

V.A.S.E Academy

Oaklands Centre, Oaklands Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B21 0NA

Inspection date

9 November 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

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) as a result of the school requesting permission to use premises other than the school's registered location. In addition, Ofsted received a complaint related to the appropriateness of the additional premises for school use and the potential risk to pupils' safety and welfare.
- The purpose of the inspection was to confirm that the additional premises were appropriate for school use and whether the school is compliant with the relevant independent school standards.

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

- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. Leaders have ensured that the policy has been updated with the most recent guidance from the DfE, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2021).
- Staff have received appropriate training in the most recent guidance and records show that staff are vigilant in reporting any concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders follow up any referrals robustly and escalate their concerns to make sure that pupils are not at risk.

Paragraph 11

- Leaders have ensured that the school's health and safety policy, and practice, meet the standards expected. Health and safety checks are completed weekly. Security checks are carried out daily. Leaders keep accurate and up-to-date records of these checks.

Paragraph 12

- Fire safety records are rigorous. The most recent fire risk assessment identified some minor corrections, which leaders have addressed without delay.

- Fire escape routes are clearly signposted. The names of trained fire marshals are displayed around the building. Fire extinguishers are clearly labelled with the date of the most recent check.
- Fire drills are carried out with pupils as part of their induction. Leaders have put in place a risk assessment to mitigate the risks associated with evacuation procedures.

Paragraph 13

- Leaders have ensured that as many staff as possible are first-aid trained, including in paediatric first aid. A record is kept of any accidents or near misses. When necessary, first aid is administered appropriately. Details are recorded on the accident log.

Paragraph 14

- All pupils are supervised on a one-to-one or two-to-one basis at all times, including at breaks and lunchtimes. All pupils return with staff to the main site at lunchtime to access the outdoor facilities and dining facilities.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The school's risk assessment policy covers the registered premises and the additional premises. Leaders have put in place risk assessments for the potential risks associated with the use of the new premises. For example, pupils are transported between the two sites in school vehicles. They are always escorted by members of staff. Drivers have safeguarding checks. Vehicles are insured and well maintained.
- One of the two fire evacuation routes directs pupils and staff out of the rear of the building, following a path around to the front of the building to the fire assembly point in the adjacent car park. Leaders have correctly identified the risks associated with this route and put in place adequate mitigations.
- The school meets these independent school standards.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The inspector carried out a comprehensive tour of the additional premises, including the outdoor areas and fire escape routes, in order to establish the suitability of the additional premises for school use.

Paragraph 25

- The additional premises are located in a shared building originally intended as office space. The school occupies the first floor, which is securely separated from the rest of the building, with access-controlled doors. Facilities include classrooms, a kitchen, offices, an animal room and an outdoor education room. The accommodation is well maintained. Classrooms are clean and well-lit, with good ventilation and acoustics. The additional site is a safe and appropriate environment for pupils.

Paragraph 23(a), 23(b)

- Separate toilet facilities are provided in the new premises for the sole use of pupils. Toilets are lockable from the inside and are intended for use by one person at a time.

Paragraph 23(1)(c)

- There are no shower facilities on the new site. However, physical education lessons take place at the local leisure centre, where pupils can use the shower facilities.

Paragraph 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- Bottled drinking water is readily available to pupils at all times. It is stored in a cupboard in the kitchen that is away from the toilets and clearly marked 'drinking water'.

Paragraph 28(1)(b), 28(1)(d)

- Toilet facilities have washbasins with hot and cold running water. The hot water is regulated so that it does not present a scalding risk.

Paragraph 29(1)(a), 28(1)(b)

- There is a small balcony that pupils can access for fresh air, when accompanied by an adult. Access is locked at all other times. Leaders have erected an eight-foot barrier across the balcony edge to prevent accidents.
- There is no suitable outdoor space on this site for pupils to play outside at break- and lunchtime. However, pupils spend lunchtimes on the main site, where they have access to suitable outdoor space.
- The school meets these independent school standards.

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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	147702
DfE registration number	330/6134
Inspection number	10210063

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	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Muhammad Majid
Chair	Mr Muhammed Zahed
Headteacher	Mr Muhammed Majid
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,000 to £80,000
Telephone number	0121 551 4882
Website	www.vaseacademy.co.uk
Email address	contactus@vaseacademy.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	29 June to 1 July 2021

Information about this school

- The school's last full standard inspection took place from 29 June to 1 July 2021.
- V.A.S.E. Academy is an independent day school. The school's main base is at the Oakland Community Centre, Handsworth, Birmingham, where it occupies a number of classrooms as well as having access to a sports hall and outdoor space. The school opened in September 2021.
- The school uses additional premises for intervention purposes at 51 Downing Street, Smethwick B51 2PP. The building has shared use. The school occupies the first floor of the building and has access to a number of classrooms and administrative offices.

- Pupils are transported between the two sites in school vehicles, accompanied by members of staff.
- The school offers places to pupils aged 11 to 16 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative providers for part-time provision for individual pupils when necessary.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over one day. Leaders were given no notice of the inspection prior to the inspector's arrival on site.
- The inspection was commissioned by the DfE to establish whether the school's use of additional premises at 51 Downing Street, Smethwick is appropriate. The inspector was commissioned to review the following parts of the independent school standards: Part 3 – paragraphs 7(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16(a), 16(b); and Part 5 – paragraphs 23, 25, 28.
- The lead inspector took into account a complaint that had been submitted to Ofsted about the school.
- The inspector reviewed documents relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the premises and accommodation of the school. These included the single central record of pre-employment checks, safeguarding files and accident records.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, including the school's safeguarding policy and the health and safety policy.
- The lead inspector also considered the school's previous inspection reports.
- Once on site, the lead inspector reviewed the fire safety certificate, training records for staff in first aid and fire safety, the risk assessment policy and relevant risk assessments, and the health and safety audit and checklists.
- The lead inspector conducted a tour of the additional building and the surrounding area with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher to ensure that the school complies with relevant paragraphs of part 3 and part 5 of the independent school standards.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher (who is also the proprietor), the deputy headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with two pupils to discuss the facilities of the school.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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