

SMS Changing Lives School

Inspection date

23 October 2024

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 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The school has put in place a suitable safeguarding policy that has regard to the latest appropriate statutory guidance. This policy is published on the school's website. There are robust reporting procedures for staff to report any safeguarding concerns.
- When necessary, the school makes timely and appropriate referrals to external agencies in order to keep pupils safe. The arrangements for doing so take into account the fact that the school operates in different local authorities.
- The proprietor has ensured that all staff receive regular safeguarding training. Several staff are trained as designated safeguarding leads (DSL). This means that there is always at least one DSL available at each of the school's sites.

Paragraph 11

- The school has a health and safety policy that complies with relevant legislation. The policy is supported by a programme of regular checks to identify and rectify any faults at each of the school's premises. For example, electrical equipment, gas boilers and water temperature are tested regularly.

Paragraph 12

- The proprietor has ensured that the school's policies and procedures are suitable and comply with the necessary fire safety regulations. For example, fire escapes are clearly marked to facilitate evacuation. Alarm systems and extinguishers are tested regularly. The school carries out periodic fire drills to ensure that pupils and staff know what to do in case of fire.

Paragraph 14

- The school has deployed staff effectively to ensure pupils' welfare and safety. This includes staff with the required expertise to meet pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities successfully. The proprietor already employs suitably experienced

staff in its alternative provision. These staff will be redeployed to ensure that the proposed increase in pupil numbers at the school are suitably supervised.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- The proprietor has prioritised pupils' welfare. It has ensured that the school has taken the necessary steps to reduce risks. For example, the school has drawn up an appropriate risk assessment policy. This includes considering how risk assessments may need to change for a potentially greater number of pupils using the school's premises.
- It is likely that the independent school standards ('the standards') checked in this part will remain met if the proposed material changes are approved.

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

Paragraphs 18, 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 21 and 21(1) to 21(7)(b)

- The required checks on staff's suitability to work with pupils are completed before they begin working at the school. All appropriate pre-employment checks are recorded on an electronic single central record. This record is monitored regularly to ensure that it is up to date.

Paragraphs 19, 19(1), 19(2), 19(2)(a) to 19(2)(d)(ii) and 19(3)

- The proprietor does not currently make use of supply staff. However, should this be the case in the future, the proprietor is aware of the checks that are required prior to the employment of supply staff at the school.

Paragraphs 20, 20(6), 20(6)(a) to 20(6)(c)

- The section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 checks are in place. These ensure that staff with leadership and management responsibilities, including members of the proprietor body, are not prohibited from managing a school.
- It is likely that the standards in this part will remain met if the proposed material changes are approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 22

- The school has already relocated its main site to newly acquired premises. These premises are safe, secure and well maintained. Classrooms and other teaching spaces are clean, tidy and suitably resourced. These rooms are appropriate for their intended use. The proprietor has plans to convert the upper floor of these premises into additional classrooms. Nevertheless, the existing classrooms already provide sufficient space for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- The school has also opened a further site. This building was already leased by the proprietor. However, it was not previously used by the school. The building is spacious, safe and suitable for the age and needs of pupils. This building adequately supports the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

- The school's sites are located a considerable distance from each other. However, pupils will not travel between them. Only a small number of senior staff will work across both locations.

Paragraphs 23, 23(1) to 23(1)(c), 23(2), 28 and 28(1) to 28(2)(b)

- At both premises, there are sufficient toilet and washing facilities for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. Hot and cold water is available for handwashing. This hot water does not pose a risk of scalding. Toilets are for the sole use of pupils. To ensure privacy, toilet cubicles can be locked from the inside. There are separate, suitable toilets for staff and visitors. Accessible toilets are also provided for pupils, staff and visitors. These arrangements are likely to remain suitable should the proposed material change be granted.
- The school provides pupils on both sites with showering facilities. These facilities will remain appropriate if the request for an increase in pupil numbers is granted.
- Drinking water is readily available to pupils. It is clearly marked as such.

