

Northstar New School

c/o Gascoigne Primary Annex, The Shaftesburys, Barking IG11 7JA

Inspection date

11 June 2024

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2

- The proprietor/headteacher has applied for this material change to enable current pupils to build on the substantial progress that they have made and complete their secondary education at the same school. This commitment to realise the best possible outcomes for pupils is reflected in the current provision and in the preparation that leaders have undertaken for the proposed change.
- The deputy headteacher has produced a detailed curriculum handbook that sets out the plans for key stage 4. Leaders have considered carefully how the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 will build on the aims set out in the school's policy and on the ambitious schemes of work for current pupils. They have set high expectations for pupils to work towards suitable and relevant qualifications, including GCSEs.
- Proposed plans and schemes of work take into account pupils' aptitudes, ages and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Plans are based on the national curriculum to ensure that pupils receive a broad and ambitious education. They are written with sufficient flexibility so that they can be adapted to better suit pupils' needs and interests.
- Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is woven into the curriculum. Leaders maintain a high level of focus on pupils' personal development to prepare them for their future lives. The proposed curriculum for key stage 4 also places the same strong emphasis on PSHE.
- Leaders have recently redesigned the school's approach to providing impartial careers guidance. This has considered the possible extension of the school's age range. A range of activities are provided that provide pupils with meaningful learning. For example, pupils are supported to develop a CV, apply for a role and attend an interview for work experience in the school. Pupils will also learn about the range of options available to them through a programme of visits and external speakers.

Paragraph 2A

- The school has planned to develop relationships and sex education so that it extends to key stage 4. In doing so, they have taken into account national expectations and will consult with any prospective parents if the material change is approved.
- The current relationships and sex education policy is published on the school's website. It makes clear that a parent can request that a pupil is excused from sex education that is not part of the science curriculum. Staff also make this clear when sharing the planned learning with parents and carers.

Paragraph 3

- Teaching is based on very strong relationships. Pupils place trust in staff and staff make sure that they understand pupils' individual needs very well. Pupils strive to meet the very high expectations that teachers have of their behaviour and the progress that they can make.
- The school environment is very conducive to learning. Classrooms are well resourced; staff are highly skilled in setting the right culture, and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils hold each other to account to ensure that staff are well respected, and learning is not disrupted.
- Pupils receive just the right amount of support so that they are motivated, independent and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils in the nurture class were well focused on their task to find alternative words using a thesaurus, discovering words such as 'toxic' and delighting in recording them for themselves.
- Teachers plan very effective sequences of learning that capture pupils' interests and extend their confidence, knowledge and skills. For example, pupils in the key stage 3 class enjoyed using drama to demonstrate their understanding of the characters in the play 'DNA'.
- Time is used well in lessons. Staff check pupils' understanding routinely and adapt the teaching accordingly to accelerate pupils' progress. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge and vocabulary to extend and support pupils' understanding. For example, in a key stage 2 lesson about stereotypes, the teacher paused the lesson to ensure that pupils understood the relationship between two 'voices' in a poem.

Paragraph 4

- Leaders have implemented an assessment framework that provides parents and carers with reports that show how well their child is progressing in each subject against national expectations. Pupils are assessed on entry to the school and, after that, at suitably regular intervals. Leaders also intend to make use of exam and accreditation specifications to assess pupils' progress at key stage 4, if the material change is implemented.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is introduced.

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

Paragraph 5

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development cuts across all aspects of life at the school. As part of this work, leaders ensure that the fundamental British values

are actively promoted. Curriculum plans for all classes, including the proposed key stage 4 class, make explicit reference to SMSC and British values.

- Through visits, celebrations and other activities, pupils learn about British institutions, such as parliament and the monarchy. This also enables them to learn about the law and democracy.
- Staff help pupils to learn to respect other people and consider how they can contribute positively to society. Pupils are taught about protected characteristics and the importance of valuing difference. They also learn how they can help others through fundraising or other charitable work.
- There are many opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to learn about different cultures. For example, in history, pupils in key stage 2 complete a study of the kingdom of Benin. Leaders have planned for prospective key stage 4 pupils to learn in geography about the social, environmental and cultural impact of rapid development in Nigeria.
- Curriculum documents, staff handbooks and policies relating to teaching and learning make clear that teachers should not present partisan political views. Leaders are clear that they will continue to check and assure themselves that external speakers or visits will present all pupils, including any in key stage 4, with balanced viewpoints.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is introduced.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Leaders have a clear moral purpose that has driven them to request this material change. They have great ambitions for pupils, and these are reflected in the high quality of the school's current provision. Leaders have thought carefully about their proposals, developed appropriate plans that build on the outstanding provision that is already in place and have discussed them at length with their governors.
- Leaders have secured a clear culture of safeguarding that puts pupils' needs first. They have a secure understanding of the risks that pupils may face and ensure that staff are equipped to keep a close eye on pupils and act appropriately if concerned. The child protection and safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and meets current requirements.
- There is considerable expertise in the school to support an extension of the school's age range. Leaders have extensive experience in providing for pupils with SEND, staff have strong skills and knowledge, and governors provide a range of valuable skills to support and challenge this work. The independent school standards checked on this inspection continue to be met and are likely to be met if the material change is approved.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the material change is introduced.

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	142334
DfE registration number	301/6007
Inspection number	10338198

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 special school
Proprietor	Euan Macdonald
Headteacher	Mr Euan Macdonald
Annual fees (day pupils)	£49,500 to £69,010
Telephone number	02087248862
Website	https://www.northstarnewschool.org
Email address	info@northstarnewschool.org
Date of previous standard inspection	13 to 15 June 2023

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 14	7 to 16	7 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	23	30	30

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Not applicable
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	23	Not applicable

Number of part-time pupils	0	Not applicable
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	23	Not applicable
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	23	Not applicable
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	23	Not applicable

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	15	Not applicable
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	Not applicable

Information about this school

- Northstar New School is an independent special school. It was previously named Youth Empowerment Education Programme and opened in 2015. The school moved to its current premises in Barking in 2018.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils have additional needs, including autistic spectrum disorder. Pupils have an education, health and care plan or are undergoing statutory assessment.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The last standard inspection took place in June 2023, when the school was judged to be outstanding. All of the independent school standards were met.
- The school has a sole proprietor. There is a governing body who provide advice and guidance to leaders.

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 consider whether the school would continue to meet the independent standards if a material change was implemented.
- Leaders propose to increase the age range from 7 to 14 years to 7 to 16 years. They intend to continue to provide education for five pupils that are currently at the school and are in Year 9.
- This was the first material change inspection to consider an extension to the age range that the school caters for.
- The inspector met with the proprietor and headteacher and deputy headteacher. She also met with the vice chair of the governing body.
- The inspector visited lessons and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to the curriculum, leadership, safeguarding and the school's pre-appointment checks on staff, to check likely compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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