curriculum provides all pupils with opportunities to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Alongside core subjects, pupils also engage in creative learning, including in music and media.
- The headteacher has carefully considered the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils, including those with an EHC plan, that the school wishes to admit. The policy is supported by detailed schemes of work that have been suitably adapted. Curriculum planning considers the needs and prior attainments of pupils.
- The deputy headteacher is completing formal training to become a qualified special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Almost half of the current pupils have an EHC plan. The SENCo ensures that appropriate interventions and adaptations are made to learning. Pupils access the full curriculum and make strong progress.
- The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education is well planned and considers the needs of pupils. Pupils learn about rights, responsibilities and the law. Leaders know their local context and make sure that they teach pupils how to keep themselves safe.
- Regular careers advice and guidance are provided by the local authority. This guidance is accurate and up to date. Pupils can make informed choices about a broad range of career options. The curriculum helps them to fulfil their potential.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is positive. Strong relationships underpin learning

experiences. In lessons, teachers take into account what pupils already know and can do and use the time productively. Pupils have ample opportunities to learn and make progress. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They use a range of good-quality classroom resources effectively.

- The assessment policy is clear and applied consistently. The school uses standardised tests to identify pupils' starting points. Teachers use this information to plan appropriate learning. Teachers track and monitor pupils' progress effectively, making sure that they make any necessary adjustments to teaching. Pupils have opportunities to sit a range of GCSEs and equivalent qualifications.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements for this standard for the pupils they intend to admit if the material change is accepted.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- The safeguarding policy is written in accordance with current guidance issued by the secretary of state. It is underpinned by local guidance and clearly outlines the process to follow if there are concerns about a child. The school does not currently have a website. Paper copies of the policy are available upon request.
- The designated safeguarding lead is appropriately trained and fully aware of their responsibilities when it comes to keeping pupils safe. Staff receive regular, appropriate child protection training. They know how to identify pupils at risk of abuse and neglect. Procedures for managing safeguarding concerns are clear. Staff are always vigilant and supervise pupils appropriately. Training for an additional designated safeguarding lead has been agreed.
- Leaders have carried out appropriate checks on staff who work at the school. Records of these checks are appropriately maintained. The school's single central record meets requirements.
- The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy. It is thorough and is implemented fully by all staff.
- The first-aid policy is current and fit for purpose. An appropriate number of staff are trained in administering first aid. Leaders maintain suitable records of accidents and any treatment given.
- The school has a detailed anti-bullying policy. Procedures for reporting issues are clear. Reported incidents are low. The school maintains comprehensive records, including of any action taken.
- Leaders have taken appropriate action to make sure the school complies with fire safety. An appropriate fire risk assessment is in place. Exits from the building are clearly identified and accessible. Frequent testing of alarms takes place and pupils participate in regular practice evacuation drills. Leaders maintain appropriate records. They make sure firefighting equipment is serviced regularly. Emergency lighting is regularly tested. Routine testing of portable appliances is in place.
- Leaders carefully consider risks within the school environment and wider community. Staff produce detailed risk assessments. They identify risks appropriately and take

necessary action to reduce risks.

- Physical education (PE) takes place at a local leisure centre. Pupils have access to showers and washrooms at this facility.
- The proprietor ensures that an admissions register is maintained. The register contains the necessary information. Pupils' attendance is recorded in accordance with legislative guidance. Absence is followed up thoroughly by the school.
- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements for this standard if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of the material change.

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(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) and 29(1)(b)

- The school site is safe and secure with authorised access only.
- The premises are maintained to a high standard. Classrooms are light, well ventilated and appropriately soundproofed. They are spacious enough for the small groups they accommodate. Classrooms are suitable for the activities that take place within them. The school is well resourced.
- The number of toilet facilities are suitable for the number of pupils who access the school building. Toilets are intended for one person at a time and can be secured from the inside. A disabled toilet is also accessible on the ground floor. Washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. The hot water does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- The proprietor has made suitable arrangements to cater for pupils' short-term medical needs. The accommodation is near to a toilet and has washing facilities. Staff take additional first-aid equipment off site when pupils are accessing trips and visits.
- Suitable drinking water is always provided and accessible.
- External lighting is provided to ensure safe entry and exit to and from the school building in the hours of darkness.
- There is a small outdoor space that is appropriate for the number of pupils. Pupils access nearby playing areas with full staff supervision, as well as the local leisure facility.
- These standards are likely to be met if the proposed material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- Suitable arrangements are in place for parents and carers to access copies of the safeguarding policy upon request.
- The school is likely to meet the requirements of this standard if the DfE approves implementation of the material change.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c) and 34(2)

- The headteacher and proprietor wish to extend the school's registration to cater for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. School leaders have carefully considered the needs of the pupils they would like to admit. They have made appropriate adaptations to schemes of work and curriculum planning to take these needs into account.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have undertaken training appropriate to their roles. They have appropriate expertise and experience to meet the needs of the pupils they plan to admit.
- Leaders demonstrate skills and knowledge to ensure that the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders plan to increase the staff team as the school grows. This will ensure that they maintain high staffing ratios and a good level of supervision.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

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|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 137574 |
| DfE registration number | 861/6006 |
| Inspection number | 10100684 |

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 | Independent secondary school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Proprietor | Matthew Wilcox |
| Chair | Matthew Wilcox |
| Headteacher | Mr I Amponsah |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £16,150 |
| Telephone number | 01782 409508 |
| Email address | school@unitystoke.co.uk |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 10–12 October 2017 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal | Inspector's recommendation |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Age range of pupils | 13 to 16 | 13 to 16 | 13 to 16 |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 12 | 24 | 24 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Mixed |
| Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age | 6 | 24 (max) |

| | | |
|--|----|----------|
| Number of part-time pupils | 6 | 12 |
| Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities | 12 | 24 (max) |
| Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan | 5 | 24 (max) |
| Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan | 5 | 24 (max) |

Staff

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff | 3 | 4 |
| Number of part-time teaching staff | 1 | 2 |

Information about this school

- Unity School is a small independent day school located in Stoke-on-Trent. The school is registered for up to 24 pupils aged 13 to 16 who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream school. Often pupils have experienced disruption to their learning. Some pupils experience behavioural difficulties that have led to exclusion from previous settings.
- The school wishes to make a change to its registration to become a special school.
- Pupils are referred from local authorities, including Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire and Leicester. Pupils are also referred from local schools.
- The school was inspected in October 2017 when it was judged to be good in all areas.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority the Department for Education under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The school applied for a material change. The school wishes to change designation to become an independent special school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the SENCo, who is also the deputy headteacher. The inspector toured the premises with the headteacher.
- Several key policies were examined, including on safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying and first aid. The fire risk assessment was also reviewed, along with risk assessments for both classroom and off-site activities.
- The curriculum policy was scrutinised, along with supporting schemes of work and planning documentation.
- The inspector visited several lessons, including English, mathematics and citizenship. Work in pupils' books was reviewed across all year groups in English, mathematics, science, citizenship, PE and religious education.

Inspection team

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
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