

# Sporting Stars Academy

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

## Inspection dates

2 February 2021

### Overall outcome

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- At the time of the previous inspection in July 2020, leaders had not ensured that their safer recruitment procedures were implemented consistently and in line with statutory guidance. This has been addressed and they now make sure that all the required pre-employment checks are carried out on staff and members of the proprietorial body.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most up-to-date statutory guidance. The policy is available on the school's website.
- The headteacher is an experienced designated safeguarding lead and demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that the safeguarding of pupils is a high priority. The designated safeguarding lead is supported by three trained deputy designated safeguarding leads. All new staff receive safeguarding training before they start work at the school. This includes how to report any concerns they have about a pupil's safety or well-being. Staff have also received training on the 'Prevent' duty.
- The school's curriculum provides details about how pupils are supported to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe. This includes staying safe both online and offline, such as when out in the community using roads and bicycles, and near railways and water. Pupils are also taught about the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse, the danger that strangers can pose and what a healthy relationship should feel like.
- Information about pupils is stored securely.
- The proprietor now meets the requirements of the independent school standards in this part.

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

*Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(b), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(b)*

- At the time of the previous inspection in July 2020 the proprietorial body had not ensured that the necessary pre-employment checks had been carried out. This included prohibition checks for some staff. It also included not obtaining written references for appointed staff, despite this being a requirement of the school's recruitment policy.
- Since the previous material change inspection in July 2020, leaders have reviewed and updated safer recruitment procedures. The school now follows the statutory guidance as outlined in 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- The headteacher is supported by a newly appointed human resources manager. Together, they ensure that all necessary pre-employment checks are completed before anyone joins the school staff.
- A single central register of employment checks on staff is in place. This includes checks that staff are not subject to any orders that prohibit them from teaching or holding a management position in a school. It records the date when the required information was received. Staff personnel files are stored securely.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff. However, the headteacher is knowledgeable about the checks required on the suitability of supply staff if this was to become necessary.
- The proprietor now meets the requirements of the independent school standards for this part.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- At the time of the previous inspection leaders had not ensured that some of the standards linked to the safer recruitment of staff were being met.
- Leaders have addressed the issues identified at the last inspection. They drew up an action plan and they have completed everything they set out to do. The headteacher and other members of the proprietorial body demonstrate a sound understanding of the independent school standards.
- The proprietorial body, which includes the headteacher and two other members, have the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met. There are clear lines of accountability and robust systems in place to monitor the quality of the provision.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are now met.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's accessibility plan outlines leaders' plans to adapt and improve the school's premises, curriculum and published documentation to meet the needs of current and potential pupils.
- The accessibility plan meets the requirements of schedule 10 of The Equality Act 2010.

## The school's proposed change of age range to include provision for students aged 16–19

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school's provision is implemented.**

### 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)(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*

- The headteacher articulates the vision for the school clearly and with passion. Leaders intend to build on the current key stage 4 curriculum for the proposed post-16 provision. This is in order to continue to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Leaders' plans show that the current curriculum meets the requirements to provide linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. Leaders intend to provide a broad range of subjects for post-16 students.
- Leaders intend that the post-16 students will be able to study and acquire BTEC National Diploma qualifications up to and including level 3 in subjects including sport, health and social care, and art. Leaders' plans show that they intend to provide a bespoke programme based on the needs, interests and aspirations of individual students. This will include the opportunity to complete GCSEs in English and/or mathematics as new qualifications or as a resit to improve upon grades achieved at the end of key stage 4.
- Leaders place great importance on personal, social and health education in order to support pupils. It is clear from leaders' plans that pupils' physical and mental health and well-being are prioritised and will continue to be a priority for post-16 students. Leaders aim to build pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem so that they are able to make strong academic progress.
- Leaders have suitable plans to extend the current enrichment programme to meet the needs of post-16 students. Currently, pupils gain experience in a range of aspects including food preparation, first aid skills and as part of sports teams. Leaders intend for post-16 students to have a wider range of opportunities including volunteering in the community, sports coaching and the acquisition of skills for independent living.
- Leaders' plans show that they aim to promote fundamental British values and to ensure that pupils understand these values. There are also suitable plans for teaching pupils about the protected characteristics and the importance of respecting these.

