

Blackwater Academy Sandwell

Horseley Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 7NB

Inspection date

5 November 2025

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

Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 2A(1), 2A(1)(b) to 2A(2), 3 to 3(j), 4

- The proprietor intends that the proposed school will provide short-term education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils will have a range of needs related to social, emotional and mental health. Pupils will be placed by their schools or by neighbouring local authorities and are likely to attend for up to 18 weeks. However, some pupils may attend on a permanent basis where this best meets their needs.
- The school's planned curriculum ensures that pupils can learn across a broad range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history, geography, religious studies, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), relationships, sex and health education and physical education. There is a clear sequence of learning in place for each subject that is likely to support pupils to build on what they already know to make further progress. The school also proposes that pupils will follow a mental health programme. Collapsed curriculum days are planned to enhance subject knowledge and understanding, careers guidance, life skills and to provide wider opportunities and experiences to support understanding of fundamental British values.
- It is likely that many pupils attending the proposed school will have experienced a disrupted education. A well-considered induction process has been developed to ensure that the needs of all pupils are identified quickly on arrival and that these are thoroughly understood by teachers. Leaders intend that this information will inform adaptations of the curriculum to meet these needs. In addition, a cycle of assessment and half termly reviews are intended to check how well pupils are learning and what further support might be indicated.
- The proposed school has trained all teaching staff in their chosen phonics scheme to support those pupils who are at an early stage of reading.
- The proprietor has ensured that there is a written policy for relationships and sex and health education available to parents. It is intended that the programme will be

delivered through PSHE, with elements also threaded through the science and religious education curriculums.

- Leaders have planned a programme of training that is intended to ensure that all staff have the knowledge, understanding and expertise they need to best meet pupils' needs. Systems have been developed to check the quality of teaching regularly.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The proprietor has carefully considered how best to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of prospective pupils. The school has a personal development programme, designed to ensure that all pupils learn about British values and the protected characteristics. It is intended that this will be enhanced by weekly whole school assemblies that are linked to pupils' lives and experiences in their communities and beyond. Plans are in place to support pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence as well as their understanding of right from wrong. The proprietor intends that learning will be further reinforced through regular personalised mentoring.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 9 to 9(c), 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 16(b)

- The proprietor has ensured that the proposed school's safeguarding policy meets all requirements. It will be published on the proposed school's website should registration be agreed. Leaders are well informed about the types of safeguarding vulnerabilities and risks of the locality and their prospective pupils. Staff have already received suitable training.
- Leaders have established an electronic system for recording all safeguarding concerns. This system allows for rigour in recording, review and analysis of all concerns logged to identify any indicators of further risk.
- Suitable behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place. The proprietor was able to show how these aspects of school life will also be incorporated in the taught curriculum.
- Policies for health and safety, first aid and risk assessments are in place and meet all legislative requirements. Risk assessments consider all potential risks, and it is intended that these are regularly reviewed. In addition, all pupils attending the proposed school will have individual risk assessments.
- A fire risk assessment has been actioned appropriately, and the proposed school now complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Admissions and attendance registers are in place and meet all requirements. Staff have experience and training to ensure that these will be completed accurately.
- It is intended that daily checks will be carried out on all areas of the building. Suitable processes to monitor these checks have been put in place.

- The proprietor intends that there will be very close supervision of pupils throughout the day, both in classrooms and during social times.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c) to 21(6)

- The proprietor and leaders have extensive experience in recruitment and ensure that processes are rigorous. Staff have already been employed for the proposed school. Therefore, the proprietor was able to demonstrate that all pre-employment checks are recorded on the proposed school's single central record.
- Leaders do not propose to use supply staff in the school. Nonetheless, they are fully aware of the processes to follow and the checks to be made should they choose to do so.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(2), 24(1) to 24(1)(b), 24(2), 25 to 29(1)(b)

- The site of the proposed school has been recently refurbished. It is well maintained throughout and provides a suitable learning environment. Classrooms are suitably furnished, well lit and have appropriate acoustics
- There are separate toilets for boys and girls that have a supply of hot and cold water at a suitable temperature. A supervised medical room has been provided that is close to a toilet. There is a suitable area for changing and showers.
- Drinking water is clearly labelled and readily available.
- Externally, there is an outdoor area for pupils to play and socialise, which is being developed to offer a greater range of activities than currently possible
- External lighting is in place to ensure that staff, pupils and visitors can enter and exit safely.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f) to 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(c) to 32(3)(f)

- The proprietor intends that the newly developed website will become live if the proposed school is registered. In the interim, all required information has been made available and accessible to those with an interest, including for the schools and local authorities who have expressed interest in placing pupils at the school.
- The proprietor intends to report on pupils' progress every half term. These reports will assess progress towards academic and personal development targets, including progress towards education, health and care plan targets where appropriate.

- The proprietor has clear systems in place for reporting on expenditure for pupils placed by local authorities. Expenditure is agreed at placement in accordance with the level of provision made.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33 to 33(k)

- The proprietor has provided a suitable complaints policy that meets all requirements. It is intended that it will be published on the new website when it becomes live. This policy is also part of the induction packs that will be provided for parents.
- Leaders have made provision for recording and analysing complaints and that these records are kept confidential.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor has ensured that there are clear lines of oversight and accountability in place so that school leaders have the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their responsibility to meet the independent school standards consistently. The needs of pupils are kept at the heart of decision-making and this is reflected in the thoughtful development of policies, curriculum and routines.
- Leaders know their intended pupil cohort and have made sure that they can meet their needs from admission. The centrality of pupils' needs to the curriculum, personal development and well-being planning underpins the vision for bespoke education promoted by the proprietor and school leaders. Leaders were able to provide many examples of how their expertise and understanding of pupils' contexts afforded opportunities for pupils to contribute to their community, understand how to keep themselves safe and prepare their next steps to secure success and well-being in the future.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- There is a written accessibility plan in place that meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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	152215
DfE registration number	333/6021
Inspection number	10425314

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 school day school
Proprietor	BWA Sandwell Ltd
Chair	Louise Morris
Headteacher	Lucy Jelf
Annual fees (day pupils)	£20,000 to £52,000
Telephone number	01212855123
Email address	lucy.jelf@blackwateracademy.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	11 to 16	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	50	50

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	50
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	50
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	5
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	5

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	7	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

Information about this proposed school

- The school is located at Horseley Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 7NB.
- The proposed school intends to provide education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The proposed school will have a sole proprietor.
- The proposed school intends to admit 50 pupils over time.
- The proposed school does not intend to use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the second pre-registration inspection of the proposed school. The first pre-registration inspection took place in June 2025.
- Inspectors met with the proprietor, the chair of governors, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the lead for health and safety.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including information about the arrangements for safeguarding, the curriculum and statutory policies.
- Inspectors visited all parts of the school, both internal and external. They checked fire safety routes, equipment and certification.

Inspection team

Mel Ford, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Barry Yeardsley

His Majesty's Inspector

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