

Hanthorn House School

Hanthorn House, Church Street, Droylsden M43 7BR

Unique reference number (URN): 152613

Pre-registration inspection report:

7 July 2026

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards if it is registered

The purpose of this inspection was to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the proposed school's likely compliance with the independent school standards and associated requirements that are required for registration as an independent school.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

When we carry out pre-registration inspections of proposed independent schools, we report on the provider's likely compliance with part 8 of the independent school standards first. Under part 8, the proprietor is required to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards consistently. The standard in part 8 is intended to ensure that the quality of leadership and management at the school is sufficient for that purpose.

The chair of the proprietor body is an experienced teacher with recent success in leading another independent school. He demonstrates a secure understanding of the independent school standards (the standards) and has established suitable systems and procedures to support compliance. He has a clear vision for the proposed school and is ambitious for what pupils will achieve.

The proprietor has ensured that appropriate staffing structures will be in place. Staff will have suitable qualifications and experience, including expertise in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and looked-after children. Leaders intend to develop partnerships with local schools and education networks to share effective practice and support professional development.

The proprietor has established suitable arrangements to monitor the quality of provision and ensure that standards are met consistently. Plans are in place to draw on the expertise of experienced headteachers to provide oversight and strategic guidance. The proprietor demonstrates a secure understanding of its statutory duties and how to promote pupils' wellbeing.

The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Curriculum

The proprietor has put in place a broad and ambitious curriculum that takes account of pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs. Appropriate policies, plans and schemes of work are in place. The curriculum enables pupils to study a wide range of subjects and supports the development of knowledge and skills over time. Provision has been carefully considered for pupils with SEND.

Most curriculum subjects provide opportunities for pupils to work towards GCSE qualifications. Leaders have also developed vocational pathways that will allow pupils to gain recognised qualifications. Pupils will receive appropriate personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, including relationships and sex education. Appropriate arrangements are in place to consult parents and carers about this provision.

The proprietor has established a suitable careers programme. Pupils will have access to independent careers advice and guidance, work experience opportunities and opportunities with employers from a range of professions.

Teaching

The proprietor has ensured that schemes of work support well-planned lessons and allow pupils to build on previous learning. Leaders intend to employ appropriately qualified specialist teachers who have the knowledge and expertise required to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Pupils will be taught in classes of up to 6 pupils. High staff-to-pupil ratios will enable staff to provide appropriate support and develop positive relationships with pupils. Leaders have considered carefully how routines and expectations will support pupils' learning and personal development.

Assessment

Leaders have established suitable arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. Appropriate systems are in place to review the needs of pupils with education, health and care plans regularly. This will help ensure that pupils receive suitable support and provision.

The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

The proprietor has planned suitable opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These opportunities are evident across the curriculum and particularly within the PSHE programme. The proposed curriculum will prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

The proprietor has ensured that fundamental British values are woven throughout the curriculum. Pupils will have opportunities to discuss topical issues, learn about different faiths and develop an understanding of equality, mutual respect and tolerance.

Leaders have planned a range of activities and educational visits to broaden pupils' experiences. These include participation in charity work and visits to places of worship. These experiences will help pupils develop an appreciation of diversity and the wider community.

The standard in this part is likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Safeguarding

The proprietor understands how to establish and sustain an effective safeguarding culture. A suitable safeguarding policy is in place and is published on the proposed school's website. Leaders responsible for safeguarding have received appropriate training and suitable arrangements are in place for staff induction and ongoing safeguarding updates. The proprietor demonstrates clearly how leaders will work with external agencies when necessary to support pupils and keep them safe.

Behaviour and supervision of pupils

The proprietor has established a suitable behaviour policy that reflects the needs of the pupils the school proposes to admit. Staff will receive training to support them in understanding and responding appropriately to pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders have clear procedures in place to manage behaviour and support pupils effectively.

There are clear arrangements in place to ensure that pupils will be appropriately supervised throughout the school day. Small class sizes and high staff-to-pupil ratios will support positive relationships between staff and pupils. Leaders intend to establish clear routines and expectations to help pupils behave responsibly and engage positively in school life.

Anti-bullying

The proprietor has established a suitable anti-bullying policy. Leaders have clear procedures in place for identifying, recording and responding to incidents of bullying. Pupils will take part in activities, including Anti-Bullying Week, to develop their understanding of the impact of bullying and the importance of respectful relationships.

The proprietor will give guidance for staff on responding to incidents should they occur. The proprietor has ensured that suitable arrangements are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying and promote positive relationships between pupils.

