

West Midlands Education and Skills

86 Watery Lane Middleway, Bordesley, Birmingham B9 4HN

Inspection dates

29 January 2021

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)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- Leaders have developed curriculum plans and schemes of work to meet the needs of key stage 2 pupils. The plans are based on the national curriculum. Leaders have also integrated the school's wider curriculum offer into the plans.
- Leaders have considered the needs and aptitudes of key stage 2 pupils and have adapted planning to meet those needs. Pupils have access to the full range of national curriculum subjects including subjects such as science, history and geography. Leaders have purchased new reading books to meet pupils' specific needs. The curriculum is also supplemented with practical activities such as cooking.
- Leaders have paid close attention to the needs of pupils above compulsory school age. Bespoke programmes of study have been developed to meet both the educational and pastoral needs of these learners.
- The personal, social, health and economic curriculum reflects the school's aims and ethos. It is suitably adapted to meet the needs of key stage 2 pupils and those above compulsory school age. It pays due regard to the protected characteristics and is likely to help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain well.

- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

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

- Teaching is provided by one-to-one tutoring. The tutors are matched carefully to individual pupils. They spend time developing positive working relationships with pupils that help to engage them in their learning. It also enables tutors to understand pupils' specific needs and aptitudes so they can adapt their planning to meet those needs. The teaching is likely to enable pupils to make good progress.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

Paragraph 4

- There is a clear assessment system in place. Assessments are linked to the planned objectives and enable tutors to evaluate pupils' performance.
- The school is likely to meet this standard if the material change is implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The school's safeguarding policy reflects current government guidelines and is published on the school's website. Leaders undertake all the required safeguarding checks on staff and ensure that safeguarding training is regularly updated.
- As most pupils are educated in designated settings in the community, there is a detailed tracking system in place to monitor their whereabouts. Tutors report when pupils arrive at the setting and when they return home. Any absences are reported and followed up immediately.
- All staff are acutely aware of pupils' vulnerabilities. They develop trusting and close working relationships with pupils that enable them to spot and respond to any dangers or issues quickly.
- Staff understand the school's safeguarding procedures well. They report any concerns quickly, and leaders take immediate action to follow up these concerns. Leaders work very closely with a range of agencies, especially social care, to keep pupils as safe as possible.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

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

- The school's health and safety policy is comprehensive. It includes individual roles and responsibilities to ensure that the policy is implemented and adhered to. The policy outlines the health and safety arrangements for areas such as the premises, classrooms, signage, manual handling, educational visits and the use of electrical appliances to keep staff and pupils as safe as possible when in school.
- A tour of the school site demonstrated that leaders are ensuring that the building will adhere to the arrangements set out in the policy. Some building works are yet to be completed. However, they are on track to be completed to an acceptable health and safety standard. New walls have been built to secure the school site. Checks, such as for legionella and electrical testing, have been completed.
- A fire risk assessment was carried out in November 2020. This identified a range of remedial actions that needed to be undertaken, for example removing covers from smoke detectors and installing appropriate signage. The majority of these works have been completed and leaders provided evidence to show that the remaining works will be completed in the near future. The headteacher is a trained fire warden and a number of other staff have also completed fire marshal training. The fire logbook shows how regular fire drills and fire checks will be completed.
- The supervision policy sets out the expectations of how pupils will be supervised throughout the school day. It links to the behaviour policy and if implemented is likely to ensure that pupils are supervised closely and safely.

- The risk assessment policy sets out how risk assessments will be undertaken. A sample of risk assessments, including those on COVID-19 (coronavirus), individual pupils, site safety and the administration of medicines, show that staff follow the guidance in the policy. The assessments outline the potential hazards and the required actions needed to mitigate any potential risk or harm.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- There are suitable toilet facilities for staff and pupils. The medical room is situated next to a toilet and has appropriate washing facilities. Due to COVID-19 there has been a delay in the delivery of a bed to provide short-term care for sick pupils. However, leaders have developed an appropriate room for this purpose. The toilet and medical room facilities are clean and well-maintained.
- There are no separate showers or changing facilities. However, physical education will not be offered on site. The school intends to use local leisure centre facilities for the purposes of physical education and will use their changing and washing facilities as needed.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

