

Expanse Learning Wigan School

Expanse Learning and Development Hub, Tyrer Avenue, Worsley
Mesnes, Wigan, WN3 5XF

Inspection dates

24 July 2018

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(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(c), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- Leaders have prepared an appropriate curriculum policy. Details within the policy emphasise the contribution each subject will make to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils. This approach demonstrates leaders' intention for the school to provide a flexible and personalised education. The details also show that the active promotion of values such as tolerance, respect, and developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of being a British citizen will lie at the core of the school's work.
- The curriculum policy is supported by long-term schemes of work for each subject. The depth and detail of the schemes of work and supporting long- and medium-term planning are thorough for both key stage 3 and key stage 4. It is evident that leaders have thought carefully about what they want the pupils to learn during their time at the school. The planning takes into account the specific and very individual needs of pupils, most of whom are likely to have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The curriculum is appropriately broad. Pupils will experience a variety of subjects, encompassing mathematical, linguistic, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. At key stage 4, pupils will have the opportunity to work towards a range of externally accredited qualifications, including GCSEs for the most able.
- Personal, social and health education will be delivered as part of the school's core curriculum and also through specific personal development programmes linked to pupils' education, health and care plans. This will include delivery of sex and relationships education. Policies have already been drawn up and the topics to be covered are wide-ranging.

- Leaders have well-thought-out plans for the delivery of careers education. A wide range of visitors are planned. Information, advice and guidance are intended to be offered impartially, tailored to the individual needs and interests of pupils and enable them to make informed choices. This will be done in a variety of ways, including structured careers advice provided by external impartial advisers from the local authority careers service, a personal tutor system and access to online commercial careers guidance.
- Leaders already have well-established links with local employers to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their readiness for college or work. These links include placement opportunities within nurseries, cafés, supermarkets, and building and engineering firms.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j)

- Leaders have not recruited all staff as yet; however, some teaching staff will transfer from the organisation's other educational provision. Leaders have a very clear idea of the calibre and expertise they are looking for in their new teachers and staff.
- No short-term teaching plans are yet in place. Once the school is open, leaders will utilise the specialist teachers, for example in English and mathematics, who are already working for the organisation. Teaching methods will vary and reflect the subject being taught and individual needs and requirements of pupils. This is an appropriate approach at this stage.
- The headteacher is a qualified and experienced teacher. Other senior leaders within the organisation have an appropriate amount of experience of education, including being members of governing bodies for local maintained schools. They are likely to be able to ensure that teaching is of a suitable quality when the school opens.

Paragraph 4

- Leaders have made suitable arrangements for the assessment of pupils. These arrangements are aligned with the schemes of work for each subject.
- Pupils will be formally assessed when they arrive at the provision. They will be also be assessed on a half-termly basis. Intended records appear thorough. Teachers and leaders have a good understanding of the progress they expect pupils to make across the curriculum. Pupils' progress will be shared regularly with parents and the governing body. Pupils will also have an opportunity to discuss their progress and assess themselves against their goals. Targets will be set from these assessments and then reviewed regularly.
- Pupils will have access to a range of academic and vocational qualifications according to ability and need. This includes the most able pupils who have the potential to access GCSE qualifications.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Documentary evidence indicates that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a thread that runs throughout the proposed provision. Schemes of work, policies, aims and plans for extra-curricular and enrichment activities all have spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at their core.
- There is evidence that pupils will learn about democracy and different faiths. Educational visits are already scheduled to promote understanding and knowledge of Britain's diverse society. Schemes of work include opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Leaders have already drawn up a schedule of regular opportunities for pupils to discuss current local and national events. They plan to promote pupils' leadership skills, resilience and self-confidence through participation in activities, including work-related experiences. This will support the development of pupils' skills, broaden their horizons and provide an opportunity to experience a balance of opposing views. There are ample opportunities for pupils to be able to put into practice the values that are fundamental to living in Britain.
- Plans and school policies relating to behaviour define the high expectations of pupils and staff. Displays around the school give a flavour of how the school will promote respect, tolerance and an understanding of right and wrong. Opportunities for reward are now built into the behaviour policy and reflected in displays around school celebrating achievement and success.
- The school's policies include positive reference to all the protected characteristics set out in legislation.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- Leaders have paid careful attention to statutory guidance. They have put in place all the necessary arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of pupils and to promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- Leaders now have a suitable safeguarding policy in place: it is up to date, will be reviewed regularly and meets all current statutory requirements. The policy is clear about the duties of staff relating to recording and reporting incidents.
- There is a designated safeguarding lead within school. All staff receive appropriate induction, safeguarding training and regular updates on areas such as radicalisation and extremism, female genital mutilation, sexting and e-safety. Records of training are thorough and detailed.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10

- Leaders have a detailed behaviour policy in place and now have an appropriate anti-bullying policy. Any incidents of poor behaviour can be logged and cross-referenced with other concerns, including social issues and attendance. Sanctions are appropriate

and proportionate. The policy is implemented within a culture of 'understanding the reasons behind pupils' behaviours'. Staff seek to de-escalate incidents and teach pupils an appropriate range of responses and skills to deal with a situation. A range of rewards are also in place.

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

- Leaders have a health and safety policy that is tailored to the premises of the proposed school. It complies with all relevant laws. The premises have regular fire safety checks and the proprietors ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Leaders provided the inspector with an array of policies to be implemented when the school opens. These include first aid, fire safety, data protection and privacy, and the acceptable use of information and communication technology. All of the policies reflect recent developments and meet statutory requirements.
- A risk assessment policy is in place. Detailed risk assessments exist for all educational and extra-curricular activities, including for potential risks from the wide range of animals that are housed within the school, such as snakes, chinchillas, lizards and rats. Leaders use their risk assessments well to identify hazards and to plan and take appropriate actions to mitigate potential risks. Leaders will create individual pupil risk assessments as and when appropriate.
- The security and safety of pupils have been considered as part of the plans for the building refurbishments. For example, closed-circuit television recording is in operation around the school building.
- Leaders have made arrangements to ensure that the school's computer network will be filtered to ensure pupils' safety when they are online.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils will be supervised at all times, including at break times, before school and on leaving the premises.

