

Emerge School

Elgin Chambers, 22-24 Cemetery Road, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2DL

Inspection date

9 January 2026

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

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)

- The school has a curriculum policy in place. This policy outlines how pupils' particular needs will be met. There are detailed plans and schemes of work for an appropriate range of subjects.
- The proprietor has applied for a material change in the age range of pupils up to 14. The curriculum covers this age range adequately. Currently, there are no 14-year-old pupils in the school.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this paragraph are likely to be met if the material change is accepted.

Paragraphs 2(2)(e) to 2(2)(e)(iii) and 2(2)(i)

- The school is currently making plans to deliver impartial careers guidance to pupils of secondary school age. These plans are in the early stages of development. It is too soon to see the impact of these plans. Therefore, pupils of secondary school age are not receiving appropriate, up-to-date careers education. They are not being effectively prepared for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not likely to be met.

Paragraphs 2A(1) to 2A(1)(b), and 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2)

- The school has an appropriate policy and curriculum for the teaching of relationships education and relationships and sex education appropriate to pupils' ages. The policy and curriculum are available to parents on the school's website. Parents have been consulted and are consulted before changes to the policy are made.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 3 to 3(j) and 4

- Teachers teach the curriculum well. They give pupils appropriate work to develop their skills and knowledge appropriately. They use a range of appropriate classroom resources to help pupils learn.
- Teachers understand the content of the curriculum well. They use information about pupils, including from pupils' education health and care (EHC) plans to appropriately adapt their teaching. This means that they can explain content appropriately and support pupils to make progress. It also means that pupils show an interest in lessons, complete their work and are keen to contribute.
- The school has a clear assessment policy and framework. Staff use this effectively to adapt their approaches as necessary so that pupils can make progress.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 5 to 5(b)(vii)

- The school has an appropriate personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. Pupils are taught about various public institutions and fundamental British values. Pupils learn about a range of cultures, traditions, religions and festivals. Across the school, this is celebrated in displays of pupils' work and the activities they have undertaken.
- The curriculum contains effective opportunities for pupils' social and moral development. Through a wide range of activities, pupils develop independence and social skills, learn to regulate their emotions and express their feelings.

Paragraphs 5(c) to 5(d)(iii)

- The school's staff code of conduct clearly states that staff may not share partisan political views. A code of conduct for visitors is similarly clear on this matter.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Part 6. Provision of Information

Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b) and 32(1)(c)

- The school has an up-to-date child protection and safeguarding policy. It reflects the most recent advice issued by the Secretary of State. It is available on the school's website.
- Staff have an appropriate understanding of their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding. They have relevant training. The most recent training on record-keeping was effective and has strengthened this aspect of the school's work further. Staff raise concerns with safeguarding leaders as appropriate. They are vigilant. The school builds a comprehensive picture of pupils' safeguarding needs as a result.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 11, 13, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- The school has a risk assessment policy and a range of relevant risk assessments. However, this policy is not effectively implemented as the risks to pupils have not been fully identified. The school has not taken all reasonable steps to identify and reduce risks. Therefore, the welfare of pupils is not being promoted effectively.
- The school has a first-aid policy. However, this policy is not effectively implemented. Staff are not clear on where first-aid equipment is kept. A first-aid cupboard located was locked and the key was not where it was supposed to be. The cupboard marked with a first-aid sign contained no first-aid equipment.
- The arrangements for pupil medications are not secure. The recording of the storage and administration of medications contains major inaccuracies. At the time of the inspection, some pupil medications were missing and some records not fully legible.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not likely to be met.

Paragraph 14

- Staff supervise pupils effectively. The school has a risk assessment on supervision of pupils. This risk assessment is implemented effectively. It shows how risks, particularly in the playground, will be mitigated. Staff follow this risk assessment.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraph 12

- At the time of the inspection, some fire doors that should have been shut were propped open. Outside, one fire exit was a slippery wooden ramp that would present a risk during an evacuation. A fire exit was obstructed by a table and 2 chairs. A fire door was locked with 2 locks and an additional door release button well above head height. This door was locked in a way that prevents easy and immediate opening by anyone who needs to use it.
- The standard in this paragraph is not 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), 20(6) to 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii) and 21(5)(b) to 21(6)

- The school has completed all of the relevant checks on staff and the proprietor body in line with the standards. The checks have been completed before staff begin working at the school. The school keeps a clear electronic record of these checks.
- The school does not use staff from employment agencies. However, leaders know what checks they would need to make if they were to do so.
- The school has an electronic record of all of the checks made. This has been recently reviewed and it now accurately reflects the checks.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 25, 27, 27(b), and 29(1) to 29(1)(b)

