

Hammer Lane Academy

Hammer Lane, Sharlston, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 1DH

Inspection date

20 August 2025

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

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

- The proposed school has developed a broad and appropriate curriculum from the early years through to the end of key stage 1. The three curriculum pathways are designed to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with precision. Each pathway is proposed to offer pupils a broad range of subjects tailored to their specific SEND requirements. Learning will be adapted as necessary according to pupils' individual education, health, and care (EHC) plan outcomes.
- The curriculum will have a strong emphasis on early reading, phonics and developing mathematical skills. The school has identified the essential knowledge and skills that it intends pupils to learn. This includes developing pupils' written and oral communication.
- The curriculum includes personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) provision. The proprietor body has considered how this curriculum forms a foundation for later learning. The proposed PSHE curriculum is appropriate to the age and stage of pupils who might attend the setting. Pupils will learn about fundamental British values, different faiths, and the protected characteristics. The curriculum reflects the school's aims and ethos. It is designed to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

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

- The proposed school's approach to teaching relationships education is appropriate to the pupils it intends to educate. The content of the intended curriculum meets statutory guidance. The school plans to consult with parents and carers about the content of the relationships curriculum.

Paragraphs 3 to 4

- Proposed assessment methods are linked to the school's curriculum and pupils' individual SEND profiles. The school intends to carry out a range of initial checks on what pupils know and can do when they start at the school. This information

combined with the outcomes stated in pupils' EHC plans is intended to inform teaching and adaptations to provision for pupils.

- The proposed school intends to make use of occupational therapy as well as speech and language therapy to meet pupil's needs. The proprietor has established links with other settings to provide the appropriate expertise in this regard.
- The school has employed staff with the relevant knowledge and expertise to implement the intended curriculum effectively. The school has considered how it will promote and ensure high-quality teaching and learning. An appropriate programme of professional development has been planned by the school, including in relation to the communication needs of pupils who will attend the school.
- The independent school 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 to 5(d)(iii)

- The proposed school has given careful thought as to how it will promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development (SMSC). The SMSC programme is designed to foster in pupils respect for others and an appreciation for those that are different from themselves. The curriculum promotes positive relationships and empathy for others. The school has considered how it will provide pupils with enrichment opportunities beyond the classroom and in the local community.
- The proprietor intends to promote positive behaviour and relationships among pupils. This approach aligns with the school's values and ethos. Pupils will be encouraged to actively participate in extra-curricular activities within their school, local community and with other schools within the proprietor's trust. Planned opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation and respect for others around them are well considered.
- The proposed school intends to train staff to ensure that they understand how to preclude the teaching of partisan political views. This training will provide guidance for staff on how to preclude such views through both the taught curriculum and any extra-curricular activities that pupils access.
- The independent standards (the standards), in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 3. Welfare, health, and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7 to 7(b)

- The proposed school has established strong foundations on which to build a culture of safeguarding. The school's designated safeguarding lead has completed the relevant training. The school has a rigorous safeguarding training programme planned. This is informed by relevant statutory guidance. The school has identified an appropriate method of recording safeguarding matters, and the safeguarding policy clearly sets out how safeguarding concerns will be acted upon.

- The proprietor body has an effective understanding of contextual safeguarding risks and what is required to establish a strong culture of safeguarding. The school understands its duty of care to pupils and the external agencies it can seek support and advice from if needed.
- The school's curriculum is intended to teach pupils how to stay safe both in person and online in an age-appropriate manner.

Paragraphs 9 to 10

- The proposed school has appropriate policies to promote positive attitudes among pupils and discourage bullying or unkind behaviour. These policies promote a culture of collaboration and mutual respect. Leaders intend to make adaptations to the policy in light of pupils specific SEND, when necessary.

Paragraph 11

- The school has an appropriate health and safety policy. It complies with relevant legislation and takes account of the ages and needs of the pupils who will attend the school. The proprietor intends to carry out regular checks on the premises to ensure that these are adhered to.

Paragraph 12

- The school has an appropriate fire safety policy in place. Fire exits are clearly marked, and emergency lighting is in place. Fire safety equipment has been installed but not tested. At the time of the inspection, the premises had not been inspected by external fire safety professionals.

Paragraph 13

- The proposed school has ensured a suitable number of staff have up to date first-aid training. An appropriate space has been identified in which to provide short-term care for sick or injured pupils. However, the room was not appropriately equipped at the time of the inspection.

Paragraphs 14 and 15

- The proprietor has considered the number of staff that will be required to supervise pupils attending the school. Pupils will be appropriately supervised at all times of the day. Staff have been recruited with relevant expertise to support pupils' anticipated SEND effectively.
- The school has appropriate procedures in place to maintain the admissions and attendance registers in line with statutory guidance. The school understands its legal obligations in this regard. Leaders intend to promote the importance of good attendance and monitor any absence closely.

Paragraph 16 to 16(b)

- The school has a suitable risk assessment policy in place. However, some of the risk assessments are not specific enough as to provide appropriate guidance to staff when enacting them. Some risk assessments are generic and do not take account of the needs of the pupils who will attend the school or the building's layout. In addition, at the time of the inspection, ongoing building work on the school site prevented the risk

assessment policy from being effectively implemented. Some risks were not fully mitigated, for example, due to unfinished building work or electrical installation.

- The standards in this part are unlikely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2), 18(3), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3)

- The proposed school has completed all appropriate pre-employment checks on staff that have already been employed. Staff do not start employment at the school until the relevant checks have been completed, and the evidence recorded electronically. The school understands its responsibility for making checks on staff who might work at the school from a supply agency.

Paragraphs 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(6)

- All relevant pre-employment checks have been conducted on the proprietor body. These are recorded on the school's single central record.