Health and safety, fire and first aid

The proprietor has established suitable health and safety procedures. Appropriate policies and systems are in place to ensure that the premises are maintained to a high standard. Risk assessments have been completed for off-site activities, including visits to local leisure facilities.

The first-aid policy provides suitable guidance for staff. Appropriate first-aid equipment is available, and arrangements are in place to ensure that sufficient staff are trained. The proprietor has ensured that the premises comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Admissions and attendance

The proprietor has suitable arrangements in place to maintain admission and attendance registers. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the relevant statutory requirements.

Risk assessment

A structured risk assessment policy is in place. Risk assessments demonstrate that appropriate control measures have been identified and implemented. Leaders understand the need to review and revise risk assessments regularly.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

The recruitment checks made on staff, supply staff and the proprietor

The proprietor demonstrates a secure understanding of safer recruitment requirements. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that all relevant pre-employment checks are completed before staff begin work at the school. This includes checks relating to staff suitability and medical fitness where required.

The proprietor does not intend to employ supply staff. However, it demonstrates a clear understanding of the checks that would be required should supply staff be employed in the future.

The single central record of these recruitment checks

The proprietor has established a single central record and has already begun recording many of the required checks. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the information that must be recorded and monitored. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that recruitment information is maintained accurately.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Toilet and washing facilities, water supply, changing accommodation and showers

The proposed school provides suitable toilet and washing facilities, including an accessible toilet. Running water is available throughout the building and water temperatures do not present a scalding risk. Drinking-water is readily available to pupils. Appropriate shower facilities are available on site. Changing facilities are available through arrangements with a local leisure centre for physical education activities.

Medical room and accommodation for pupils' therapy needs

There is a suitable medical room for pupils who become unwell. It contains appropriate facilities and provides convenient access to a toilet.

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils

The proprietor has ensured that the premises are maintained to a suitable standard. The accommodation provides sufficient space for the proposed number of pupils and has been furnished appropriately. There is suitable outdoor space available within the grounds.

Lighting and acoustic conditions

The proprietor has ensured that lighting throughout the building is suitable for teaching and learning. Acoustic conditions are appropriate and support the intended use of the accommodation. External lighting enables pupils, staff and visitors to leave the site safely.

Outdoor space

Pupils will have access to a secure outdoor area suitable for recreation. Physical education activities will be provided through local leisure facilities. Appropriate risk assessments are in place to support pupils' safety when attending these sessions.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 6. Provision of information

The proprietor has established a website for the proposed school. It contains the policies and information required by the standards, including contact details for both the school and the proprietor. The website is structured so that additional information can be published as required, including inspection reports.

The proprietor has suitable arrangements in place to report pupils' attainment, progress and emotional wellbeing to parents and carers. Leaders understand their responsibilities to provide information to local authorities and contribute to annual reviews for pupils with education, health and care plans.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The proposed school has a complaints policy that meets requirements. It sets out clearly the stages through which complaints will be considered, including an opportunity for concerns to be resolved informally before progressing to the formal stages of the procedure.

The proprietor has identified a suitable independent person to participate in a complaints panel when required. Appropriate arrangements are in place to record complaints and maintain records.

The standard in this part is likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

The school's accessibility plan

The proprietor has a suitable accessibility plan in place. The plan identifies how pupils' access to the curriculum, information and premises will be improved where necessary.

The proposed school is likely to meet schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 if the proposed school opens.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. Inspectors checked the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our updated inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body during the inspection.

The school intends to cater for pupils aged 11-16 years with SEND. The main area of SEND is likely to be social, emotional and mental health needs.

The school does not intend to use any alternative provision.

Lead inspector

Rebecca Sharples

His Majesty's Inspector

About this proposed school

Proprietor	Hanthorn House School Limited
Chairs of the proprietor body	James Docherty and Colin Phillips
Headteacher	Amy Gibson
Type of school	Other independent special school
Capacity	60
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	Provider's proposal: 60
Number of part-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	Provider's proposal: 0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities on roll	Provider's proposal: 60
Number of pupils on roll who have an education, health and care plan, or who are looked after by a local authority	Provider's proposal: 60
Age range of pupils	Provider's proposal: 11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Provider's proposal: Mixed
Total hours operating as a school per week	Provider's proposal: 32.5
Total hours of teaching provided per week	Provider's proposal: 27.5
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Provider's proposal: 12
Number of part-time teaching staff	Provider's proposal: 2
Annual fees for day pupils	£45,000
Email address	james.docherty@hanthornhouse.uk

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