

Safe Start Education

1, 2, 4 & 5 Henry Square Chambers, Old Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, Tameside OL6 7ST

Inspection date

18 April 2024

Overall outcome

The school meets the independent school standards relevant to the material change. The material change has already been implemented.

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The proprietor has ensured that there is an up-to-date, suitable safeguarding policy in place. The policy is published on the school's website. The school has effective arrangements in place to keep pupils safe and promote their welfare. For example, staff receive regular training and support so that they can identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. This includes training about the vulnerabilities of the pupils who attend the school and the additional welfare checks needed for these pupils.
- The designated safeguarding leaders share regular safeguarding updates and briefings with staff. The school takes timely and appropriate action to respond to any safeguarding concerns and detailed safeguarding records are maintained. The school is currently in the process of recruiting an additional senior leader with specific responsibility for safeguarding. This is to further develop leadership capacity and expertise. The proprietor has identified that this is necessary to ensure the continued safety and well-being of pupils with additional vulnerabilities given the increased number of pupils at the school.

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

- The proprietor has a written health and safety policy. This is tailored to the premises of the school, including the additional school buildings on the same site. It is updated regularly to ensure that it is compliant with all relevant laws. There are monitoring procedures in place to ensure that all health and safety checks are completed regularly. The proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Fire-evacuation routes are clearly lit and signposted. The school carries out regular fire-safety checks of the premises and maintenance of fire-safety equipment to ensure that risks are reduced. All classrooms and spaces have clear routes of escape to safety.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place. A range of risk assessments show that the school takes appropriate actions to reduce identified risks to pupils, including those

who are educated off the school site. The school is aware of the additional vulnerabilities and risks that some pupils face when arrangements are in place for them to access a part-time timetable. There are robust risk assessments in place for each individual pupil to ensure that their specific needs and circumstances are considered while they are being supported to re-engage with school full time.

Paragraph 14

- Staffing levels are extremely high. Pupils are supervised at all times, including lunchtimes and breaktimes, when they are on the school premises. Additional staff have been appointed to ensure that pupils are appropriately supervised when they are educated off site or provided with additional outreach support at other locations.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the independent school standards ('the standards') checked in this part are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to approve the school's proposed material change to increase the number of pupils on roll to 45. The school caters for pupils with complex needs. The school has already increased the number of pupils on roll from 25 to 38. The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE approves the school to admit up to 38 pupils. However, the school does not have the capacity currently to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils if there is any further increase in the number on roll.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(3), 18(4), 19(1), 19(2), 19(3), 19(4), 20(6), 21

- There is a single central record (SCR) in place. The school rectified some minor gaps in the SCR found during the inspection so that it contained all of the necessary checks and information.
- The proprietor has carried out suitability checks, including those relating to supply staff and the leadership and management of the school.
- The proprietor ensures that relevant staff have completed safer recruitment training to support the appointment of suitable staff to work at the school. If there are concerns about any member of staff's suitability, then these are appropriately investigated and reported in line with statutory guidance. The induction programme for new staff ensures that they undergo a range of appropriate safeguarding training on appointment.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the standards checked in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the school's proposed material change to increase the number of pupils on roll to 45. The school caters for pupils with complex needs. The school has already increased the number of pupils on roll from 25 to 38. The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE approves the school to admit up to 38 pupils. However, the school does not have the capacity currently to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils if there is any further increase in the number on roll.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23

- The proprietor has increased the size of the premises to include an additional building. There are distinct rooms and spaces to accommodate different activities. For example, there are designated classrooms for particular subjects and pupil groups. There are shared and specialist spaces, such as kitchen areas, a photography studio and a computing suite. Some spaces are designated as sensory and therapy rooms. The premises are maintained to a high standard.
- There are suitable toilet and washing facilities in the school building for the sole use of pupils. The toilet cubicles can be secured from the inside. There is a toilet that is suitable for pupils and staff with a disability, which is also available for visitors to use. There are sufficient toilet and washing facilities to accommodate the increased number of pupils who are currently on roll.
- There is suitable changing accommodation and a shower area for pupils to use following physical education (PE). This caters adequately for the number of pupils that are currently on the school roll.

