

# Alpha Learning Staffordshire

Hobson Street, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 2AW

**Inspection date**

3 May 2023

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraph 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)(c), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii)*

- The proprietor already provides part-time alternative provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. It is planned that some of those pupils who attend will join the school when it is registered.
- Leaders have written suitable curriculum and assessment policies that are likely to meet the needs of pupils aged 11 to 16 with SEMH needs. Leaders intend to adopt a flexible approach to delivering the curriculum.
- Leaders have ensured that a curriculum policy and appropriate schemes of work are in place. The school intends to teach a suitably broad range of subjects, including mathematics, English language and English literature, science, sport, information communication and technology, digital skills, history, geography, religious studies and health and social care.
- Curriculum documents show that pupils will learn about fundamental British values and protected characteristics.

*Paragraph 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) 2(2)(i)*

- Leaders aim to provide pupils with impartial careers advice and guidance. This will enable pupils to learn about employability skills and about how to apply for future employment, education or training.

*Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(c), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2) 2A(3)*

- The school intends to follow a commercially produced personal, social and health education programme. The programme covers a suitable range of subjects, including statutory relationships and sex education.

*Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j) 4*

- Leaders have appointed appropriately qualified teachers and support staff with experience of working with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

(SEND). Staff have a good understanding of pupils' aptitudes and needs when preparing lessons.

- Leaders recognise that pupils who will attend the proposed school will have experienced significant disruption to their education. Pupils' starting points will be assessed and gaps in their knowledge identified.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii) 5(d)(iii)*

- Leaders are aware that many pupils who attend the current provision have experienced a disrupted education in the past. They are committed to ensuring that pupils build their self-esteem and confidence over time, developing positive relationships with each other.
- Leaders intend that pupils will be taught about a range of religions, faiths and cultures. Pupils will be encouraged to develop tolerance, mutual respect and appreciation of the diversity of modern society.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b) 32(1)(c)*

- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance and is available on the website.
- Leaders are aware of their duties and the importance of establishing and maintaining a strong safeguarding culture. Leaders have a clear understanding of the needs and challenges their pupils are likely to present.

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

- Leaders have clearly set out the approach to promoting pupils' positive behaviour in the behaviour and anti-bullying policies. These policies are published on the proposed school's website. Leaders will ensure that staff receive appropriate and regular training so that these policies are implemented as leaders intend.

*Paragraph 11, 12, 13, 16, 16(a) 16(b)*

- Appropriate health and safety and first-aid policies are in place.
- Leaders maintain a set of written risk assessments to ensure that pupils' safety will be prioritised. They include, for example, potential risks to pupils on off-site trips and when using equipment.
- The proprietor has ensured that appropriate attention has been given to fire safety. A detailed external fire safety audit has been completed. Fire extinguishers have been checked and serviced properly.

### Paragraph 14 and 15

- Leaders have appropriate plans in place for supervision of pupils. The school is located in a large building on two floors. All entrances to the school are secure. Internal areas are also secured appropriately.
- Leaders have ensured that the admission and attendance registers meet requirements. This information is stored electronically.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 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), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(7), 21(7)(a) 21(7)(b)*

- Leaders are knowledgeable about requirements for completion of suitability checks on staff. Leaders demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of part 4.
- The format of the single central record contains the full range of pre-employment checks. It is stored centrally in an electronic format.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met.

### 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), 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) 29(1)(b)*

- The school operates from a site that was formerly a training centre. The site consists of five classrooms and a large recreational space that is used for social times on the ground floor and an additional classroom and a large gym space on the first floor.
- There are male and female toilets on the ground floor with hot and cold running water and handwashing facilities. On the first floor, there are additional male and female toilets with hot and cold running water and handwashing facilities which also both include a shower and a changing room area.
- Pupils have access to drinking water on both floors of the building.
- The medical room is suitable for purpose. It is next door to a disabled toilet.
- There is an outdoor area that can be used for pupils to socialise. The area is suitably secure and well lit.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met.

### Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g)*

- The school has a website that includes all the required information. Parents can also request paper copies of school policies.
- All policies, documents and information required for the pre-registration inspection were provided in a timely manner. Policies reflect the fact that the proposed school will cater for pupils with SEND where relevant.
- Leaders are clear about the range of information they are required to make available to pupils and parents or carers to ensure compliance with the independent school standards.
- Brief half-termly and more comprehensive termly written reports will provide parents and carers with information about their child's achievement. The reports will include information about the pupil's progress and achievements, behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met.

#### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) 33(k)*

- The school's complaints policy complies with statutory requirements and is available on the website and also on request.
- The complaints policy gives clear timescales for the management and consideration of any complaint. The policy aims to resolve complaints informally in the first instance.
- Leaders will retain a record of any complaints.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

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

- Leaders have a clear rationale for why they want to register as an independent school. The proprietor is committed to providing vulnerable pupils with an inclusive and nurturing education.
- Leaders are keen to build on the successes of the alternative provision.
- They have effective arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the well-being of pupils. It is evident from leader's actions that they place the care and welfare of pupils at the centre of all their work.
- All leaders demonstrate a good understanding of the independent school standards.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have ensured that they have a suitable accessibility plan in place that meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proposed school considers and plans for the needs of pupils with SEND.

## **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.

## Proposed school details

Unique reference number	149601
DfE registration number	861/6036
Inspection number	10286613

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Alpha Learning Staffordshire Ltd
Headteacher	Nadine Wedgewood
Annual fees (day pupils)	£130 to £180 per day
Telephone number	01782 212 807
Website	<a href="http://www.alphalearningstaffordshire.co.uk">www.alphalearningstaffordshire.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:nadine@alphalearningstaffordshire.co.uk">nadine@alphalearningstaffordshire.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	35	35

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	35
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0

Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	35
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	10
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	10

### Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	4

### Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor body is Alpha Learning Staffordshire Ltd.
- The proposed school intends to cater for boys and girls from Year 7 to Year 11. The proposed school will provide education for pupils who have social emotional and mental health needs. Pupils will often have been out of full-time education for long periods prior to admission.
- It is expected that some pupils will have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils will be placed in the school by local authorities and schools.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the proposed school's second pre-registration inspection. It was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards if it is given permission to open.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the independent school standards, as well as safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, the centre manager, the business manager and the curriculum lead.
- The inspector visited all parts of the proposed school premises, including outdoor areas.

## Inspection team

Emma Gater, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector



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