

Dudley Port School

Station Drive, Tipton DY4 7QR

Inspection date

9 July 2020

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), 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)(h), 2(2)(i) and 3(i)

- The proprietorial body and leaders have set out clearly their rationale, ethos and vision for the school. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils are helped to achieve their potential through a personalised approach to learning. The curriculum, based on the national curriculum, provides a breadth of experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative education. Schemes of work and planning have been fully updated in preparation for the new academic year. They consider the likely range of starting points of the pupils and provide a coherent sequence of work.
- Leaders intend that pupils will access a wide range of accredited courses through key stages 3 and 4. Some courses at key stage 3 are specifically chosen to provide pupils with a good preparation for more challenging work at key stage 4. It is proposed that pupils will be able to access qualifications at levels matched to their needs and abilities from entry level to level two and GCSE qualifications in the core and foundation subjects.
- Leaders are ambitious in planning to provide an English Baccalaureate curriculum offer to pupils, including modern foreign languages, should pupils want to follow this route. Leaders are keen to be responsive to pupils' interests. They intend to provide a bespoke options route for individual pupils where possible.
- Pupils who are currently being educated at Dudley Port benefit from targeted support and intervention to help them further develop their literacy and numeracy skills, and address any gaps in their knowledge. The headteacher has devised a new approach to reading and literacy – 'connecticate' – which emphasises the importance of the daily reading of a variety of texts, as well as planned teaching of phonics, spelling, and speaking and listening.
- The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education scheme of work is aligned to the school's aims and ethos, and is likely to prepare pupils well for life in British society. Pupils are likely to experience PSHE education through a planned and

sequenced approach of discrete and cross-curricular learning, including a weekly lesson on fundamental British values. The scheme of work includes the teaching of relationships and sex education. Pupils are likely to develop a good understanding of the different protected characteristics, as set out in the 2010 Equality Act, because the scheme of work sets out how these will be taught.

Paragraphs 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)

- Pupils currently on roll at the school can access careers advice and guidance from Sandwell Connexions, and this is likely to continue. They also follow an accredited 'employability skills and preparation for working life' course. The school has recently joined the Black Country careers hub as they intend to further enhance careers guidance for pupils. Leaders intend to continue to offer careers day workshops, visits to the NEC Skills Show and opportunities for work experience.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(j) and 4

- Leaders are ambitious for the school and its pupils, and set high expectations of behaviour. Each pupil has an individual behaviour or pastoral support plan, informed by their education, health and care (EHC) plan. Classrooms are well resourced and provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils. The work of pupils who currently attend the school is celebrated through attractive displays around the school.
- Staff have good subject knowledge. A small number of staff have qualified teacher status. Others have degrees in subjects that they are likely to teach, including mathematics, science, sports science and art. Leaders intend to continue the current professional development opportunities that staff benefit from, including mentoring support for less-experienced staff.
- Leaders have established a regular programme of checking on the quality of teaching and learning, and the management of behaviour in each subject, with a focus on the Department for Education's (DfE) Teachers' Standards. Staff use the range of baseline information gathered about pupils to inform their initial planning. The school's assessment framework enables staff to check pupils' progress frequently and adjust planning and target additional support accordingly.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii) and 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders understand the specific special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of the pupils for whom they currently cater and plan to cater for. The curriculum is enhanced by a well-planned pastoral curriculum, which intends to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The recently introduced 'character education' programme emphasises the importance of developing pupils into well-rounded citizens, showing tolerance and respect for others.
- Pupils and staff have recently worked together to vote on the most important values for their school. These have been identified as teamwork, honesty, respect, happiness and trust. Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and protected characteristics is further enhanced through experiences such as annual culture days and activities linked to Black history month. Pupils recently took part in a well-being

day at school. They explored different ways of managing their emotions through activities such as mindfulness, art and music therapy and yoga.

