

# Expanse Learning Wigan School

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

**Inspection date**

31 October 2024

**Overall outcome**

**The school meets the independent school standards relevant to the material change.  
The material change has already been implemented.**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The safeguarding policy is up to date with the latest statutory guidance and made available on the school's website. The policy is available in paper form from the office on request. It contains detailed information about the safeguarding team and the systems and procedures in place to protect pupils from harm. The members of the safeguarding team have the training and expertise that they need to check that the culture of safeguarding keeps pupils safe.

*Paragraphs 11, 12, 16 to 16(b)*

- The health and safety policy reflects leaders' high expectations for creating a safe learning environment for pupils. There are carefully considered procedures in place for staff to raise any site or buildings issues that may arise. Leaders have systems in place to rectify any issues quickly and to ensure that this is done to a high standard.
- Regular fire drills take place. Follow up actions are noted and addressed in a timely manner. Leaders use competent professionals to check and audit the fire-fighting equipment at the required intervals. The proprietor has ensured compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The risk assessment policy demonstrates leaders' expectations for identifying risks. Control measures put in place are well thought out and consider the needs of pupils who attend the school. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed. There are systems in place to share the important content of pupils' risk assessments with all staff.

*Paragraph 14*

- The school ensures that pupils are properly supervised by school staff. The proposed number of extra staff is suitable for ensuring that the increased number of pupils will be supervised appropriately.
- The independent school standards ('the standards') in this part are likely to continue to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

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

*Paragraphs 17 to 18(2)(e), 18(3) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), to 21(8)*

- The single central record (SCR) is in place and includes all staff. The proprietor makes regular checks on the accuracy of the SCR. Records relating to the proprietor are included on the SCR, including those relating to suitability for leadership and management.
- Key staff have had safer recruitment training that gives them the most recent guidance about safeguarding within recruitment procedures. Leaders make sure that recruitment checks are completed before staff start their employment.
- Leaders are aware of the requirements for the safe use of agency staff. Leaders are familiar with the procedures for the necessary checks for staff who have spent time overseas.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 22 to 23(1)(c), 28(1) to 28(1)(d), 28(2) to 28(2)(b)*

- The school premises are maintained to a high standard. The accommodation is all on the ground floor and consists of teaching spaces within the main building as well as a neighbouring vocational centre and therapy centre within the same site. There are extensive outdoor areas for social times and physical education (PE).
- There are appropriate toilet and washing facilities for the proposed increase in pupils. Toilet cubicles are lockable from the inside for privacy. Water is set at a safe temperature and drinking-water is available for pupils throughout the day. Drinking water is clearly labelled.
- PE takes place on the school site and there are appropriate changing facilities available.

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

- There is a suitable medical room, which includes a shower, toilet and sink. The medical room contains a bed and a first-aid kit. Administration of first aid or medication is recorded and stored securely.

*Paragraphs 25 to 27(b)*

- The accommodation is clean and tidy throughout. The layout of the building has been carefully considered with pupils' needs in mind. The proprietor has made the relevant checks to ensure that the sound and lighting provides a suitable environment for pupils to learn. There is external lighting that covers all exits.

*Paragraphs 29(1) to 29(1)(b)*

- The school has recently upgraded some of the outdoor areas. There is an all-weather pitch that is suitable for recreation and physical activity, including PE lessons.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor body has an in-depth knowledge of the standards. It makes regular checks on compliance in all areas to make sure that the standards will remain met over time and between inspections.
- The headteacher and other senior staff have the background and expertise to fulfil their responsibilities. They put into place robust systems and procedures to check on the quality of education and all other aspects of the school's provision.
- The proprietor body has thought carefully about how the increase in numbers will be managed to maintain the high standards that are currently in place.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the request for the material changes is approved.

### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

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

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets 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	145289
DfE registration number	359/6003
Inspection number	10369046

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 compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Independent special school
School status	Independent day school
Proprietor	Expanse Group Limited
Chair	Tony Brown
Headteacher	Ed Hanley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,250
Telephone number	01942 877 715
Website	<a href="http://www.expanselarning.co.uk">www.expanselarning.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:hello@expanselarning.co.uk">hello@expanselarning.co.uk</a>
Dates of previous standard inspection	1 to 3 March 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	62	90	90

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	62	90
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	62	90
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	62	90
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	62	90

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	7	9
Number of part-time teaching staff	3	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	20	24

## Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection was on 1 to 3 March 2022.
- All pupils who attend the school are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All have an education health and care plan. Most pupils at the school have autism. Some pupils have additional learning difficulties.
- The school makes use of two unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school is operating beyond its registration agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). It has exceeded the maximum number of pupils on roll that it is registered to admit. The school is registered to admit up to 60 pupils. There are currently 62 pupils on roll.

## Information about this inspection

- The 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 60 to 90.
- This was the second material change inspection in respect of an increase of the school's capacity since the school's standard inspection in March 2022.
- The inspector checked those aspects of safeguarding that directly linked to the material change application.
- The inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body. She also met with senior leaders.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- 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 relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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