

Sporting Stars Academy

Field Avenue, Baddeley Green, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST2 7AS

Inspection date

22 July 2020

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely 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)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i) and 3(i)

- The chair of the proprietorial body and the headteacher clearly set out their vision for the school. The school's ambition is to improve the pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). Leaders demonstrate clearly how their current key stage 4 curriculum has personal development as a central theme, as well as providing pupils with a personalised education programme that meets their academic needs. The proposed post-16 curriculum aims to build on this to further develop the SEMH of the students who attend.
- The current key stage 4 curriculum is based on the national curriculum, but it is not constrained by it. It provides a breadth of experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Curriculum plans map out the order of learning for Year 10 and Year 11 pupils who currently attend the school. Pupils have access to a wide range of qualifications at levels matched to their needs and abilities. These include GCSE courses and BTEC National Diploma qualifications at level one and level two. Qualifications can be obtained in the core subjects, as well as in sport, art, and health and social care. Pupils also experience a range of enrichment subjects, including home cooking skills, first aid and independent living to support their personal development. Functional English and mathematics courses develop pupils' speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. It is the school's policy that all pupils will study GCSE English and mathematics at a level that meets their needs.
- The proposed post-16 curriculum is planned to build on the school's current curriculum and will run alongside the key stage 4 timetable. It is likely to continue to provide a breadth of experience across a range of subjects. It is proposed that breakout sessions will be organised, when required, to meet the specific needs of the post-16 students. It is intended that the post-16 provision will offer GCSE courses either as a resit, or as an initial qualification. BTEC National Diploma qualifications can be studied up to level three and there is the option of studying A-level art. Leaders

are keen not to place a ceiling on pupils' achievements. Leaders plan to run enrichment subjects alongside accredited courses in order to enrich the curriculum and support the pastoral care of the students.

- The proprietorial body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

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

- Leaders have developed a suitable plan that provides current key stage 4 pupils with impartial careers advice and guidance. External careers advisers and a range of work experience placements support this work. The proposed post-16 careers programme intends to build on this with a particular focus on further training, higher education and the jobs market.
- The proprietorial body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

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

- In line with the school's core purpose, leaders demonstrate the necessary knowledge, understanding and expertise to improve pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and levels of motivation. This is likely to support pupils in making good academic progress in line with their ability.
- The learning environment is highly likely to support learning. Interactive whiteboards, inspirational quotations on the walls, suitable furniture, computers and a range of teaching materials are a hallmark of the school.
- The headteacher, core subject teachers, the art teacher and the sports teacher have qualified teacher status. Key stage 4 pupils, who currently attend the school, are taught by highly qualified staff with good subject knowledge. Leaders are keen for this to continue in the proposed post-16 provision and are currently strengthening their team by making three new appointments.
- The headteacher talks confidently about how she makes checks on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. She already completes a range of monitoring activities, including lesson visits, book scrutinies and learning walks. The headteacher intends to continue with this monitoring, working closely with staff to provide support and training that endeavours to improve their teaching.
- The proprietorial body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b), and 32(1)(c) [Part 6 provision of information]

- The school's safeguarding policy takes account of the most recent government guidance. There are a range of related policies that complement the safeguarding policy. These policies are available to parents on request.
- The headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputy DSL have completed suitable training in relation to their roles. The headteacher keeps up

to date with local authority and Department for Education (DfE) documentation and guidance.

- The headteacher outlined the annual safeguarding training that staff complete at the start of the autumn term. The training focuses on part one of 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE) and relevant updates. Staff who are appointed mid-year work through a similar training package with the headteacher.
- The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum supports pupils to learn how to stay safe in different situations, including when they are working online.
- Leaders have not ensured that their safer recruitment procedures are implemented consistently and in line with statutory guidance. Not all the required pre-employment checks have been carried out on staff and members of the proprietorial body. This potentially puts pupils at risk of harm.
- The proprietorial body has not ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

