

Spark Vale Academy

Crt House, 176 Melton Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 5EE

Inspection date

4 September 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

Paragraph 2(1) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)g to 2(2)(i)

- The school has a clear vision for the curriculum it intends to provide for pupils who attend the proposed school. The aim is to create a school, 'Where everyone discovers their true selves and realise their fullest potential.'
- The school's curriculum policy is appropriate and is supported by high-quality, well-sequenced plans and schemes of work. The curriculum covers the full breadth of the proposed age range of the pupils.
- Detailed curriculum plans set out the key knowledge and skills that pupils will be expected to learn and develop over time in each key stage, including in the post-16 provision. Pupils will have opportunities to study suitable accreditations and qualifications and will learn life skills that will help them prepare for their next steps.
- The school will modify the curriculum according to pupils' starting points and their particular needs, as outlined on their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Pupils will be assessed, following a short period of settling in. The school will use this information to decide which pathway is best suited to each pupil's individual needs and stage of development.
- Pupils will study a full range of subjects to ensure that they acquire an appropriate range of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.
- The planned curriculum takes into account the full range of pupils' needs for which the school intends to provide.
- The school's ambition is that every child will be able to read. Dedicated reading areas will provide pupils with a range of reading experiences and opportunities. The school will train staff to deliver an appropriate phonics programme to pupils who struggle to read fluently. These pupils will read books that match the sounds they are practising.
- The curriculum does not undermine the fundamental British values of, for example, tolerance of, and respect for, different faiths and beliefs.

Paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(d)(ii), 2A(1) to 2A(2)

- The schemes of work for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) are comprehensive and reflect the aims and ethos of the proposed school. They are suitable for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The PSHE curriculum encourages pupils to respect others by paying due regard to the protected characteristics.
- All pupils will receive lessons in relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education as part of PSHE. These lessons will be delivered in an age-appropriate way, with extra support for pupils who need it.
- The RSE policy is available on the school's website. The policy recognises the need to consult with parents and carers about the delivery of this programme.

Paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(e) to 2(2)(e)(iii)

- Pupils will benefit from up to date and appropriate careers information, education, advice and guidance, as part of the school's personal development programme. Pupils will have opportunities to engage with work-related learning opportunities in the local community.

Paragraph 3 to 3(g), 3(i) to 3(j), 4

- The curriculum has clearly defined end goals for each pathway. A thematic approach will give pupils opportunities to develop their knowledge over time, with daily opportunities to recall prior learning.
- Resources are available to help teachers deliver the curriculum. Well-planned lessons provide teachers with guidance about effective teaching methods they can use to meet pupils' varying needs.
- The school has considered carefully how it will get to know each pupils' individual needs and interests. Baseline assessments will help staff understand each pupil's starting points, educationally, socially and emotionally.
- The proprietor intends to employ qualified teachers who have experience of working in special education settings.
- A cycle of assessment will be used regularly to check pupils' well-being and academic progress. Staff will be able to use this information to plan pupils' next steps.
- The school will use an online portal to communicate with parents, as well as keeping them up to date about their children's progress using annual reports and parents' evenings.
- The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards (the standards) in this part.

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

Paragraph 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The school has a clearly planned programme for PSHE that will foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This programme will be supplemented by assemblies, social events, visits, and visitors.

- The school will make the most of the diverse range of opportunities in the local community to support pupils' development. Links have already been made with nearby sports teams and a local café that pupils will be able to visit to order their own lunch.
- A range of visiting speakers will be invited into school to talk with pupils. This will ensure that pupils develop a knowledge of, and respect for, public institutions and services.
- There will be opportunities for pupils to discuss and debate important topics. Pupils will be able to run enterprise projects alongside local businesses and learn from members of the local police force and St John's Ambulance.
- The personal development programme will give pupils plenty of chances to learn important life skills. Opportunities for them to develop their character will encourage them to 'embrace challenges, stay resilient and never give up'.
- The school's curriculum for PSHE education and religious education will teach pupils about diversity, a range of different faiths and the protected characteristics. The fundamental British values are woven through the curriculum.
- The school will ensure that staff and visitors provide balanced points of view when they are delivering content to pupils.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7 to 7(b)

- The school has prioritised safeguarding. It is aware of the increased safeguarding vulnerabilities that pupils with SEND may face. The school understands the local safeguarding issues and will incorporate these when teaching pupils about keeping themselves safe.
- Safeguarding leaders have had appropriate safeguarding training, in line with national guidance. An annual audit by an external expert will ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are suitable.
- There is an appropriate system in place for staff to record any safeguarding concerns they may have about pupils. These records will note any actions taken by the school in response to these concerns and any external agency involvement.
- Pupils will learn how to stay safe, including online. The school will also provide parents with guidance about online safety and the use of new technologies.
- Suitable web-filtering and monitoring systems are in place.

Paragraphs 3(h), 9 to 10

- The behaviour policy focuses on the use of praise and rewards to promote positive behaviour. Records of sanctions imposed in response to poor behaviour will be used to spot any patterns and trends so that pupils get appropriate support.
- The behaviour and anti-bullying policies are comprehensive. These policies consider the additional vulnerabilities of the pupils who will attend the school.

- Pupils will learn about different types of bullying and how to report any bullying they might experience.
- All staff will be trained to use de-escalation and intervention strategies appropriately, including restraint.

Paragraphs 11 to 13

- The school's arrangements for managing health and safety, and fire safety are robust. Weekly checks will ensure that the proposed school provides pupils with a safe environment.
- There is a detailed and appropriate health and safety policy in place.
- The proposed school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. A fire risk assessment has been completed. The school has responded quickly to resolve actions identified from this audit.
- Staff will receive appropriate first aid training. Medication will be stored securely. The first aid policy outlines how staff will care for pupils who need first aid or medical care while at the school.

