

# New Horizon Academy

New Horizon School, 104 Summer Road, Erdington, Birmingham B23 6DY

**Inspection date**

17 December 2024

**Overall outcome**

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

#### *Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(1)(b)(i)*

- The previous standard inspection in May 2024 identified that the curriculum in many subjects lacked clarity. The school had not identified the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. The curriculum was not effectively implemented and assessment was not used as well as it could have been. The school did not make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities received tasks that supported their learning. Consequently, not all pupils achieved well.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has rewritten the whole curriculum. Leaders with the requisite knowledge, expertise and experience have thought carefully about the full curriculum offer and the needs of the pupils who attend the school or may attend in the future. This due care and consideration of pupils' starting and end points has allowed the school to construct a cohesive and well-linked curriculum. The school has ensured that there is sufficient scope to track back and cover key knowledge from the primary curriculum while spiralling forwards into the secondary curriculum. This skilful weaving together of previous and future knowledge sets a secure foundation for each pupil's learning.
- The school has given deliberate and careful consideration to three distinct pathways of learning through the curriculum. These range from a full academic and examination route to a more bespoke route that focuses on functional skills and vocational certificates.
- There is now a specific emphasis on the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to acquire over time. Consequently, staff in all subjects are clear about what to teach and when. The resources to support lesson delivery are set out clearly. These support staff to make appropriate choices for each subject and pupil. This, in turn, is improving the adaptations that staff make to meet pupils' individual interests and needs. Pupils achieve positive outcomes within and across lessons and through a unit of work.
- The school has refined its assessment systems. These include start and end of unit assessments for some subjects being strengthened by mid-unit checks. 'Can I still?'

prompts are being put in place to support the revisiting and recall of previous learning as part of ongoing checks of what pupils know.

- The school is using targeted coaching, team teaching and professional development for staff. The positive impact of this work is evident. Staff are identifying misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning. They have the knowledge and tools to address these gaps and errors. Pupils' learning is building up securely over time.
- Both the redefined curriculum and the effective professional development provided by internal leaders are working hand in hand to ensure that staff have sufficient subject knowledge to teach and adapt the current topic well. The school has adopted a sensible approach to taking this development one step at a time. This is working well. The school has appropriate plans to continue staff's knowledge of, and expertise in, delivering the curriculum effectively.

*Paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(e) to 2(2)(e)(iii)*

- The previous standard inspection in May 2024 identified that the school's work to support pupils' wider personal development was limited in scope. The school had minimal knowledge of pupils' career aspirations and had not ensured that pupils benefited from a range of encounters with the world of work.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has written a clear and appropriate policy relating to careers provision. The policy sets out what the school will provide in terms of an effective careers programme. This aligns with the government's statutory guidance on careers advice for pupils.
- The school has made links with two local secondary schools. Pupils can access accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner through attending careers fairs at these schools. All pupils meet with a careers adviser.
- The proprietor has facilitated the leadership development of the careers programme. A member of staff is nearing the completion of a postgraduate course in this area. The knowledge gained from this professional development is being applied into practice with clarity and purpose.
- The school utilises the review cycle of individual education plans for pupils' interests and talents to be noted and taken account of. Pupils share their likes and dislikes as well as their strengths and things that they would like to get better at. The school uses this information to link to opportunities within school. It also hooks this into the identification of possible visits and visitors, such as meeting an interpreter who uses British Sign Language or gaining first-aid certification.
- The school has identified a range of roles of responsibility within and across school life that pupils can choose to be involved in. There is a full recruitment process in place for these roles. Pupils are proud of their success in being appointed as a book monitor or a gardener. They spoke of having to fill in an application form, explaining the skills that they would bring to the role and the interview that they had. The school is using this as a starting point from which to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world of work while they build links with local resources and companies to then begin to provide work experience placements.
- The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils' wider personal development. These currently happen as opportunities arise or link to pupils' interests. They include

visiting a museum and the library, city culture walks and provisions that link to a topic, such as finding out how animals live under the sea. Pupils spoke with excitement of the upcoming visit to the cinema. This is a first for some. The school recognises that now that the curriculum is plotted out, it has the scope to be more strategic and plan pupils' experiences and opportunities to tie in much more closely and coherently to the learning.