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

- Leaders have put together a detailed behaviour policy that outlines their positive and restorative approach to behaviour management. Leaders are keen for pupils to see every day and every lesson as an opportunity for a fresh start, when required. It is intended that this policy will be implemented in the proposed post-16 provision.
- When pupils join the school, their behaviour and the impact this might have on their learning is assessed. Behaviour and attitude for learning (BAFL) plans are then formulated. It is intended that the majority of pupils who attend the proposed post-16 provision will be current pupils. Therefore, the BAFL plans will be reviewed and continued. If new students join the post-16 provision, leaders intend to assess them on entry and formulate an individual BAFL plan.
- Currently, the start of every school day begins with form time. During these lessons, pupils spend time with their form tutor. Leaders explain how the time is used to prepare pupils socially and emotionally for the day ahead. Activities include board games, watching the news, having a chat and making smoothies. It is intended that this will continue into the proposed post-16 provision.
- The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy in place. Leaders articulate how they educate and encourage pupils to be accepting of difference. They demonstrate how this links to developing respect for the protective characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010. Leaders state that this approach will naturally extend into the proposed post-16 provision.
- The proprietorial body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

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

- A detailed health and safety policy and other related policies are in place. An external company carries out an annual health and safety visit and provides a help desk for advice and guidance. Nearly all staff have completed first-aid training. Leaders have also arranged training for staff linked to pupils with specific needs, such as diabetes.

- A fire risk assessment has been carried out. It is used as a working document to continually improve fire safety in the school. The school's health and safety officer is also the fire marshal. All staff have completed a basic level of fire safety training. Leaders provided evidence of fire safety checks, including checks on extinguishers and records of evacuations.
- The proprietorial body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

Paragraphs 14 and 15

- For pupils who are currently attending the school, the information recorded on the admissions register is in line with DfE guidance.
- The staff-to-pupil ratio suggests that pupils are suitably supervised throughout the school day. The proposed material change does not include an increase in the number of pupils attending the school. The maximum number of pupils attending will remain the same at 62. The teaching staff, including learning mentors, also provide support for pupils' welfare. This aligns with the school's ethos of providing academic support alongside pastoral care.
- The proprietorial body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- The DfE's inspection commissioning form did not state that Part 4 of the independent school standards be checked. However, as part of the safeguarding checks made during the inspection, the single central register was looked at to ensure that appropriate checks had been made on staff appointed since the most recent inspection. This prompted a more in-depth look into recruitment procedures.

Paragraphs 18(2)(a), 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)(a)(i), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(2), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 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 follows many of the safer recruitment procedures outlined in KCSIE, including identity checks, carrying out enhanced criminal record checks and medical assessments prior to appointment.
- The school has a single central register that is stored centrally and in electronic form. Currently, the school does not use any supply staff, but leaders are aware of the checks and safeguards that should be undertaken if they decide to use a supply agency.
- The headteacher and the other two directors have completed safer recruitment training. Currently, at least one of them will sit on any recruitment panel.

- The proprietorial body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(b), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(ii), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii) and 21(3)(b)

- Leaders have not made all the necessary pre-employment checks on staff prior to their appointment or recorded them on the school's single central register. Prohibition from teaching checks have not been made on all relevant staff.
- Section 128 checks have not been made on the headteacher, who is also a director, and the other members of the proprietorial body.
- As part of its recruitment procedures, it is the school's policy to obtain two written references prior to appointing a member of staff. However, nearly all staff in the school have been appointed based only on two verbal references. This potentially puts pupils at risk.
- The proprietorial body has not ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