Paragraph 14

- The school will ensure that the pupils are appropriately supervised by staff in school and when out on educational visits. Additional staff will be available to support pupils with complex needs.

Paragraph 15

- The school's admission register will contain all of the information required about pupils who attend the school.
- Daily attendance registers will be kept. There are clear procedures set out to monitor the attendance of pupils and precise actions to follow if any pupils are absent.

Paragraph 16

- Risk assessments for the proposed school's site and for off-site activities contain clear controls to mitigate any identified risks. Suitable risk assessments will be written for individual pupils when necessary. The school has a suitable risk assessment policy, which sets out who is responsible for the reviewing of risk assessments and when.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

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), 21(1) to 21(3)(b)

- An electronic single central record contains all the required information relating to staff recruitment checks.
- The school understands exactly what recruitment checks are required to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with children.
- The school will use an external expert to check the single central record each term to ensure that recruitment processes remain robust.

- The school does not intend to use supply staff, although the correct information is on the single central record should the need arise.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The proposed school has suitable toilet facilities that are readily available for the sole use of pupils. These facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. The hot water does not pose a scalding risk.
- All rooms have plenty of natural light. Lighting and acoustics are appropriate. There is also adequate external lighting outside the school.
- The school has made sure that pupils will always have access to drinking water. This is clearly marked as such.
- There is suitable accommodation for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. While this space is also an office, it will not be used for teaching. A screen will be used to protect pupils' privacy when they are poorly. The school plans to install a portable sink to ensure that there is a washing facility in this room. The room is close to a toilet.
- The school intends to use the local leisure centre so that pupils have access to suitable changing accommodation and showers. There is a suitable risk assessment in place for this.
- There is a small outdoor area where pupils can play and socialise. The school plans to take pupils to the nearby park each day to play, socialise and undertake physical education.
- The proposed school's premises are maintained to a high standard to ensure that pupils' welfare, health and safety are promoted.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f) to 32(1)(i), 32(2) to 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii) to 32(3)(g)

- The school is updating its website with its latest policies. The information necessary is available on the website, including the safeguarding policy and the RSE policy. Parents will be able to request paper copies of the school's policies or documents.
- The school will work with appropriate external agencies to review pupils' EHC plans. It will provide information to local authorities about looked after children and pupils with an EHC plan, when requested.
- The school has an appropriate system in place to record both income and expenditure for all pupils funded by local authorities. This will be available on request.
- Parents will receive an annual report with information about their children's progress.

- The school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33 to 33(k)

- The complaints policy outlines what parents should do if they have a concern about any aspect of the school's work. It details the process for both informal and formal complaints. Each stage that the school will follow for dealing with complaints is clearly explained and the timeframe for each step is provided.
- Parents who are not satisfied with the way the school has dealt with their complaint can request a panel hearing that will be independently chaired.
- The school will retain a written record of all complaints and the actions taken in response. The number of complaints will be published on the school's website.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has a comprehensive understanding of the standards. They have demonstrated good knowledge and skills that will enable them to fulfil their role.
- The proprietor is a qualified teacher, who has appointed leaders with experience of working with pupils with SEND.
- The chair of governors is experienced in governance and will act as a 'critical friend' to provide strategic oversight of the school's work. The school intends to develop a governing body in time.
- The checks completed by the proprietor and the chair of governors will ensure that all of the standards will be met consistently.
- An experienced school business manager will ensure that the school is well maintained and that the welfare, health and safety of pupils are assured.
- Suitable policies, a well-planned curriculum and robust safeguarding arrangements provide confidence that the proprietor will actively promote pupils' well-being.
- The school is likely to meet all the requirements of the standard in this part.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school's accessibility plan is suitable. It includes all the requirements, including how leaders will ensure that the site, the curriculum and any documents are made as accessible as possible.
- The school is likely to meet the regulation in this part.

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	151121
DfE registration number	856/6039
Inspection number	10360739

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	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	CRT Enterprises Limited
Chair	Mital Thanki
Headteacher	Mital Thanki
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000 to £80,000
Telephone number	01162 665920
Website	www.sparkvaleacademy.co.uk
Email address	mital.thanki@spark-academy.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	N/A	11 to 18	11 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	50	45

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- The premises of the proposed school do not provide sufficient space to accommodate 50 pupils. It is recommended that the proposed number of pupils on roll is no more than 45 pupils.
- While the proposed school has access to some additional accommodation, this space was not suitable for use by pupils at the time of the pre-registration inspection.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	N/A	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	N/A	45
Number of part-time pupils	N/A	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	45
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	45
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	45

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	2	25
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	5

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located in Leicester. The proprietor is CRT Enterprises Limited. The headteacher is also the chair of the proprietor board.
- The proposed school will provide full-time education for pupils aged between 11 and 18 years. All pupils are likely to have an EHC plan. The proposed school is planning to cater for pupils with a diagnosis of autism; cognitive and learning needs; speech, language and communication needs; social, emotional and mental health needs; and moderate, specific and severe learning needs.
- The headteacher, curriculum leader and school business manager are already in post at the proposed school.

- The proposed school is unlikely to make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection. It was commissioned by the Department for Education to determine whether the proposed school is likely to meet the standards if it is given permission to open.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher. She also met with the curriculum leader, and the school business manager. The inspector met remotely with the chair of governors.
- The inspection focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the standards, safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector visited all parts of the proposed school premises. She also looked at a wide range of policies, risk assessments and documents.

Inspection team

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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