- Leaders intend for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as sporting events. Current pupils have recently been supporting a local foodbank initiative as part of their charity work.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- The proprietorial body and leaders have made sure that there are effective arrangements in place to safeguard pupils. The school's safeguarding policy takes account of the most recent government guidance. The headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), and the deputy DSL have completed suitable safeguarding training for their roles.
- All staff have recently completed safeguarding refresher training facilitated by the proprietorial body. The headteacher knows the possible risks that pupils may face, in the context of pupils' vulnerabilities. He has completed additional training in youth violence.
- The PSHE education curriculum enables pupils to learn how to keep safe in the local community and online. It is proposed that pupils will also be able to complete an additional qualification, 'keeping safe and healthy', at a level matched to their ability.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b) and 10

- Leaders and staff have set high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Behaviour records show that behaviour is improving over time. There is a declining trend in the number of fixed-term exclusions and incidents requiring physical intervention. The inspector saw detailed evidence of behaviour incidents that have occurred at the school. They included suitable actions taken to follow up these incidents, including support for pupils and liaison with parents and carers and external agencies where appropriate.
- The school's behaviour policy is adequate but does not reflect the recent positive developments in managing pupils' behaviour in the school, such as the opportunity for pupils to reflect on their behaviour in a safe space. There is no reference to the new pupil passports that leaders have introduced, enabling pupils to earn points to exchange for a lifelong dream or ambition, such as a visit to a famous football stadium. Leaders acknowledge that the policy needs updating and intend to address this as soon as possible.
- Leaders have a suitable anti-bullying policy and keep a record of all bullying incidents, of which there are very few. Pupils learn to recognise bullying, and the different forms it takes, through the PSHE education curriculum and planned anti-bullying focus days.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- Leaders have a suitable health and safety policy and first-aid policy in place. There is clear signage on display around the building relating to health and fire safety. Several staff are trained first aiders, and this information is available to all staff.
- The school's fire risk assessment was updated in November 2019 and no 'high risks' were identified. All fire exits in the building are clearly signed and suitable emergency lighting is in place. Regular fire safety checks and drills take place. As part of the school's induction process, staff and pupils receive fire safety training. There are four appointed and trained fire marshals for the school.
- The school's risk assessment policy stresses the importance of assessing and managing all types of risks, including risks in the local environment. Every pupil has an individual risk assessment, which identifies additional precautions that should be taken to keep that pupil safe. Additional risk assessments have been completed in response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 14 and 15

- Pupils who currently attend Dudley Port School are listed in the school's admissions register. Pupils' attendance is recorded in line with DfE guidance, using the correct attendance codes.
- Pupils are suitably supervised by staff throughout the school day. They work in groups of no more than five pupils for lessons. The proprietorial body plans to appoint an additional teacher and welfare assistant should the school be successful in its registration.
- These standards are likely to be met.

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(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)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 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(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c) and 21(6)

- The school has a single central register of the full range of pre-employment checks carried out on all staff and the proprietorial body, such as fitness to work checks, and checks on staff who have worked abroad.
- Leaders and administrative staff make the necessary checks on any supply staff who are engaged to work at the school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have completed safer recruitment training. They are supported in the process of appointing new staff by a suitably trained member of the proprietorial company's human resources department.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1)(a), 24(1), 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 two-storey school building is currently operating as an annexe to another registered independent school. The building, the interior and exterior areas are well maintained. They provide suitable accommodation for the proposed number of pupils to follow a broad curriculum. Classrooms are well lit, with good acoustics, and provide a comfortable learning environment for the pupils.
- As well as classroom areas on the first floor, including an ICT suite, there are additional teaching areas on the ground floor. These include a food technology room, an indoor games area, which is also used for assemblies, a library and a bistro. Leaders are currently developing a sensory area where pupils will be able to relax and reflect in a safe way.
- There are suitable toilet facilities for the sole use of pupils, with cubicles, hot and cold running water and handwashing facilities. There is a separate toilet for staff and visitors. There are several areas in the school where pupils can access drinking water, which is clearly labelled.
- A medical room is set aside on the ground floor for the treatment of sick or injured pupils. It provides access to drinking water, has a washbasin and includes a toilet.
- The external site area is suitably lit and secure. There is a large tarmac area where pupils can play outside or take part in physical education. A shower is available in the school for pupils to use. Leaders are in the process of developing a horticulture area in part of their outside space, as they would like to further increase the range of learning experiences for pupils.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(b)(ii), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d) and 32(3)(f)

- All policies and procedures are made available in paper form, including the safeguarding policy. The proprietorial body's website provides information about the proprietorial body, with relevant contact details. It also includes a webpage for each of the schools in the group. Dudley Port School does not yet have its own webpage, but the proprietor intends that a page will be made available on the website. All the required policies and information will be accessible via this page.
- The school provides an annual written report to parents of pupils currently on roll. It provides information about the progress and attainment that the pupils are making in each subject.
- Leads provided evidence of the qualifications gained by pupils in the previous academic year.