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 premises are furnished and decorated to a very high standard. All rooms are well lit and have good acoustics. There are three classrooms and an art room, which provide a suitable space for pupils to learn. There is also a conference room and other multifunctional rooms that can be used as teaching spaces if required.
- There are separate boys' and girls' toilets, with hot and cold running water and handwashing facilities. Both are near to the medical room. The medical room is spacious, well resourced and includes a washbasin and a foldable bed. There are separate toilets for staff and visitors, as well as an accessible toilet.
- There is a shower room in the accessible toilet, but this is not used by pupils.
- There is an outdoor area that can be used by pupils to socialise at breaktimes. Leaders utilise local leisure centres to provide physical education on a regular basis. Showers are available at these facilities if pupils choose to use them. Leaders have completed risk assessments related to individual sites and activities.
- The school has a kitchen area. The kitchen is the place where pupils can obtain drinking water. However, leaders have put systems in place so that drinking water is available in the classrooms for pupils throughout the day.
- The proprietorial body has ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The chair of the proprietorial body and the headteacher are clear about why they want to extend the age range of the pupils at the school. Leaders explain clearly how their vulnerable Year 11 pupils will struggle in other post-16 provision and would benefit from remaining at the school for a further year, or possibly two, if required. Leaders have demonstrated how they successfully cater for the SEMH needs of their current pupils. They are keen to extend their provision to cater for 16 to 18 year olds.
- The headteacher, who is also a director, works closely with the other two members of the proprietorial body. The three directors have individual specialisms in education, finance and health and safety. They use their expertise to support the work of the school. Leaders value and act upon support and guidance from external agencies, including social care and special educational needs services. This is likely to improve provision within the school.
- Leaders demonstrate skills, knowledge and expertise appropriate to their role. This has enabled them to make sure that many of the independent school standards that were looked at as part of the inspection are likely to be met. In particular, the standards linked to the quality of education are clearly understood and likely to be met consistently. However, some of the standards linked to the safer recruitment of staff are not being met. This potentially puts pupils at risk of harm and could possibly have an impact on their well-being.
- The proprietorial body has not ensured that these standards are likely to be met if the material change application is approved.

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 unlikely 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, as set out in the annex of this report.

School details

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 141128 |
| DfE registration number | 861/6012 |
| Inspection number | 10154566 |

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 | Other independent school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Proprietor | Sporting Stars Community Interest Company |
| Chair | Shane Tudor |
| Headteacher | Emma Tench |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £25,155 to £47,775 |
| Telephone number | 01782 248248 |
| Website | www.sportingstarsacademy.com |
| Email address | emma.tench@sportingstarsacademy.com |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 17–19 April 2018 |

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal | Inspector's recommendation |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Age range of pupils | 14 to 16 | 14 to 18 | 14 to 18 |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 38 | 62 | 62 |

The proprietorial body has not ensured that all of the standards in Parts 3, 4 and 8 are likely to be met if the material change application is approved. Please note that the school is already registered to cater for up to 62 pupils.

Pupils

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Mixed |
| Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age | 31 | 62 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 1 | 1 |
| Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities | 31 | 62 |
| Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan | 29 | 62 |
| Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan | 29 | 62 |

Staff

| | School's current position | School's proposal |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff | 10 | 12 |
| Number of part-time teaching staff | 0 | 0 |
| Number of staff in the welfare provision | 0 | 0 |

Information about this school

- The school currently caters for key stage 4 pupils. All these pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities linked to SEMH. It is also likely that they will have an education, health and care plan.
- Leaders propose to give current pupils the option of undertaking their post-16 education in this school if the material change is granted. However, leaders also intend to admit new pupils to the proposed post-16 provision, if it meets their needs.
- Current pupils are placed at the school via referrals from local authorities, including Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.
- The school does not have a religious denomination.
- The school does not use, or intend to use, alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the DfE during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic of 2020, to determine whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material change is granted.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many documents were submitted electronically and I reviewed these remotely prior to the inspection. Several additional documents, including the school's single central register, were scrutinised on site.
- As the inspection included an on-site visit, a tour of the premises was possible.
- Social distancing was maintained throughout the inspection. Pupils who currently attend the school's key stage 4 provision were not on site because the school had closed for the summer holidays.
- I met with the headteacher, who is also a director of the school. The headteacher is also the DSL and the special educational needs coordinator. I also met with the chair of the proprietorial body.
- The final feedback meeting was conducted by telephone with the headteacher later in the day. This was at the request of the school, to enable a deep clean to continue in the afternoon on the day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if-
 - 20(6)(a) MB-
 - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether-
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any

disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;

- 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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