- Current pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance about different colleges, the courses they offer and vocational work-based programmes such as traineeships and apprenticeships. Leaders' plans for a post-16 careers programme are suitable and include additional work experience opportunities and information about higher education.
- When pupils arrive at the school, a baseline assessment is completed on their academic ability, behaviour and social skills. This is used to create a plan that details the additional support a pupil may need to catch up academically, and also anything that will support their SEMH needs. This could include mentoring or help to make new friends and maintain positive relationships with others. These plans are linked to individual pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans when appropriate. Leaders intend to use the same system for new students who join the proposed post-16 provision.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers have the necessary qualifications, skills and expertise to deliver the current curriculum and the proposed post-16 curriculum. The headteacher has implemented a comprehensive monitoring schedule so that they are able to check on the quality of education that pupils receive.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change application is approved.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The school's current behaviour policy will be suitable for use in the proposed post-16 provision. Rules, rewards and sanctions are clearly set out. The policy reflects the school's aim to manage behaviour positively with a restorative approach.
- Each pupil has an individual behaviour- and attitude-for-learning plan. The plans include details about patterns of behaviour and any triggers. They are reviewed regularly and are intended to support pupils and staff in order to reduce the risk of behaviour incidents. Leaders intend to use the same system in the proposed post-16 provision.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is fit for purpose and can be extended to the proposed post-16 provision. It details the different types of bullying and how the school will respond to this. There are links with the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and their work to teach pupils about the protected characteristics as set out in The Equality Act 2010.
- The standards checked in this part are likely to continue to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Leaders' plans to provide post-16 provision for vulnerable pupils with SEMH needs have been carefully thought out. The plans reflect how leaders intend to build on the existing provision that successfully meets the needs of vulnerable pupils in key stage 4.
- The proprietorial body, which includes the headteacher and two other members, have the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure that the independent school standards are

consistently met. There are clear lines of accountability and robust systems in place to monitor the quality of the provision.

- Leaders are not seeking to increase the number of pupils that they are already registered to cater for and there have been no changes to the school premises since the last inspection in July 2020. The proprietor is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

#### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of the 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 unincorporated 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 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(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 a check was completed.

## **Part 8. Quality of leadership 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;
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

## School details

Unique reference number	141128
DfE registration number	861/6012
Inspection number	10173878

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Sporting Stars Community Interest Company
Chair	Shane Tudor
Headteacher	Miss Emma Tench
Annual fees (day pupils)	£21,155 to £47,775
Telephone number	01782 248248
Website	<a href="http://www.sportingstarsacademy.com">www.sportingstarsacademy.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@sportingstarsacademy.com">admin@sportingstarsacademy.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	17–19 April 2018

## Information about this school

- The school was last inspected in April 2018, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good. An additional inspection was conducted in July 2020, when some of the independent school standards were not met.
- Sporting Stars Academy is a school for pupils aged from 14 to 16 years with SEND who have social, emotional and mental health needs. It is likely that most pupils will have an EHC plan.



- In 2020 the school applied to the DfE for a material change to offer post-16 education. Leaders propose to offer this provision to current pupils and to new pupils, if it meets their needs.
- Pupils arrive at the school throughout the year. They are placed at the school via referrals from local authorities, including Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- The school does not have a religious denomination.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspection was commissioned by the DfE because the proprietor had applied to provide post-16 education for current and new pupils. This was the school's second request for a material change. The first material change inspection took place on 22 July 2020.
- The proprietor's action plan to address the standards that were not met at the material change inspection in July 2020 was evaluated and accepted on 16 November 2020.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- The inspection was carried out on site. Social distancing was maintained throughout the material change inspection.
- I met with the school's headteacher, who is also a director of the school and a member of the proprietorial body. The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator. I also met with the school's human resources manager.
- I reviewed a range of policies, plans and documentation associated with the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

Jo Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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