- As the school is already operating, the proprietor was able to provide evidence of financial reporting to local authorities, and records of annual review meetings to discuss pupils' EHC plans.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)

- The school's complaints policy sets out clearly the steps that individuals need to take if they have a concern about any aspect of the school. The policy aims to resolve complaints informally where possible. It sets out a suitable timeframe for managing complaints. The inspector was provided with evidence of a complaint from the current academic year, which has been independently investigated and resolved.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietorial body have a clear rationale and desire for Dudley Port School to become an independent school in its own right. The chair of the proprietorial body and the managing director of education have good knowledge and experience of catering for pupils with SEND. There are several schools for pupils with SEND in the proprietorial group.
- There have been several changes in the leadership of the annexe provision in recent times. The current headteacher was appointed to the substantive role in January 2020, after serving as acting headteacher due to the ill health of the previous headteacher.
- The proprietorial body recognise that, if successful in their registration, pupil numbers will increase, and additional staffing will be required. They are already taking steps to address this.
- The headteacher's commitment to providing pupils with a quality, bespoke curriculum, well matched to their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and well-being, shines through. His professional development has been supported effectively by the proprietorial body and he has recently achieved the National Professional Qualification for Headship. He has worked with staff to revise the school's curriculum to ensure it meets the SEMH needs of pupils.
- All leaders have a good understanding of the independent school standards. A termly audit of compliance with the standards takes place. In addition, the headteacher is held to account via weekly reports and monthly monitoring visits. The proprietorial group employs a school improvement consultant to provide impartial support and advice, as well as internal checks and balances.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a suitable accessibility plan in place that meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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	147736
DfE registration number	333/6016
Inspection number	10149108

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	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Horizon Care and Education Group
Chair	Paul Callander
Headteacher	Daryl Hill
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,025 to £58,500
Telephone number	0121 557 7544
Email address	Daryl.Hill@horizoncare.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	18
Number of pupils of compulsory school age for whom a statement is maintained under section 324, or who is looked after by a local authority	18
Total hours operating as a school per week	25
Total hours of teaching provided per week	25

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11-16	11-16	11-16
Number of pupils on the school roll	18	30	30

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	18	30
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	18	30
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	18	30
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	18	30

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	6	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	5	6

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is one of several schools in the Horizon Care and Education group. It is currently operating as an annexe provision to Bloomfield School, Tipton, a registered independent school. At the time of the inspection, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only a small number of pupils were attending the school.
- The proposed school currently caters for pupils with an EHC plan, who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders propose to transfer all the current pupils onto the roll of the new school, should they be successful in their application. Additional places will then be made available to pupils who have an EHC plan.
- Current pupils are placed at the school via referrals from local authorities, usually Sandwell and Birmingham.
- The proposed school is seeking Section 41 approval.
- The proposed school will not have any religious denomination.
- The proposed school does not intend to use alternative provision.
- The proposed school does not have a website.

Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the DfE during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards if it is given permission to open. This is the proposed school's first inspection.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some documents were submitted electronically and were reviewed remotely by the lead inspector. Several additional documents, including updated schemes of work, were scrutinised on site. The lead inspector also looked at a range of safeguarding records, including the school's single central register, behaviour incidents, exclusions, child protection concerns and records of physical interventions.
- To maintain social distancing and school 'bubbles', the lead inspector had a tour of the premises with the headteacher, before pupils arrived on site.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and spoke to the chief executive officer (CEO) of Horizon Care and its managing director of education. The lead inspector also spoke to the headteacher in his capacity as DSL. The final feedback was conducted via video conference and was attended by the headteacher and the managing director of education, with apologies from the CEO.

Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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