

EdStart Schools Oldham and Rochdale

276 Maygate, Off Chadderton Way, Oldham OL9 6TR

Inspection date

6 February 2025

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

Paragraphs 2, 2(1) to 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The proprietor has prepared an appropriate curriculum policy. The information set out in the policy also shows that the active promotion of fundamental British values is at the core of leaders' work. This includes values such as tolerance and respect, together with the development of pupils' knowledge and an understanding of being a British citizen.
- The curriculum policy is supported by schemes of work for each subject. The curriculum design and schemes of work are appropriate. The proprietor has thought carefully about what it wants pupils to learn during their time at the school. The proposed school's curriculum design considers the specific and individual needs of pupils, all of whom will be pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- There is suitable importance placed on speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics in the curriculum. Additionally, there will be an emphasis on pupils studying subjects such as science, information and communication technology, history, and geography. The subjects offered will also include art and design and physical education (PE).
- Pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education will be taught through timetabled lessons. Aspects of PSHE education will also be woven into the whole school curriculum, including careers education. The development of pupils' life skills, including their emotional and well-being skills, are considered an essential part of the curriculum by the proposed school. The topics to be covered are suitably wide-ranging and include all of those that pay particular regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Paragraphs 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(1)(g), 2A(2)

- The PSHE curriculum will include the development of pupils' understanding of relationships, sex, and health education. The proprietor has taken into consideration the relevant statutory guidance. There is a drafted policy statement which outlines how they will consult with parents and carers about the policy. The proposed school is aware that this statement will need to be placed on its website.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a) to 3(j)

- The proprietor has already recruited some staff. The proprietor is in the process of recruiting other staff. It has a clear idea of the calibre and expertise that it is looking for in new teachers and other staff.
- The proposed school has created templates for short-term curriculum design. Teachers will set out the content of lessons in these templates should the school be approved to open. Teachers will be expected to consider the needs of pupils when designing lesson activities. The proposed school is well resourced with a range of appropriate educational books and equipment. These are relevant to the age range of pupils who the school proposes to admit.
- The proprietor is committed to providing a good-quality education for pupils. The proposed executive headteacher and head of school have already been identified. They have the knowledge, skills, and experience to guide and support teachers. This should enable teachers to provide a suitable quality of education if the proposed school opens.

Paragraph 4

- The proposed school has a suitable assessment policy in place.
- Pupils' attainment and personal needs will be assessed when they start at the proposed school. Pupils' progress and attainment will be assessed routinely. Pupils' progress will be communicated regularly with parents and those responsible for governance. Teachers will use these assessments to inform their teaching.
- Where appropriate, pupils will complete national end-of-key-stage assessments.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the independent school standards (the standards) in this part.

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

Paragraphs 5, 5(a), 5(b) to 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d) to 5(d)(iii)

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development is a thread that runs through the curriculum for the proposed provision. Pupils' SMSC development is central to the school's aims, policies, and plans for enrichment activities.
- Aspects of SMSC development are threaded through the PSHE scheme of work. For example, pupils will learn about democracy and different faiths. Enrichment activities will be offered to all pupils to ensure that they experience a diverse range of social and cultural activities and traditions. For instance, plans are in place to help pupils to be involved in charity work and local community events.

- The proposed school has plans to provide opportunities for pupils to discuss local and national issues in an impartial way. Pupils will be encouraged to put into practice the values that are fundamental to living in modern Britain.
- The proposed school's policies include appropriate references to all the protected characteristics set out in legislation.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health, and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The proprietor has paid attention to the current statutory guidance for safeguarding pupils. A suitable and up-to-date safeguarding policy is in place. The proposed school has introduced all the necessary arrangements to keep pupils safe and to promote their welfare at the school.
- There are designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) already appointed. It is likely that other senior staff will also be trained to DSL level. All new staff will receive appropriate induction training, safeguarding training, and regular updates on areas such as radicalisation and extremism, sexual exploitation, sexting, and e-safety.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a) to 9(c), 10

- The proprietor has detailed and suitable behaviour and exclusion policies in place. There is also an appropriate anti-bullying policy. Any incidents of poor behaviour will be recorded. The proposed school intends to cross-reference these with any other concerns so that they can gain a full picture of an individual pupil's behaviour and respond quickly to any additional needs that arise. The policy includes appropriate and proportionate sanctions.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The proprietor has a health and safety policy that is tailored to the proposed school building. It complies with all relevant laws. Regular fire-safety checks of the building are planned. The proprietor intends to ensure the proposed school's compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The proprietor has an appropriate first-aid policy in place. Some of the staff already appointed have undergone first-aid training.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place. The risk assessments that have already been completed show that leaders plan to take appropriate actions to minimise risks to pupils. This includes risk assessments for the school building and grounds, staff, events, and individual pupils.
- The proposed school has made appropriate arrangements to ensure that its computer network has appropriate monitoring and filtering systems in place. This is to assure pupils' safety when they are working online.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils will be supervised by the deployment of sufficient staff, including at breaktimes, when arriving at school and on leaving the school premises.

Paragraph 15

- The proposed school has appropriate systems in place to register pupils' attendance and to allow them to monitor pupils' absences effectively. The proposed school will report on pupils' attendance on a regular basis through the intended governance arrangements at the school.
- The proprietor has published a suitable admissions policy for the proposed school. Systems are in place to ensure that records of admissions will adhere to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and 2024.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standards in this part.