Paragraph 15

- Leaders presented the inspector with the policy and systems used to register attendance. This included procedures to follow up absence promptly. They were also able to share how they propose to monitor ongoing attendance and evaluate absence on a termly basis through the leadership and governance of the school.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

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

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 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)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 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)(a), 21(7)(b)

- The single central record is already in place and the required checks prescribed in this part of the independent school standards have been undertaken on all staff already appointed. This includes all members of the proprietorship and the governance of the school. Checks related to section 128 of the Act and checking staff, governors or proprietors are free from any prohibition relating to working in or leading and managing a school are now fully compliant.
- Leaders have completed training to ensure they only appoint staff who are suitable to work in a school. Comprehensive recruitment and selection procedures include suitable activities to check thoroughly applicants' understanding of safeguarding.
- Leaders are aware of the procedures that they should follow in the event of employing agency staff.
- Leaders are clear about their responsibility for vetting volunteers who might work with pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- The proposed school is located in a school building previously owned by the local authority. The premises have been refurbished and altered to meet the needs of the proposed school. The school comprises a suite of teaching rooms, as well as toilets, changing facilities, a shower, a medical room, a kitchen and two break-out spaces for indoor recreation. All are well furnished, warm and conducive to learning.
- There are appropriate toilet facilities for the sole use of pupils, including a designated disabled toilet. All toilets can be secured from the inside and there is running hot and cold water. The hot water is of an appropriate temperature. Pupils will have access to a water butt containing drinking water, throughout the day.

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

- A medical room has been set aside and there are suitable washing facilities and access to a toilet. A bed with blanket, sheet and pillow is easily accessible. There is a first aid kit located in the medical room. Several additional first aid kits are located around the building. The room has provision for a medical hoist.

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

- Accommodation throughout is of a high standard and meets all requirements for the health, safety and the welfare of pupils, including suitable acoustics and lighting. All teaching rooms have a good source of natural light. The exterior and interior lighting is of a similar high standard. The proposed school has a security system in place; consequently, all rooms and facilities are secure and only accessible with a security key fob.

Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The pupils will have access to appropriate outdoor space that is secure and will allow them to enjoy the fresh air and to play when not in lessons. There is access to extensive outdoor space for recreation, and to undertake physical education in

accordance with school's curriculum requirements. This includes a full-sized football pitch and a hard-surfaced playground. Leaders have plans to develop the school grounds further to include provision for horticulture, animal husbandry and construction activities.

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

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g)

- The proprietors have a website that provides information about all the provision within the organisation, including this proposed school. It is well presented and contains a range of useful information for parents. The required information in relation to the safeguarding of pupils is published on the school section of the website, as is information on complaints.
- Leaders are putting together good-quality parent and pupil information packs for when pupils join. A comprehensive range of school-specific policies for parents are in place, including admissions, behaviour and exclusions. They reflect recent legislation and good practice fully.
- Leaders are aware of the need to provide termly reports to parents. They were able to give examples of the extensive range of information they intend to provide. This will give parents a holistic picture of how well their children are progressing. Leaders are aware that any inspection reports and examination results need to be made available once released.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)

- The complaints policy is comprehensive and contains all of the necessary stages with appropriate timescales and details about written records. The policy is robust and ensures transparency.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- Leaders demonstrate the knowledge and experience to open a new school. They have worked effectively and with understanding to address the areas that were identified as unmet at the previous pre-registration inspection.
- They are likely to fulfil their responsibilities to promote the well-being of pupils.
- The quality of their leadership is reflected in ensuring that all of the independent school standards are now likely to be consistently met when the school opens.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The policy for equalities is clear about how leaders will monitor and support the range of different protected characteristics. It is also threaded through a range of policies and is central to the school's personal, social, health and cultural education curriculum.
- Equality of opportunity is a prominent feature of the values of this school.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

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	145289
DfE registration number	359/6003
Inspection number	10056347

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	Secondary
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Expanse Group Ltd
Chair	Martin Budden
Headteacher	Richard King
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,000–£22,000
Telephone number	01942 877715
Website	www.expanselarning.co.uk
Email address	tony.brown@expansigroup.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

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	31	31

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	31
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	31
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	31
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Not yet known

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	Not yet determined
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not yet determined

Information about this proposed school

- Expanse Learning Wigan School will be an independent co-educational special school. It proposes to register for boys and girls aged 11 to 16.
- The school proposes to open with a maximum number of 31 pupils. It intends to offer a small, personalised and nurturing environment for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, social, emotional mental health issues and 'for those young people who have found a mainstream school environment overwhelming'.
- The school aims to ensure that pupils make progress by affording them the opportunity to learn and develop in a supportive and creative environment in which there is a focus on recognising achievement.
- The school is to be housed in the premises of a previous pupil referral unit that was originally built as a voluntary-aided Catholic primary school. The school intends to make use of the building and the school grounds to meet the learning needs of pupils and provide a safe and caring environment in which to learn.
- All pupils are likely to have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- This is the second pre-registration inspection that has been carried out.
- During the inspection, the proposed documents and policies were scrutinised, including documents relating to safeguarding. A visit was made to the proposed site of the school and a tour was made of the proposed accommodation. Discussions were held with the operational director, the pastoral lead and the person responsible for high needs study programmes.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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