Paragraph 24

- There is a designated medical room for pupils in the school to use. It has a bed, pillow and blanket. There is easy access to a toilet and washing facilities. The room is equipped with a first-aid kit and a lockable medicine cabinet.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 28

- The accommodation is well maintained. It meets all requirements for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils, including for the additional pupils who have already been admitted on the school roll. The building is bright, clean and tidy. All of the rooms used by pupils have appropriate acoustics, lighting and heating suitable for the purpose of the different rooms. There is external lighting to ensure that pupils, staff and visitors can enter and leave the site and building safely in the hours of darkness.
- There is an adequate supply of hot and cold water. Drinking-water is available for pupils throughout the day. It is clearly labelled.

Paragraph 29

- The school grounds provide sufficient outdoor space for the increased number of pupils already on the school roll. All pupils have access to a safe and secure outdoor area. The outdoor space is suitable for PE lessons. However, the school also makes use of recreation areas in close proximity to the school for this purpose.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the standards checked in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the school's proposed material change to increase the number of pupils on roll to 45. The school caters for pupils with complex needs. The school has already increased the number of pupils on roll from 25 to 38. The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE approves the school to admit up to 38 pupils. However, the school does not have the capacity currently to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils if there is any further increase in the number on roll.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)-34(1)(c)

- The proprietor and school leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the standards. There have been recent staff changes that have led to instability in the school. The proprietor has acted swiftly and robustly to address weaknesses and ensure that more robust procedures are implemented to monitor the school's compliance with the standards and statutory requirements.
- The proprietor and school leaders have the knowledge and experience required to carry out their roles successfully with the current number of pupils on roll. However, at this time, the standards in this part and the other parts checked during this inspection are not likely to be met if the DfE approves the school's request to increase the school's capacity to 45 pupils. This is because the school does not have the capacity at present to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils if the number on roll increases further.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the standards checked in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the school's proposed material change to increase the number of pupils on roll to 45. The school caters for pupils with complex needs. The school has already increased the number of pupils on roll from 25 to 38. The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE approves the school to admit up to 38 pupils.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The accessibility plan meets the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. This plan reflects the needs of the current cohort of pupils at the school.

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 are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	147859
DfE registration number	357/6007
Inspection number	10334450

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 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	Safe Start School Limited
Chair	Rachel Piling
Headteacher	Grace Speakman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,200 to £48,000
Telephone number	01615 235 444
Website	www.safestarttameside.com
Email address	admin@safestartschooltameside.com
Dates of previous standard inspection	8 to 10 December 2021

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	38	45	38

Reason for inspector's recommendations

The school has already increased the number of pupils on roll from 25 to 38. Many of these pupils have complex needs. These pupils do not attend school full time and require a significant level of support to re-engage with education. In addition, there have been a number of recent changes to the staffing structure of the school and the proprietor is in the process of strengthening the leadership capacity with new staff appointments. At this

time, it is recommended that the school consolidates and embeds its current provision. This is so that it can ensure the welfare, health and safety for the 38 pupils on roll and continue to meet the standards consistently before considering any further increase to the number of pupils on roll.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	26	35
Number of part-time pupils	12	10
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	38	45
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	38	45
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	38	45

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	6	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	6	6
Number of staff in the welfare provision	26	27

Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection was 8 to 10 December 2021. A subsequent material change inspection took place on 13 January 2022.

- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is registered to admit up to 25 pupils. The school currently has 38 pupils on roll. This is beyond the registration agreement with the DfE.
- The school operates from premises at 1, 2, 4 & 5 Henry Square Chambers, Old Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, Tameside, OL6 7ST. Since the previous material change inspection, the school has added an additional building on its premises. The DfE has approved this change.
- There are two members of the proprietor body, including the headteacher.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative providers and two registered alternative providers for a total of 14 pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The DfE has commissioned this material change inspection to check whether the school is likely to meet the standards if it increases the number of pupils on its roll from 25 to 45. The school has already partly implemented this material change.
- This was the school's second material change inspection. The first material change inspection took place on 13 January 2022.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders of the school. She also met with the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector spoke with some staff and pupils.
- The inspector made a tour of the school's premises and accommodation.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents and policies relevant to the school's proposed material change. These included: documents relating to pupils' behaviour, health and safety information, fire-safety and risk assessment documentation.
- The inspector also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central register of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers. These requirements of the standards are met.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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