

Edstart Schools Wirral

237 Liscard Road, Wallasey, Cheshire CH44 5TH

Inspection date

5 November 2025

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 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The school has in place an up-to-date written safeguarding policy. It is well understood and consistently applied by staff and school leaders. The proprietor has ensured that this policy is published on the school's website.
- The school organises a well-defined programme of annual safeguarding training that all staff undertake. This ensures that staff have a secure understanding of how to recognise and report concerns regarding pupils' welfare. Leaders respond swiftly and effectively when staff raise safeguarding issues. The school works effectively with external agencies and local authorities in the best interests of pupils' safety.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 16 to 16(b)

- The school has developed a written health and safety policy. This policy is implemented effectively. It is underpinned by well-established procedures and routine health and safety checks that are carried out by the proprietor. For example, the proprietor arranges annual checks on electrical and gas equipment. When required, remedial work is acted on swiftly.
- The proprietor ensures that fire evacuation practice takes place regularly. Several staff are trained as fire marshals. Fire alarms and safety equipment are checked consistently to ensure that they remain in working order. Fire safety documentation is well kept. The proprietor has ensured compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- There is a sufficient risk assessment policy in place to ensure that leaders and staff know how to identify potential hazards and risks. Adequate risk assessments are undertaken to consider what control measures are necessary for different activities. These are regularly reviewed and shared with staff as required.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils are appropriately supervised by staff throughout the school day. The school has already recruited additional members of staff to accommodate the proposed increase

in the number of pupils on roll, should the material change be approved.

- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to continue to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

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

Paragraphs 17 to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2)(d) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)(a) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(6)

- Leaders have the training and expertise required to ensure that newly recruited staff are suitable to work with young people. They routinely carry out appropriate checks on new staff before allowing them to commence employment. Leaders then provide new staff with a robust package of safeguarding training as part of their induction.
- The single central record (SCR) is compliant. It is well maintained by leaders who are knowledgeable about what information must be included in the SCR. Those responsible for governance are checked for their suitability for leadership and management. Additionally, those who have spent time overseas have also undergone the necessary checks. The school seeks appropriate assurances when engaging the services of third parties such as transport companies or agency staff.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22 to 23(1)(c), 28(1) to 29(1)(b)

- The school premises are maintained well. The accommodation is across three floors. Teaching spaces are primarily on the upper two floors and are of ample size to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers, should the material change be approved. There is sufficient outdoor space for use during social times.
- There are appropriate toilet and washing facilities available throughout the school. These are sufficient for the proposed increase in the number of pupils. Water supplies are regularly tested for safety and appropriate temperature. There are several drinking-water points on each floor of the building for pupils to access. These points are clearly labelled.
- The school makes use of a local sports centre to provide physical education. There are appropriate changing and shower facilities available at this location.

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

- There is a dedicated medical room that contains a bed, first-aid kit and sink. These items are in good condition. The room is located close to toilet facilities.

Paragraphs 25 to 27(b)

- The school's building is clean and tidy. The proprietor ensures its upkeep through routine maintenance programmes. Rooms are well lit, and acoustic conditions are suitable. There is appropriate external lighting in place at exit points.

- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor demonstrates a secure awareness of the standards. It undertakes a programme of checks on compliance with these standards throughout the year. These checks cover all aspects of the standards and help the proprietor to make sure that they remain met over time.
- The headteacher, executive leadership team and other senior staff have the background and expertise to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. In addition, they have recently improved their systems and procedures to review the quality of education.
- The proprietor has carefully considered how the increase in pupil numbers will be managed to maintain the positive standards that are currently in place. For example, additional qualified teaching staff have already been recruited in preparation for the proposed increase.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The accessibility plan reflects the school's statutory responsibilities.

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	150427
DfE registration number	344/6020
Inspection number	10424419

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 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 category	Independent day school
Proprietor	EdStart Specialist Education Ltd
Chair	James Lowe
Headteacher	Kevin Buchanan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,000 to £65,000
Telephone number	07502095422
Website	www.edstartschools.com
Email address	james@edstartschools.com
Date of previous standard inspection	14 to 16 January 2025

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	60	60

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	40	60
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	40	Up to 60
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	9	Up to 60
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	9	Up to 60

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	8	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	7	7

Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection was on 14 to 16 January 2025.
- The school is currently registered to admit up to 50 pupils. It is located at 237 Liscard Road, Wallasey, Cheshire, CH44 5TH.
- The school caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from their mainstream schools. The school also caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The proprietor has appointed a governing body.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned this material change inspection to evaluate the school's likely compliance with the relevant standards if the DfE approves the proprietor's request to increase its pupil capacity from 50 to 60.
- This was the first material change inspection in respect of an increase to the school's capacity since the school's registration in February 2024.
- The inspector checked those aspects of safeguarding that were directly linked to the material change application, including the single central record of pre-employment checks.
- The inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body. He also met with senior leaders.
- The inspector made a tour of the site to check the suitability of the premises against the relevant standards.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation and policies relevant to the material change request. These included health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment documentation. The inspector also checked documentation related to safeguarding, as well as minutes of governing body and executive team meetings.

Inspection team

David Spruce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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