- These independent school standards (the standards) are now met.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The previous inspection in May 2024 identified that the standards relating to the provision of suitable changing accommodation and showers for pupils aged 11 years or over receiving physical education (PE) were not met. The school had also not ensured that pupils had sufficient space to play outside. The space that was available was too small, in a state of disrepair and posed a tripping or slipping hazard.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has put in place provision for PE to take place off site. The space is a dedicated sports hall with changing and shower facilities. There is an appropriate risk assessment in place to manage the visit safely and to ensure the safety of pupils while preparing for and engaging in PE. The school has sole use of the facilities during the PE lessons. Staffing ratios are high. Individual adaptations are made to the transport and timings of the day for pupils to ensure that they have access to PE in a safe way that meets their needs.
- The proprietor has instigated a maintenance schedule that ensures that any repairs or hazards are identified, recorded and reported with immediacy by staff. They are addressed swiftly. For example, leaves are cleared from the playground to reduce slip and trip hazards. Staff have had health and safety training. They have an increased knowledge and awareness of a range of safety aspects across school life. They know what to do when they spot something that needs sorting.
- The proprietor has renovated the outside space. The previous small, cramped playground space has been changed to the staff car park. A new, larger play space has been created at the rear of the school. It has been fenced off so that it is a clearly designated space for pupils to relax and socialise in or in which to run and be active. It has a hard surface that is safe and free from trip and slip hazards. It has some seating and a basketball hoop. Pupils are currently deciding what equipment and games they would like added to this space. Planters have been provided, and pupils with the gardener role will be making choices and planting them up.
- These standards are now met.

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

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

- At the time of the previous inspection, it was found that the proprietor did not ensure that all the standards were met consistently. Leaders did not demonstrate the knowledge

and skills to ensure the standards were met consistently and continually. Leaders, including the proprietor, did not check carefully enough on the impact of their work.

- Since then, the proprietor has ensured that external expertise and support are utilised to help develop leaders' knowledge, understanding and monitoring of all areas of the provision. This is working well. The proprietor and school leaders have acted with appropriate speed and clarity that have focused on addressing the previously unmet standards with an energy and preciseness that are effective. The proprietor has ensured that staffing absence is managed effectively and that the capacity for sustained improvement is secured.
- The school has made sensible decisions on the implementation of its action plan that have allowed them to have the right people, in the right place, taking the right actions in a timely manner. At the time of the previous inspection, some staff were very new to the school. They have since immersed themselves in the school improvement required and skilfully brought previous curriculum expertise into this setting. The work that has been completed has made sure that the curriculum is clear, progressive and bespoke to the context of the school and pupils who attend. The proprietor is currently reviewing and redefining the action plan to become a longer-term school development plan as they rightly recognise that this early work needs continued oversight and time to embed.
- The proprietor, with the guidance of external support, has set up a monthly monitoring and reporting system. These systems are sustainable for the future. They have fulfilled the dual purpose of addressing previously unmet standards while developing practice that will ensure that all independent school standards are continually and consistently met. The proprietor has provided support and challenge to school leaders through an additional layer of governance being in place on the school site several days a week. All staff spoke highly of the support from both the proprietor and governance. They gave many examples of the positive difference it made to their teaching practice, safety routines and well-being.
- The school's work to monitor the impact that the curriculum has on pupils' learning is now well established. The proprietor and school leaders have raised expectations of staff and pupils. Staff have had the training that they need to support pupils' learning. Pupils' work is of good quality, and they achieve well.
- The proprietor and leaders have worked effectively to improve standards at the school. As a result, the previously unmet standards are now met.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an accessibility plan that fulfils the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### The school now meets 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(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; 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.

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

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
  - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 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.
- 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.

## School details

Unique reference number	148929
DfE registration number	330/6139
Inspection number	10366006

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Proprietor	N H Care Limited
Chair	Sukhjit Bains
Headteacher	Katie Davis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000 to £125,000
Telephone number	0121 448 3737
Website	<a href="http://www.newhorizon-academy.org">www.newhorizon-academy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@newhorizon-academy.co.uk">enquiries@newhorizon-academy.co.uk</a>
Dates of previous standard inspection	14 and 15 May 2024

## Information about this school

- The school is part of N H Care Ltd.
- The school provides education for up to 10 pupils aged between 11 and 16. The school caters for pupils who have cognition and learning needs. There are currently three pupils on roll, all of whom have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school operates from premises at 104 Summer Road, Erdington, Birmingham B23 6DY.
- The school received its last full inspection in May 2024 and was judged as requires improvement for overall effectiveness.
- Presently, the school does not use any alternative provision to provide education for pupils.

- At the time of this inspection, the headteacher was absent from school. The deputy headteacher is currently fulfilling this role in the headteacher's absence.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This progress monitoring inspection was carried out without notice and lasted one day.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection since its last standard inspection in May 2024, when it was judged as requires improvement.
- The Department for Education (DfE) issued a statutory notice requiring the school to prepare an action plan as a result of non-compliance with the standards following the inspection in May 2024. Ofsted evaluated the action plan in September 2024. The DfE rejected this action plan in September 2024.
- The inspector met with the deputy headteacher, the chair of the proprietor body and staff. The inspector spoke with the operations manager of the proprietor body and the school improvement adviser.
- The inspector checked the school's curriculum policy and subject documentation. The inspector visited a sample of lessons and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The inspector toured the school's premises and reviewed the school's accessibility plan.
- The inspection also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record of pre-employment checks, and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents. These requirements of the standards are met. To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

## Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector



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