Paragraph 21(1) to 21(3)(b)

- The proprietor maintains an electronic single central record of all pre-employment checks conducted for staff. The school has recorded the dates on which all relevant checks were carried out.
- 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) to 24(1)(b)

- The proposed school is located on the site of a former nursery school. The proprietor is carrying out renovation work to the building to make it suitable to operate as the proposed school. At the time of the inspection, this work was still in progress. When completed, this work is likely to be of high standard. However, the areas of the school site are not currently likely to support pupils' health, safety, and welfare because the building work is incomplete.
- The proposed school provides suitable toilet and washing facilities for pupils. These facilities are appropriate to accommodate the proposed number of pupils who will attend the school. Medical facilities for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils are appropriate and meet the needs of the pupils who will attend the school.

Paragraph 25

- The proprietor has carried out renovation work to the building and grounds. Where complete, this work has been done to a high standard, and these will support the health, safety, and welfare of pupils. However, the renovation process is not complete. Because of this, some areas of the school site do not support pupil's health, safety, and welfare as well as they might when this work is completed.

Paragraph 26

- Both the teaching spaces and the general school building take account of the activities which will normally take place therein and are suitably sound-proofed.

Paragraph 27 to 27(b)

- Internally the school is bright and well-lit by both natural and artificial light sources. However, some external lighting does not ensure people can safely enter and leave the school premises, either because it is not functioning or because it is not appropriately situated.

Paragraph 28 to 28(2)(b)

- Adequate supplies of hot and cold water are provided to toilets and washing facilities. Hot water does not provide a scalding risk. Drinking water is readily accessible and located away from toilet facilities. However, water supplies that are suitable for drinking are not appropriately labelled.

Paragraph 29(1) to 29(1)(b)

- The school's premises include appropriate outdoor space for pupils to play and undertake physical education (PE). The school intends to provide a variety of play equipment and access to appropriate reading materials. The school's outdoor space is secure from the public.
- The school intends to provide interior spaces to support pupils' emotional regulation and well-being. These include sensory rooms and 'break out' spaces, where staff will provide additional support for pupils based upon their individual needs.
- The standards in this part are unlikely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32(10)(f) to 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii) to 32(4)(c)

- The proposed school understands its duty to publish appropriate policies and information for parents, the Department for Education, and other bodies. The school has constructed a website for the provision of this information and intends to ensure it is readily available to parents and other organisations upon request.
- The school recognises its responsibility to contribute towards the annual review of pupils' EHC plans and provide the local authority with relevant financial records pertaining to these pupils.
- The school has developed an appropriate template for the reporting of pupils' progress and personal development to parents, on a termly basis.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33 to 33(k)

- The school has an appropriate written complaints policy in place. This provides relevant information about the school's complaints process and procedures. It gives clear guidance on how to raise informal and formal complaints. Additionally, it contains information on timescales, complainants' rights and how records of complaints will be kept.

- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34 to 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has an ambitious vision to create high-quality provision for pupils with SEND. An appropriate programme of professional development is planned for each member of staff to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to work with pupils who have communication and interaction needs as well as other barriers to their learning.
- The proprietor has not ensured that some of the standards are met. Renovation work on the school building is incomplete. Some risk assessments are not specific enough, so as to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils who will attend the school.
- The proprietor has a secure grasp of what is needed to promote the well-being of pupils. For example, policies and procedures take account of the proposed school's statutory duties regarding safeguarding and under the 'Prevent' duty. The proprietor is likely to support and challenge school leaders appropriately to provide for the needs of pupils.
- The standards in this part are unlikely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a suitable accessibility plan in place. It is appropriate to the needs of the intended pupils. The plan details how the school intends that all pupils can access the curriculum and physical environment.
- The school is likely to meet schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- The proposed school's curriculum and policies give assurances that the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage are likely to be met if the proposed school opens. The school's curriculum builds upon the early years statutory framework and provides a clear sequence of learning. It encompasses the seven areas of early years learning precisely.
- The school has considered the needs of the youngest children in the early years foundation stage when developing safeguarding policy and procedures. Consideration has been given to children's health and welfare needs, staffing ratios, SEND and the physical environment.
- The statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage are likely to be met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	151908
DfE registration number	384/6016
Inspection number	10411280

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 School
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Waterton Academy Trust
Chair	Stephen Johnson
Headteacher	Laura Thresh
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,000
Telephone number	01924240767
Website	www.hammerlaneacademy.org
Email address	ddickinson@watertonacademytrust.org
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	4 - 7	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	30	Not applicable

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	30

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	30
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health, and care plan	Not applicable	30
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health, and care plan	Not applicable	30

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located at Hammer Lane, Sharlston, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 1DH. It is situated adjacent to a maintained primary school.
- The proposed school will be an independent special school for pupils with a range of needs, including those with communication and interaction needs. All pupils will have an EHC plan. Places will be commissioned by the local authority in which a pupil lives.
- It is proposed that the school will provide full-time education for up to 30 pupils aged between four to seven years.
- At the time of the inspection, all staff had been appointed, including a head of school.
- The proposed school is not likely to use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned the inspection to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the standards if it is given permission to open.
- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspectors met with members of the proprietor body, the executive headteacher, the head of school, deputy head of school and other staff. The inspectors also met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector toured the school site to check the suitability of the premises. They also discussed with leaders the remaining works to the school building that the proprietor body intends to undertake.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including schemes of work and policies and procedures related to safeguarding, health and safety, risk assessment, administration of first aid, complaints, and fire safety.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for staff recruitment, scrutinised various risk assessments, viewed the single central record and discussed the school's proposed arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephanie Innes-Taylor

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health, and safety of pupils

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 27(b) external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 28(1)(c) cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such; and

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and

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