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

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2) to 19(2) (d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7) to 21(7)(b)

- The single central record (SCR) is in place and meets the requirements for the information that it must contain. The proprietor understands the need to complete all the required checks on the suitability of staff before they take up an appointment.
- Records relating to the proprietor are included on the proposed school's SCR. All of the suitability checks, including those relating to the leadership and management of a school, have also been carried out.
- The proprietor, executive headteacher, head of school and designated safeguarding lead have completed appropriate training to support the appointment of suitable staff to work in a school. Some teaching staff have already been appointed. Plans to recruit additional teachers and support staff are in place as the school's pupil numbers grow. The induction documentation for new staff makes it clear that they will undergo a full suite of safeguarding, and other appropriate training, on appointment.
- Leaders are aware of the procedures that they should follow in the event of employing supply staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.
- The proposed school does not intend to engage volunteers. However, staff are clear about their responsibility for checking the suitability of volunteers who may work with pupils if this does occur.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a) to 23(1)(c), 28(1) to 28(1)(d), 28(2) to 28(2)(b)

- The proposed school is housed in a large, two-storey former nursery. The building has been refurbished to a high standard and comprises of several teaching rooms, a communal space, breakout rooms and a kitchen. There is also a medical room, reception area, office spaces and an outdoor space.

- There are appropriate toilet and washing facilities. All the toilet cubicles can be secured from the inside. There is hot and cold running water. The hot water is set at an appropriate temperature. There are signs indicating that the water is not suitable for drinking. Pupils will have access to drinking water throughout the day.
- There are no separate changing facilities for boys and girls and there are no shower facilities. However, the sports centre that the school will use for their weekly PE sessions has suitable, separate changing and shower facilities. The inspector saw evidence to confirm that the school will have access to and sole use of these facilities when visiting this centre.

Paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- A medical room has been set aside. It has a sink within the room. There is easy access to a toilet. A bed and first-aid kit were in the medical room at the time of the inspection.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- The accommodation throughout is of an appropriate standard and it meets all requirements for the health, safety, and welfare of pupils. This includes suitable acoustics and lighting. Teaching rooms have a suitable source of natural light. The exterior and interior lighting is of an appropriate standard. Access through main doorways and gates will be via keypads and coded locks.

Paragraphs 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The proposed pupils will have access to an outdoor area that is safe. It will be an appropriate space in which pupils can play when not in lessons. PE activities will be regularly timetabled in accordance with the school's curriculum requirements. PE sessions for pupils will be conducted at a local sports centre. There are risk assessments in place to ensure pupils' safety when travelling to and from the sports centre, and when using this facility.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standards in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f) to 32(1)(j), 32(2) to 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii) to 32(2)(d), 32(3) to 32(3)(g)

- The proprietor has set up a school website that contains all of the required information. The proprietor is fully aware of the requirements for the information that a school should publish on its website.
- There is a suitable range of information available for parents and pupils when they join the school. This includes information on admissions, behaviour, the curriculum, and safeguarding. All key documents will be made available for parents on request from the school office, as well as being published on the school's website.
- The proposed school intends to provide termly and annual reports on pupils' progress and attainment to parents. Reports will be detailed and provide a holistic picture of a pupil's progress. The school will also report on pupils' personal development and

emotional health and well-being. It is aware that any inspection reports and examination results need to be made available on the school's website once released.

- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33, 33(a) to 33(k)

- The complaints policy is appropriate. It outlines all of the required stages. It includes appropriate timescales and information about the storage and sharing of written records. The policy is detailed. It ensures that the proposed school's intended complaints procedures are transparent.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has an appropriate understanding of the standards. It has plans in place to monitor compliance with the standards regularly.
- Leaders demonstrate the knowledge required to set up and run this independent school successfully. They have experience of, and a commitment to, providing an effective quality of education for pupils. They are likely to fulfil their responsibilities to promote the well-being of pupils.
- The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school's accessibility plan fully reflects statutory requirements.
- The proposed school is likely to meet the regulation in this part.

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	151393
DfE registration number	353/6028
Inspection number	10370931

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	Independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	EdStart Schools Oldham and Rochdale Limited
Chair	James Lowe
Headteacher	Dympna Woods (executive headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,800 to £65,000
Telephone number	0300 303 4414
Website	www.edstartschools.com
Email address	james@edstartschools.com

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	None
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	Not known
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health, and care plan	Not applicable	Not known

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	2	3
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	4

Information about this proposed school

- This proposed independent school's address is 276 Maygate, Off Chadderton Way, Oldham OL9 6TR. However, access to the school is on Barton Street.
- It is proposed that the school will provide full-time education for up to 35, mixed gender pupils, aged between 11 and 16 years.
- It is intended that the proposed school will cater for pupils with SEND. Pupils will have social, emotional, and mental health, autism, and associated needs. Some pupils may have an education, health, and care plan.
- The school will also cater for pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools.
- The proprietor is EdStart Schools Oldham and Rochdale Limited, which is part of EdStart Specialist Education Limited. There are currently three other, separately registered schools within this company, EdStart Schools Salford, EdStart Schools Wigan, and EdStart Schools Wirral.
- There are two members of the proprietor body including the chair.
- The proprietor has appointed a chair of governors, an executive headteacher and a head of school.

- The proprietor does not intend to use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to determine whether the school is likely to meet the independent school standards should the DfE register the proposed school.
- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietor and the executive headteachers, the company leader for human resources, who is also a designated safeguarding lead and responsible for maintaining the single central record.
- The inspector also spoke with the company operations manager, the company lead special educational needs coordinator and several curriculum leaders.
- The inspector made a tour of the school to check the suitability of the proposed premises against the relevant standards. She looked at a wide range of documents and policies, including those relating to the curriculum, behaviour and health and safety. She also checked documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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