Paragraph 25

- A considerable amount of building work has already been carried out to upgrade the school's facilities. Interior works yet to be completed are largely aesthetic, such as finishing painting and decorating of a teaching space. Outdoor works to be completed include finishing the play area and the basketball court. However, leaders shared evidence that the works have been planned. There have been some delays to building works due to COVID-19. It is likely that the accommodation and facilities will ensure that pupils' welfare, health and safety are maintained as far as possible.
- The school is likely to meet this standard if the material change is implemented.

Paragraphs 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- Teaching spaces have suitable acoustic conditions. New lighting has been installed throughout the building and on the exterior of the building. All lighting is functional. Teaching spaces benefit from natural light through large windows.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

Paragraphs 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- Pupils will have access to suitable drinking facilities. Drinking water signs are in place by the relevant taps throughout the school. Hot taps present no risk of scalding. There are washing facilities in the toilets and in the medical room.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

Paragraphs 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The outdoor play space is yet to be completed. However, considerable work has already been completed in this area. The space will provide adequate room for pupils

to play and will also include a basketball court. Pupils will access physical education off-site.

- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor, chair of governors and the headteacher demonstrate a clear understanding of the independent school standards. They are committed to ensuring that the independent school standards are consistently met and showed that they have the knowledge and skills to do this. For example, they responded to the fire risk assessment and undertook actions to ensure that the necessary works were undertaken to make the site safe. As a result, the standards checked during this inspection are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.
- Leaders have taken steps to update all school policies in line with the government's statutory guidelines. The policies show that the proprietor and leaders are committed to actively promoting the well-being of pupils.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of The Equality Act 2010. While the current building works are yet to be completed, the inspection evidence shows that leaders have considered how the building will be made accessible to all pupils.

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	146563
DfE registration number	330/6044
Inspection number	10173976

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 school
School status	Other independent special school
Proprietor	Sharon Saunders
Chair	Jim Ryan
Headteacher	Gemma Aird
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,006
Telephone number	01922 643303
Website	www.westmidlandseducationandskills.org.uk
Email address	learning@westmidlandseducationandskills.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	28–30 January 2020

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 19	9 to 25	9 to 25
Number of pupils on the school roll	35	40	40

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	34	40
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	35	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	35	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	35	40

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	25	Not applicable
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	Not applicable
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this school

- The school's first standard inspection was on 28 to 30 January 2020.
- The school was previously located in a converted manufacturing unit on the outskirts of Birmingham city centre. The proposed new site is a converted residential building in Walsall.

- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs who have previously had disruption to their education. All of the pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Some pupils will be educated full time in the school building. However, many of the pupils will spend some or all of their time being educated by their tutors in 'designated learning venues'. These venues are located in local businesses and other organisations such as museums and libraries. However, during this COVID-19 pandemic, tutors have created 'bubbles' with pupils and are educating them in their homes.
- The school is proposing to use a local leisure facility to provide physical education.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has not yet implemented the material change in relation to the change of premises. However, the school has exceeded the maximum number of pupils on roll that they are registered to admit. The school has also admitted pupils below and above the registered age range.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) in response to an application by the school for a change in premises and the number of pupils the school can admit. At the start of the inspection the school applied to the DfE for a change in the age range. This was considered as part of the inspection. The inspection focused on whether the new premises would be likely to meet some of the welfare, health and safety standards in Part 3 and the standards in Part 5 if the material change was implemented. It also focused on whether the school's proposed education for pupils in key stage 2 would be likely to meet the standards in Part 1.
- This was the first material change inspection.
- The inspector met with the chair of governors, the proprietor and the headteacher.
- A tour of the proposed site was conducted with the headteacher.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including the school's safeguarding policy and documents and policies relating to fire safety, supervision, health and safety and risk assessments. The inspector reviewed the school's key stage 2 schemes of work and plans. A sample of pupils' work was also reviewed.
- The inspector examined the school's record of safeguarding checks made on staff, and pupil safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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