- The school premises are not maintained to a high enough standard.
- At the time of the inspection, the playground contained piles of refuse, broken play equipment and packaging. Some of the equipment in the playground was extremely dirty and not suitable for use. An area for younger pupils to play outside is not kept tidy or functional for pupils. The metal fence around this area has sharp edges that may injure a pupil.
- Some of the lighting that is intended to help people safely enter and leave the building is absent or broken. This includes on fire exit routes.
- The school contains a range of hazards to pupils. For example, some cupboards could easily topple and present a crush risk. Some single-pane windows are not fitted with tempered glass or safety film. In one toilet, there are two easily accessible ligature risks. In one classroom, there is an electrical socket adjacent to a sink which had an electric lamp above the sink, plugged into it. A banister has a sharp protrusion that could cut a pupil and is secured with plastic cable ties.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not likely to be met.

Paragraphs 26 and 27(a)

- All rooms in the building have lighting and acoustic conditions that are appropriate to the purpose of the room.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(1)(c), 28(1)(b) and 28(1)(d)

- There are toilets for the sole use of pupils that are intended for the use of one person at a time and are lockable from the inside. There are enough toilet facilities for the pupils the school caters for. There is hot and cold running water for pupils to wash their hands. The hot water does not pose a scalding risk to pupils.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 28(1) to 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c), 28(2), 28(2)(a) and 28(2)(b)

- The school has drinking water available at all times. Drinking water is clearly marked and is available in a separate area from toilets.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.

Paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c) and 24(2)

- At the time of the inspection, there was confusion between leaders as to the location of the accommodation for the medical examination, treatment and short-term care for sick and injured pupils. Leaders have decided where they intend to locate these facilities in the future.
- The designated medical room used to be in a room which has a sink and is also used as a staff room. However, this room has had equipment, such as first-aid equipment, removed. Therefore, it is no longer an appropriate place for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. The toilet is too far away from this room to be readily accessible by a sick or injured pupil.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor has not ensured that, over time, those responsible for the leadership and management of the school have the skills and knowledge they need to consistently meet the standards. A range of standards are not met. Some of these standards relate to health and safety and, therefore, pupils' wellbeing.
- The proprietor has appointed a school consultant and a new headteacher. While these leaders have the skills and experience needed, some standards remain unmet. It is too soon to see the impact of these leaders on the school.
- The proprietor recognises that they have not had enough oversight of the school in the past. They have established a governance board. This board has met once this academic year. While the establishment of the governance board is likely to improve oversight, it is too early to see its impact at this time.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a detailed accessibility policy which meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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, as set out in the annex of this report.

School details

Unique reference number	149668
DfE registration number	861/6038
Inspection number	10434378

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	Other independent special school
School status	Independent day school
Proprietor	Emerge Care and Therapeutic Solutions Limited
Chair	Ian Scragg
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Mason
Annual fees (day pupils)	£47,500 to £75,600
Telephone number	01782 890121
Website	www.emergeschool.co.uk
Email address	richardwood@emergeschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	4 to 6 June 2024

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 13	5 to 14	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	42	44	Not applicable

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	42	44
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	42	44
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	42	44
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	42	44

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	9	9
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

Information about this school

- Emerge School is an independent day school registered for up to 40 pupils between the ages of 5 and 13.
- The school applied to the Department for Education for a change in the number of pupils and the age range of pupils. The school has already implemented the material change in terms of the number of pupils on roll. It has exceeded the maximum number of pupils that it is registered to admit. It has recently admitted 44 pupils onto the roll. At the time of the inspection, there were 42 pupils on the roll.
- The school is in the process of registering a new chair of the proprietor body. This process was incomplete at the time of the inspection.
- The school has a new headteacher, who took up post in January 2026.
- The school operates from Elgin Chambers, 22-24 Cemetery Road, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2DL.
- The school carers for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including autism.

- All pupils at the school have an EHC plan.
- Pupils are referred to the school by 2 local authorities.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's most recent standard inspection was in June 2024.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the proprietor wished to make a material change to the number of pupils and the age range of pupils for whom the school provides education. This material change in terms of the number of pupils has already been implemented.
- This was the first material change inspection in respect of the particular changes that the school has applied to make.
- The inspector evaluated the school site and premises, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. The inspector also spoke with staff and evaluated a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 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

- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including-
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility; and
- 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.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable-
 - 29(1)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and
 - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

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
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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