

# New Avenue School

62 the Avenue, Southampton SO17 1XS

## Inspection dates

24 July 2024

### 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) to 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2), 3 and 4*

- Pupils who attend New Avenue School are likely to have struggled in a mainstream school due to issues relating to their social, emotional or mental health, including anxiety. The school's curriculum is designed to engage pupils with education and help them to succeed. It will cover a broad range of subjects and there are ambitious plans for what pupils will be expected to learn over time. Leaders intend to admit a small number of younger pupils initially. When pupils reach key stage 4, the school intends to offer a range of qualifications including GCSEs.
- There will be a baseline assessment for all new pupils. Along with the information in education, health and care (EHC) plans, these assessments will provide a starting point for teaching. The school's curriculum is set out into phases rather than chronological age groups, with the aim of giving teachers greater flexibility to adapt lesson content for each pupil.
- Leaders have chosen an approach to assessment that focuses on identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers will be trained to use the information from assessments to adapt their teaching and direct extra help as required.
- Leaders have planned opportunities within the curriculum to educate pupils about fundamental British values. For example, pupils will learn about democracy as part of their humanities lessons. These values will also be woven through different features of school life, such as opportunities to recognise religious festivals and take part in pupil voice discussions. Pupils will also learn about British values as part of their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum.
- There is a suitable policy and curriculum to underpin the teaching of relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education. This is an age-appropriate curriculum that will be adapted to meet the needs of the pupil cohort. The policy explains what pupils will be taught and parents' right to withdraw pupils from certain parts of this curriculum.
- The school has made plans to provide careers education and independent advice to all

pupils of secondary age. This will be covered predominantly through PSHE. Older pupils will also benefit from opportunities to visit local colleges and training providers to prepare for their next steps.

- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

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

### *Paragraphs 5 to 5(d)(iii)*

- The school have put in place a broad curriculum for PSHE with a particular focus on developing pupils' communication and social skills. This will be adapted to respond to arising issues, including those in the local community.
- Pupils will be encouraged to make moral decisions and treat others with respect. They will be recognised and rewarded for displaying the school's values of compassion, curiosity, collaboration and courage.
- The school will provide a programme of enrichment that is built into pupils' curriculum. Activities will be determined based on pupils' talents and interests, but they will include a focus on building confidence and independence by getting out into different community settings.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

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

### *Paragraphs 7 to 7 (b) and 32(1)(c)*

- The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy that is published on their website. Leaders have a clear understanding of the risks posed to pupils and why these might be greater due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders have designed an induction programme for new staff that includes training on the school's safeguarding approaches and systems. Staff will also receive regular updates to their safeguarding training. There is a system in place for staff to record any safeguarding concerns.

### *Paragraphs 9 to 16(b)*

- The school's behaviour policy has been carefully considered and is likely to result in an orderly learning environment if implemented effectively. Leaders' aim is that staff should be proactive wherever possible by encouraging positive behaviours. However, they have set out clear procedures to address unacceptable behaviours, including as part of the anti-bullying policy.
- The school has suitable policies covering health and safety and first aid. A range of risk assessments have been written to cover the premises and known activities. These will provide a model for future risk assessments alongside the school's risk assessment policy.
- There is an admissions register in place as well as a system for recording pupils' attendance.
- The school site is compliant with the relevant fire regulations and checks have been carried out by an appropriately qualified professional. There is a schedule in place for testing fire alarms, equipment and evacuation procedures on an ongoing basis.

- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

#### 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), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(6)*

- Leaders have been trained in safer recruitment. They have put in place thorough recruitment process, which includes making the necessary pre-employment checks on new staff. Details of these checks are documented in a single central record.
- The school does not intend to use supply staff, although leaders understand the checks the school must carry out if this becomes necessary.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The proposed school is set over two floors in a commercial building previously used as a well-being centre. Since taking over the building, leaders have overseen its conversion and renovation.
- Three classrooms have been completed to a high standard for the school's initial intake. As well as a general-purpose classroom, there are specialist facilities for teaching art, science and cooking. In its current state the building has adequate teaching space for 20 pupils. There are two further classrooms which leaders intend to utilise to provide more space as the school grows to capacity.
- The school has a small outdoor play area. As the school grows to capacity, leaders intend to split break times so that this area does not become too crowded. They also plan to make use of nearby parks. There is also a large room indoors for pupils to relax and socialise at break times.
- The school has arranged with a local higher education provider to use their sports facilities on a weekly basis. This includes sole use of changing and shower facilities during these visits.
- The medical room provides an appropriate space to care for any pupils who are injured or feel unwell. It contains a bed, sink and secure storage for medicines.
- Drinking water is provided and clearly labelled. Warm water is available for washing hands and the temperature is checked regularly. Toilet facilities are unisex, but individual and lockable.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

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

- The school has its own website, which is ready to be published online if its registration is approved. It contains all the information required by the independent school standards.
- Regular information will be provided to parents and carers in the form of progress data and written reports. Leaders recognise the importance of parental engagement

and also intend to host a range of events such as coffee and open mornings.

- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

#### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

##### *Paragraphs 33–33(k)*

- The school has a suitable complaints policy and this is published on the school's provisional website. Although leaders hope to address any concerns at the informal stage, the policy makes clear to parents how they can escalate their complaints if they remain unresolved.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

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

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

- Members of the proprietor body will be involved in the daily leadership and running of the school. They are in the process of appointing a board of governors to ensure that there is challenge and oversight of their work. Governors will meet regularly to discuss all aspects of the school and its performance, including compliance with the independent school standards. There are processes in place to keep governors informed, such as a regular report produced by the headteacher.
- Leaders have experience of running a school for pupils with SEND. They will draw on this as well as their knowledge of working with local authorities in the area.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders are knowledgeable about their responsibilities regarding equalities. They have produced an appropriate accessibility plan which is published on the school's website.

## **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	150798
DfE registration number	852/6015
Inspection number	10342833

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 Special School
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	AC SEMH Education Ltd
Chair	Clare Priday
Headteacher	Anthony Merriman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£70,000
Telephone number	07791 312 121
Website	<a href="http://www.newavenueschool.co.uk">www.newavenueschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@newavenueschool.co.uk">admin@newavenueschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>	<b>Inspector's recommendation</b>
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	9 to 16	9 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	20	20

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	20	20
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	20	20
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	20	20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	20	20

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	3
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	3

## Information about this proposed school

- New Avenue School intends to provide full time education for up to 20 pupils between the ages of nine and 16. All pupils will have an EHC plan and their places will be funded by a local authority.
- Pupils attending the school will have a variety of SEMH needs relating to anxiety. They may have been out of formal education for a period of time before joining the school.
- The proposed school will not have any particular religious character.
- The school does not intend to use any alternative provision.
- The school's headteacher and operations director are the also the directors of the proprietor body, AC SEMH Education Ltd. A governing board is in the process of being appointed and will provide oversight of the school.



## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education. The purpose of this inspection was to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the independent school standards if registered. This was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector phoned the school's headteacher two working days before the inspection to discuss the proposed school and the details of the inspection.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the school's headteacher and the operations director. The operations director is also the chair of the proprietor body. The inspector evaluated the suitability of the school premises and scrutinised a range of policies and documents. He spoke with leaders about a range of matters relating to the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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