

Healey Learning Centre

Unit 16, Hollow Works, Shawclough Road, Rochdale OL12 6LN

Inspection date

31 May 2024

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

Paragraph 2, 2(1)–2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a)–2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The proprietor has prepared an appropriate curriculum policy. The policy emphasises the contribution that each subject will make to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. The information within the policy also shows that the active promotion of the 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 schemes of work and examples of curriculum design are appropriate. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn during their time at the school. Leaders' curriculum design considers the specific and individual needs of pupils, many of whom may 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, religious education, history and geography. Subjects 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 and also their emotional and well-being skills are considered an essential part of the curriculum by leaders. 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.

Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d)–2A(1)(g), 2A(2), 2A(3)

- The PSHE education curriculum will include the development of pupils' understanding of relationships, sex and health education. Leaders have taken into consideration the relevant statutory guidance. They have drafted a policy statement, and they have

considered how they will consult with parents and carers about the policy. Leaders are aware that this statement will need to be placed on the school's website.

Paragraph 3, 3(a)–3(j)

- The proprietor has already recruited some staff. The school 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.
- Templates have been created for short-term curriculum design. Leaders will ask teachers to use these templates to set out the content of lessons should the school be approved to open. Teachers will be expected to consider the needs of the pupils when designing lesson activities. The 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 serve.
- The proprietor is committed to providing a good-quality education for pupils. The headteacher and other senior leaders already appointed have sufficient knowledge, skills and experience to guide and support teachers. This should enable teachers to provide a suitable quality of education if the school opens.

Paragraph 4

- Leaders have a suitable assessment policy in place.
- Leaders will assess pupils' attainment and personal needs when they start at the 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.
- All of the independent school standards ('the standards') in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b)–5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d)–5(d)(iii)

- Pupils' SMSC development is a thread that runs throughout 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 woven 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 example, plans are in place to help pupils to get involved in charity work and local community events.
- Leaders have 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 school's policies include appropriate references to all the protected characteristics as set out in legislation.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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. Leaders have introduced all the necessary arrangements to keep pupils safe and to promote their welfare at the school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are already appointed as designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs). It is likely that other senior staff will also be trained at DSL level. All new staff will receive appropriate induction and safeguarding training as well as regular updates on areas such as radicalisation and extremism, sexual exploitation and e-safety.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a)–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. Leaders intend 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 premises of the proposed school. It complies with all the relevant laws. Regular fire-safety checks of the premises are planned. The proprietor will ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The proprietor has an appropriate first-aid policy in place. A number of 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, staff, events and individual pupils.
- Leaders have made suitable arrangements to ensure that the school's computer network has appropriate monitoring and filtering in place. This is to assure pupils' safety when they are working online.

Paragraph 14

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

Paragraph 15

- Leaders have appropriate systems in place to register pupils' attendance and to allow them to monitor pupils' absences effectively. Leaders will report on pupils' attendance on a regular basis through the governance arrangements at the school.
- The proprietor has published a suitable admissions policy for the school. Systems are in place to ensure that records of admissions will adhere to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c)–18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa)–19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b)–19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a)–20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i)–20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)–21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7)–21(7)(b)

- The single central record (SCR) is in place and meets the requirements for the information it must contain. Leaders understand 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 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 two members of the proprietor body, one of which will be the headteacher, 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. 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 agency staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.
- Leaders do not intend to engage volunteers. However, they are clear about their responsibility for checking the suitability of volunteers who may work with pupils if this does occur.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The proposed school accommodation includes two main teaching spaces, a communal area, a medical room, office spaces, a staff kitchen, shower and changing facilities. There is a secure main entrance at the front of the school. This is where pupils will be dropped off and collected each day. Leaders have refurbished the building to a high standard. It is fit for purpose.
- There are appropriate toilet and washing facilities. All 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 appropriate changing and shower facilities for boys and girls on the proposed school site. These are clean and furnished to a high standard.

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

- A medical room has been set aside with suitable washing facilities in 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.

Paragraph 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. These sessions will be conducted at a local sports centre. Leaders will have risk assessments in place to ensure pupils' safety when travelling to and from the sports centre, and when using this site.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(k), 32(2)–32(2)(d), 32(3)–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. A comprehensive range of policies is in place, including information on admissions, behaviour, the curriculum and safeguarding. All documents will be made available for parents on request from the school office, as well as being available on the school's website.
- Leaders intend 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. They will also report on pupils' personal development and emotional health and well-being. Leaders are aware that any inspection reports and examination results need to be made available once released.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–33(k)

- The complaints policy is appropriate. It outlines all of the required steps for dealing with a complaint. It includes appropriate timescales and information about the storage and sharing of written records. The policy is sufficiently detailed, and it ensures transparency of the school's intended complaints procedures.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has an appropriate understanding of the standards. The proprietor has plans in place to monitor the school’s compliance with the standards regularly.
- Leaders demonstrate the knowledge required to set up and run this independent school successfully. They are committed to providing an effective quality of education for pupils. They are likely to fulfil their responsibilities to promote the well-being of pupils.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school’s accessibility plan fully reflects statutory requirements.

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	150845
DfE registration number	354/6044
Inspection number	10339610

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	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Apex Specialist Education Limited
Chair	Matthew McCann
Headteacher	Matthew McCann
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,000 to £50,000
Telephone number	07915 269 720
Website	www.apex-specialisteducation.com
Email address	info@apex-specialisteducation.com
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

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	17	13	13

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	None	13
Number of part-time pupils	17	None
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	17	13
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	None	Not known
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	None	Not known

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	5	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	None	None
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2	5

Information about this proposed school

- This proposed independent school is located in premises at Unit 16, Hollows Works, Shawclough Road, Rochdale OL12 6LN. It is housed in a medium-sized, single storey building, which has been refurbished to a high standard.
- It is proposed that the school will provide full-time education for up to 13, mixed-gender pupils, aged between 11 and 16 years. It is intended that the proposed school will cater for pupils who struggle to cope with mainstream education and/or are at risk of exclusion, by providing them with a small, nurturing learning environment.
- The proprietor intends to cater for pupils with social, emotional and mental health and associated needs. Some pupils may have an education, health and care plan.
- The proprietor is Apex Specialist Education Ltd. This company is registered at Companies House. There are two directors. One director is also the chair of the proprietor body and the headteacher, the other will be the chair of governors. The proprietor is intending to invite external educational professionals to join its governing body to add challenge and accountability.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was operating as an unregistered school provision for 17 pupils. All these pupils attend part time, and none have an EHC plan.
- 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 second pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, and chair of governors, who are also members of the proprietor body. She also spoke to the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector made a tour of the school to check the suitability of the proposed premises against the relevant standards. She also 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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