

The Holden School

Firs Lane, Leigh, Greater Manchester WN7 4SB

Inspection dates

3 November 2022

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(2)(b), 2(2)(g)–2(2)(i)

- The curriculum policy and the related schemes of work are appropriate and help to promote fundamental British values. The pupils and students whom leaders plan to teach in the proposed new premises will be aged 11 to 18. This represents a change to the maximum age from 16 to 18. This is to enable any pupils who already attend the school to continue their studies from key stage 4, if they need more time to prepare to make the transition to the next stage of their education, employment or training, because of their specific needs. The policy and curriculum documents that leaders have in place set out the knowledge that they want these pupils and students to acquire. Pupils and students will experience a broad range of subjects, including linguistic, mathematical, and human and social education. All pupils and students who will attend the proposed new site will have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have identified suitable ways of adapting the delivery of the curriculum to meet their needs.

Paragraphs 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii)

- The scheme of work for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education relates to the school's value, summed up in the motto, 'Ready, respectful, safe'. Leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of respecting the protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The scheme of work contains a suitable range of topics, such as understanding money, and health and well-being. Leaders also provide a range of impartial careers advice and guidance. They reference the Gatsby benchmarks to strengthen and refine the quality of their provision.

Paragraphs 2A(1)–2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d)–2A(2)

- Leaders have an appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) policy in place. Leaders have consulted with parents and carers about this policy. The policy sets out the arrangements for providing RSE for all pupils in an age-appropriate way. Leaders have also informed parents that they may request that their child be wholly or partly excused from sex education. The scheme of work for RSE is contained within the

PSHE education programme. It includes relevant topics, such as respectful relationships and sexual health.

Paragraphs 3–3(j)

- Learning spaces in the proposed new building are well equipped and furnished. Examples of teaching plans and other documents indicate that teaching is likely to enable pupils and students, all of whom will have SEND, to make good progress in their learning. Leaders provided a sample of good-quality resources, such as reading books, which have been bought in anticipation of the opening of the new building.

Paragraph 4

- There is an appropriate policy which explains leaders' approach to the assessment of pupils' progress. A combination of formative and summative assessment is intended. The policy states that teachers will assess pupils' learning of key concepts, attitudes, skills and knowledge. The policy takes into account the fact that the school caters for pupils with SEND. There are also arrangements for reporting to parents each term.
- Leaders have ensured that all the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved and implemented.

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

Paragraphs 5–5(d)(iii)

- Leaders have a policy on their approach to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The curriculum policy also explains how the curriculum is intended to support SMSC development by, for example, helping to develop pupils' self-worth, developing skills for the next stage of their education, employment or training, developing understanding of fundamental British values and ensuring that no partisan political views are encouraged. Leaders have planned events to promote pupils' and students' SMSC development beyond the classroom. For example, there are planned events to highlight matters such as giving to charity, understanding democracy, and mental health.
- Leaders have ensured that all the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved and implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- There is a suitable safeguarding policy in place, which references the most recent guidance from the Secretary of State. Leaders publish the policy on the school's website. They have detailed records of reports about safeguarding concerns involving pupils. Leaders are quick to respond to any concerns, making referrals to outside agencies where needed. They ensure that all staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training.

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

- There are appropriate policies in place which explain leaders' approach to managing issues of health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment. The inspection of the

premises confirmed that the building is maintained to a high standard and that these policies are implemented effectively. Leaders have suitable risk assessments in place for a range of activities and circumstances. Pupils' health and well-being are likely to be assured if the material changes are approved.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders' current and intended ratios of staff to pupils are likely to enable leaders to ensure that pupils' will be supervised effectively.
- Leaders have ensured that all the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved and implemented.

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

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(d), 18(3), 20(6)–20(6)(b)(ii), 21(1)–21(3)(b), 21(6)

- Leaders' existing processes for checking the suitability of staff and members of the proprietor body are effective. Leaders also ensure that supply agencies have made the correct checks on supply staff, although leaders rarely use them at present. The single central record contains all the essential information for the proprietor body and employees. Leaders retain copies of all required documentation to check the background of staff whom they employ.
- Leaders have ensured that all the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved and implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- The proposed additional premises have recently been renovated. Leaders maintain them to a high standard. The inspection of the premises showed that it is likely that there will be effective implementation of leaders' policies on health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment. Leaders are likely to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils.
- There are high-quality toilet facilities in place. These have a suitable supply of cold water for flushing. There are washbasins with hot and cold water for washing. The temperature of the hot water does not present a risk of scalding. There are no showers or changing facilities in the building. Leaders intend to provide physical education (PE) at an off-site venue. Leaders have carried out thorough risk assessments to ensure the safety of pupils when they are using these off-site facilities.
- There is a room that is suitable for pupils who are sick or need medical treatment. It is appropriately equipped and has a washbasin with hot and cold water. There is a separate, lockable toilet cubicle in the room.
- Classrooms and other learning areas, such as the science laboratory, are spacious and have suitable light and acoustic conditions. Leaders propose to accommodate up to 30 pupils and students in the new building. There is ample space for this number.

- Leaders intend to make drinking water readily available to pupils and students throughout the day. Leaders have provided suitably labelled sources of drinking water and have ensured that these are separate from the toilet areas.
- The outdoor area is suitable for play and could be used for PE. There is external lighting to ensure that people can enter and leave the building safely when it is dark.
- Leaders have ensured that all the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved and implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- Leaders show strong knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards. The proprietor body has suitable systems for checking the work of school leaders. Leaders are likely to fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that the relevant standards are met consistently, if the Department for Education (DfE) approves the proposed material changes.
- The policies and procedures which leaders have devised, such as those related to safeguarding and health and safety, are likely to ensure that pupils' welfare is promoted.
- Leaders have ensured that all the standards in this part are likely to be met if the material changes are approved and implemented.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have an appropriate accessibility plan in place for pupils with disabilities. Actions include creating individual access plans to the building as pupils need them and ensuring that large print is available for providing information if required.
- Leaders have ensured that this requirement is likely to be met if the material changes are approved and implemented.

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	146988
DfE registration number	359/6004
Inspection number	10251792

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 special school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Mark Fletcher
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,000 to £71,000
Telephone number	01942 932540
Website	www.theholdenschool.co.uk
Email address	info@theholdenschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	4 to 6 February 2020

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	4 to 16	4 to 18	4 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	54	84	84

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	54	84
Number of part-time pupils	None	None
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	54	84
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	54	84
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	54	84

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	40	50
Number of part-time teaching staff	None	None
Number of staff in the welfare provision	6	6

Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection was from 4 to 6 February 2020.
- The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Leaders use one registered and two unregistered alternative provisions. The minority of pupils who attend these do so on a part-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- The DfE commissioned Ofsted to carry out this inspection because the proprietor body applied to make a material change to the school's registration.
- The proprietor body requested: a change to the school's age range from 11 to 16 to 11 to 18, an increase in the school's maximum capacity from 54 to 84, and the opening of additional premises at 78 Chapel St, Leigh, Wigan WN7 2PQ to accommodate the increase in the number of pupils. If these changes are applied, they are unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the educational provision at the school.
- This is the first material change inspection that the school has received in respect of these particular changes that the proprietor body has applied to make.
- The inspector spoke with the chair of the proprietor body, the chair of governors, the headteacher and other leaders. He completed tour of the proposed premises. The inspector analysed a wide range of documents, including curriculum plans and documents relating to safeguarding and matters of health and safety.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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