Paragraph 24

- Each location has a dedicated medical room which is equipped with a bed, first-aid supplies and a sink with hot and cold water. A toilet is close by. These arrangements are suitable for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils.

Paragraphs 26, 27, 27(a) to 27(b)

- All areas of the school, including classrooms, have suitable lighting and acoustic conditions. The school maintains appropriate outdoor lighting, including emergency lighting, so that visitors, staff and pupils can enter and exit the buildings safely in the hours of darkness.

Paragraph 25

- School staff complete regular checks on safety and maintenance at each of the school's premises. Any identified issues are appropriately addressed. The proprietor has suitable arrangements for overseeing the standards related to the school's premises.

Paragraph 29

- There are safely enclosed outdoor spaces at both sites where pupils can socialise and play outside. These are modestly sized. However, they are sufficient for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. In addition, the proprietor has ensured that pupils benefit from extensive indoor sports facilities, both recreationally and as part of the school's curriculum.
- It is likely that all the standards in this part will remain met if the proposed material changes are approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34, 34(a) to 34(c)

- The proprietor, and school leaders at all levels, have planned carefully for the proposed expansion of the school's provision. For example, steps have been taken to ensure that the proposed additional premises are suitable and well maintained.
- The proprietor holds the school to account for its work effectively. This helps to ensure that the standards are met consistently. The proprietor has also made arrangements for external support for, and quality assurance of, the school's provision. This provides capacity for the school to continue to develop.
- It is likely that the standards in this part will remain met if the proposed material changes are approved.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an appropriate accessibility policy in place which ensures that the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are likely to continue to be met if the proposed material changes are approved.

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	146646
DfE registration number	353/6004
Inspection number	10365096

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 day school
Proprietor	SMS Coaching Ltd
Chair	Jonathan Davies
Headteacher	Hecabe DuFraisie
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,000 to £58,000
Telephone number	07476 916437
Website	www.smsschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@smscoaching.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	15 to 17 November 2022

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	40	80	80

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	40	80
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	40	80
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	40	80
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	40	80

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	17	20
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	37	37

Information about this school

- This school provides full-time education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan. Placements at the school are commissioned by local authorities.
- The school's registered address, as recorded on the Department for Education's (DfE) Get Information about Schools website, is Ferranti House, Wickentree Lane, Failsworth, Manchester M35 9AY. At present, the school only operates a sports centre at this location.
- The school has relocated its main site to Unit 2, Aniseed Park, Broadgate, Oldham OL9 9XA. In addition, the school has begun to operate from a further site at 67 Ayres Road, Old Trafford M16 9NH. The school also operates an outreach tuition service from premises at 29 Greek Street, Stockport SK3 8AX. This service caters for a small number of pupils with more complex needs.

- The school's sites are a considerable distance from each other. Pupils do not move between the sites. Only a small number of senior staff work across the different locations.
- At the Ayres Road premises, the proprietor also operates an unregistered alternative provision. This offers temporary placements for pupils on roll at local mainstream schools.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 15 to 17 November 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This material change inspection was commissioned by the DfE because the proprietor requested a change to the number of pupils that the school admits, a change to the main premises from which the school operates and the addition of a second site.
- The inspector considered whether the relevant requirements in Parts 3, 4, 5 and 8 of the standards are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.
- At the time of the inspection, the school had already implemented its proposals relating to the change of premises and the additional site. The school has not implemented its proposed increase in the number of pupils on roll.
- This was the first material change inspection since the school's previous standard inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the chair of the proprietor body and other leaders to discuss the proposed material changes. The inspector considered a range of policies and documents relating to these changes. The inspector also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including pre-employment checks recorded on the school's single central record.
- The inspector made a tour of the school's premises at Aniseed Park and Ayres Road to check their suitability and safety. Neither the premises at Greek Street nor the sports centre at Ferranti House were considered during this inspection as they are not involved in the school's proposed material changes.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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