

Spark Vale Academy

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

Unique reference number (URN): 151121

Progress monitoring inspection report:

11 February 2026

Overall outcome

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

At its most recent inspection, the school was judged to not meet all of the independent school standards and associated requirements.

The purpose of this 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.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

When we carry out progress monitoring inspections of independent schools, we report on the school'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.

At the time of the standard inspection, leaders had not ensured that the independent school standards (the standards) were met. The school was overly reliant on external support. The roles and responsibilities of leaders and governors were not sufficiently clear and well understood. Leaders had not ensured that accountability structures were clear and that weaknesses in the school's provision were promptly and accurately identified. Leaders' action plan outlined a range of appropriate measures to address the unmet standards.

Leaders have successfully enacted this plan with rigour and determination. They have ensured that review processes support a comprehensive evaluation of the standards, such that any issues are promptly identified and addressed. The proprietor has drawn upon external expertise and training to develop leaders' knowledge and understanding. Leaders

have the knowledge they need to ensure that the standards are met. They now have clarity about their roles and responsibilities, including in relation to identifying the strengths and areas for development of the school's provision. The proprietor and the headteacher meet regularly to engage in supportive and appropriately challenging discussion about the impact of their work. Staff are included, as appropriate, in school review and improvement work.

Staff complete training to ensure that they have the knowledge they need to teach the curriculum effectively and provide support matched to the particular needs of the pupils in the school. They are supported by leaders to take advantage of training opportunities related to their interests and so that they can contribute to school improvement. Leaders have put quality assurance processes in place to review how well the curriculum is taught and provide additional support and guidance for staff, when necessary. They demonstrate the capacity to continue to bring about improvements to the quality of the school's provision and the experiences of pupils.

The previously unmet standards in this part are now met.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Curriculum and teaching

At the time of the last standard inspection, leaders had not ensured that the curriculum considered sufficiently the needs and aptitudes of prospective pupils and students in the sixth form. This was especially the case for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's reading curriculum lacked the cohesion necessary to enable pupils to acquire required literacy skills. The school's specialist reading programmes and phonics curriculum did not align in order to support pupils at the early stages of learning to read. The provision for prospective post-16 students did not include a well-considered curriculum, opportunities for work experience or effective support to prepare for adulthood.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well designed and appropriate to the needs of the pupils at the school. Leaders have clear processes in place to identify pupils' needs before they join the school and any needs that emerge over time. Leaders use their knowledge of pupils' needs to personalise the curriculum. They ensure that ambitious end goals are the aim for all pupils, while matching pupils to the right point in the curriculum, based on their needs and any gaps in knowledge that they may have.

Staff understand how to tailor their teaching to pupils' needs. They provide pupils with tasks and explanations matched to their needs and interests. This helps pupils to engage well with their learning and to build their knowledge over time. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils with different starting points developed their understanding of multiplication. They used manipulatives, benefitted from personalised explanations and completed tasks with increasing independence.

Leaders have adopted an accredited phonics programme. They have ensured that staff have been trained to deliver this programme for those pupils who have not secured their phonics knowledge. For other pupils, careful assessment of their ability to read, enables staff to identify precise targets and strategies that will help pupils to become more confident and fluent readers. For example, pupils receive support to comprehend and then recall and summarise texts. Staff model how to read with expression and discuss key vocabulary with pupils. Pupils listen and relate what they understand from their reading to their own lives.

There are currently no post-16 students at the school. However, leaders have ensured that there is a curriculum in place that will enable prospective students to work towards appropriate qualifications. Alongside the academic curriculum, the school has designed an ambitious and comprehensive 'future path' curriculum. This sets out how students will develop the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful in their lives beyond school. For example, students will learn about their identity and society. They will participate in work experience and practise completing job applications. Students will be taught how to develop an understanding of how to organise their time, travel and expenses.

The standards that were previously unmet in this part, are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Part 6. Provision of information

Safeguarding

The school's safeguarding policy is appropriate and available on the school's website. It adheres to the latest statutory guidance and gives due regard to local contextual safeguarding issues.

