

# Inspection of EdStart Schools Wigan

Harrow Road, Marsh Green, Pemberton, Wigan, Greater Manchester WN5 0QL

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Inspection dates: 18 to 20 June 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school has high expectations of all pupils' achievement and this ambition is fully realised. Pupils achieve the GCSE qualifications that they need to make positive next steps in education, training or employment. Most pupils move on to apprenticeships, college courses and careers that match their interests and aspirations.

Some pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many have had negative experiences of education in the past. Prior to pupils joining the school, staff seek to understand each pupil's unique circumstances and barriers to learning. Pupils have the time to tell their story. They begin to trust the staff in school and over time, they start to enjoy learning again. Pupils form strong, positive relationships with the adults around them. For the majority of pupils, this is the first time that they have been happy at school.

Pupils learn to successfully manage their emotions and behaviour. Staff know each pupil extremely well. They help pupils to reflect on the impact of their behaviour on others and recognise what they could do differently. Pupils learn about different strategies to self regulate, such as using breathing exercises, mindfulness or engaging in physical activity. Over time, pupils' behaviour considerably improves. Pupils told inspectors that staff model patience and respect and that this has helped them to become more tolerant to others.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. The school quickly identifies and takes into account the additional needs of all pupils, including those who have missed a considerable amount of education prior to joining the school. The school's ambition is to ensure that all pupils leave school with similar outcomes as their peers in mainstream schools.

The school's curriculum plans and schemes of work are detailed. They provide the staff with clear steps of learning. In the main, teachers deliver the curriculum well. Teachers readily adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet pupils' SEND and interests. For example, pupils designed their own mythical creature before writing a descriptive story.

Staff use assessment strategies well. They check that pupils' knowledge is secure before introducing new learning. Staff also ensure that any gaps in knowledge from previous school years are swiftly addressed so that pupils can achieve their potential.

The school has ensured that pupils read a wide range of texts, including novels, plays, poetry and non-fiction. The school identifies pupils' broad reading ability when they start at the school. While this gives staff a starting point, it does not give them enough information to identify the precise deficits in pupils' reading knowledge. This

hinders staff from being able to rapidly close the gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. Some pupils find it more difficult to access the wider curriculum as a result.

When pupils join the school, they quickly develop a positive attitude to their education. They feel settled and start to enjoy learning. Pupils know that the school will make phone calls and home visits when they are absent. Pupils, and their parents and carers, told inspectors that their behaviour and attendance have considerably improved since coming to this school.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about different religions, cultures and practices. This helps them to have a better understanding of the similarities and differences between people in our diverse society. Pupils have a secure understanding about relationships and sex education (RSE). For example, they are knowledgeable about what constitutes a healthy relationship.

The school ensures that pupils receive suitable independent careers advice and guidance so that they are fully informed about the post-16 options available to them. For example, pupils visit a range of colleges and training providers within the local area. Some pupils have the option of attending vocational placements where they can learn and gain qualifications in construction and motorbike mechanics.

A comprehensive programme of training and support has given staff the knowledge that they need to support pupils well. The vast majority of pupils have had turbulent and challenging times before joining this school. Staff have the patience and understanding to guide pupils into a brighter future.

The proprietor is fully committed to ensuring that pupils experience a high-quality education. For example, executive leaders have been appointed to support and challenge the school. This has ensured that the school has got off to a flying start and that it is giving pupils the opportunity to reset their lives and achieve their ambitions.

The school meets all the independent school standards (the standards). The proprietor body understands and carries out its duties effectively. It has ensured that it complies with its statutory duties, such as ensuring the provision for RSE. The school's accessibility plan meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- The school has not ensured that staff have sufficient information about the gaps in some pupils' reading knowledge. This hinders staff from providing effective catch-up support for these pupils. This also prevents these pupils from fully accessing the wider curriculum. The school should ensure that staff are fully equipped to swiftly identify and address the gaps in pupils' reading knowledge so that they can become confident, accurate and fluent readers.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149591
<b>DfE registration number</b>	359/6007
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322524
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	24
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	EdStart Schools Wigan Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	James Lowe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Howarth
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£16,000 to £64,400
<b>Telephone number</b>	0300 303 4414
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.edstartschools.com">www.edstartschools.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin.wigan@edstartschools.com">admin.wigan@edstartschools.com</a>

## Information about this school

- The school opened on 11 April 2023. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school operates from premises at Harrow Road, Marsh Green, Pemberton, Wigan, Greater Manchester WN5 0QL.
- The school makes use of two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school caters for pupils with SEND. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. The school also caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools.
- The headteacher is one of the two members of the proprietor body.
- The proprietor has appointed a governing body.
- The school is registered to admit up to 25 pupils.

## Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteachers, headteacher and other leaders in school. They spoke with members of the proprietor body, including the chair. Inspectors also met with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and reading, physical education and science. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject teachers and executive headteachers, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans, pupils' books and spoke with leaders about a few other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.

- Inspectors also reviewed information relating to the standards, including records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors made a tour of the school's premises.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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