There is a secure culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They receive regular training and updates. Staff know how to identify, report and record concerns to help keep pupils safe. They meet regularly with leaders to discuss pupils' needs, including anything that is relevant to keeping pupils safe.

Leaders are proactive in ensuring that pupils receive timely and appropriate support, when necessary. They work closely with wider agencies and ensure that they are aware of and act upon any local safeguarding priorities.

Behaviour and supervision of pupils

Leaders had not previously ensured that the school's behaviour policy set out clear systems and processes for the management of behaviour, including procedures for conducting searches or confiscating items.

The proprietor has amended the behaviour policy and ensured that staff have the clarity they need about how to manage all aspects of pupils' behaviour. Leaders have clearly set out the principles and practices related to each aspect of helping pupils to behave. They have ensured that there are appropriate systems in place related to searches for and confiscations of prohibited items. Staff understand their roles in helping pupils to behave well. They provide pupils with the right support at the right time so they feel comfortable and can engage with the opportunities that the school provides.

First aid

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that there were clear and well-established systems for recording and reporting incidents requiring first-aid treatment.

Leaders have addressed this. There are clear systems in place for reporting and recording first-aid treatment. Records indicate that leaders take this seriously and have a thorough approach to recording incidents and related actions. Following any incident requiring first aid, leaders review the causes of the incident and ensure that practices are appropriate and amended, if necessary. Staff understand their responsibilities in relation to first aid, including how to report when a pupil requires treatment.

The standards relating to safeguarding continue to be met. The previously unmet standards in this part are now met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils

At the time of the standard inspection, leaders had not ensured that fire exits were safe and unobstructed. Leaders clearly outlined the measures that they had taken when they submitted their action plan. This included fitting alarms to fire doors and removing hazardous obstructions.

The evidence gathered during this progress monitoring visit, confirmed that the changes outlined in the action plan had been made. Leaders have ensured that the school premises are well maintained and safe. They have constructed an additional fence so that pupils can exit the building in the event of a fire, without being at risk from the nearby busy road. Leaders have continued to ensure that fire exits remained unobstructed, including through their work with the police and the local authority. They have fitted electronic locks to some internal doors so that pupils cannot access the fire doors other than in the event of an

evacuation. Leaders regularly test all technology, including fire alarms, fire exit alarms and electronically locked doors so that pupils are safe.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under sections 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools.

Inspectors checked the school's 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 renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The focus of this inspection was on the standards that were judged not to be met at the time of the school's most recent standard inspection.

Inspectors spoke with the proprietor, the headteacher, the business manager and staff during the inspection.

Inspectors 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 and carers. These requirements of the independent school standards are met.

The school's previous inspection was a standard inspection carried out in June 2025. At this inspection, the school was judged to not meet all of the independent school standards.

The DfE required the school to prepare an action plan. Ofsted reviewed this action plan in October 2025. The DfE accepted this action plan.

The school is registered to admit 45 pupils. Pupils are likely to have a primary diagnosis of autism and/or social, emotional and mental health needs.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

The school operates from Crt House, 176 Melton Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 5EE.

The proprietor has removed the governing body since the previous inspection. The school begun to admit pupils in September 2025, after the time of the previous inspection. A number of staff have been appointed since the previous inspection.

Lead inspector	
Matthew Fearn-Davies	His Majesty's Inspector

About this school	
Chair of the proprietor board	Mital Thanki
Headteacher	Katie James
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
Capacity	45
Annual fees for day pupils	£57,000
Email address	office@sparkvaleacademy.co.uk

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

1. The standards about the quality of education provided at the school are those contained in this Part.

2. (1) The standard in this paragraph is met if—

(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work—

(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are—

(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;

(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs; and

(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.

PART 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

6. The standards about the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school are those contained in this Part.

9. The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that—

(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour.

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.

PART 5: Premises of and accommodation at schools

22. The standards about the premises of and accommodation at the school are those contained in this Part.

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.

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—

- (a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
- (b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- (c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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