

Stansfield House

103 Crescent Road, Dukinfield SK16 4HG

Inspection date

14 July 2025

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

Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- The proprietor has written a suitable curriculum policy. This aims to provide pupils with access to a broad range of academic and vocational subjects. The proposed school has planned for pupils to study subjects which will provide them with a linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education.
- The proposed school has established schemes of work for each subject it intends to offer. The schemes of work are sufficiently detailed to enable teachers to understand what knowledge pupils should learn. In designing the schemes of work, the proposed school has considered the different aptitudes and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that pupils may have.
- The proposed school has plans in place to support any pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read. The school intends that this reading programme will help pupils to read with fluency and confidence.
- The proposed school has appropriate plans in place for pupils' careers education. It intends to use an impartial careers adviser to support pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps when they leave the school. The programme will also include pupils visiting local colleges and providers. The school intends to make use of a range of local employers to support pupils' decision-making about their futures.
- Schemes of work and other documentation suggest that the proposed school will promote fundamental British values.

Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2)

- The proposed school's relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is well designed. It considers the potential needs of pupils and their possible starting points. It complements the proposed school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum. Both curriculums meet the requirements of the statutory guidance.

- The proposed school intends to consult with parents and carers before implementing the intended RSE policy. It will ensure that the necessary information is available to parents via the school's website.

Paragraphs 3(a) to 3(j), 4

- The proprietor has developed an assessment policy, which sets out how pupils' progress and attainment will be monitored and recorded. The proposed school plans to use baseline assessments to gain a thorough understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND. It intends to use this assessment information to inform any intervention that pupils may need.
- The proprietor intends to employ suitably qualified staff to implement the intended curriculum. Where staff may teach outside of their specialism area, they will be provided with appropriate professional development to support them in implementing the curriculum effectively.
- The proposed school has put into place a range of processes to ensure that all pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan have their needs reviewed and updated accordingly. These procedures include working with the placing local authority and sharing information as necessary.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

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

Paragraphs 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- Thorough consideration has been given to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils will learn about different religious festivals and days of remembrance during special weeks and educational visits. Pupils will have opportunities to learn about the differences between people who live in Britain and gain an understanding of the Equality Act 2010.
- The proposed school intends for the teaching of fundamental British values to be woven throughout the curriculum. It intends to use assemblies and visiting speakers to discuss different topical issues, celebrate world faiths and discuss important world events that are relevant for pupils.
- The behaviour policy focuses on ensuring that relationships between pupils and their peers, and between pupils and staff, are built on mutual respect and tolerance. The proposed school intends to establish a school council to give pupils an opportunity to shape the school environment.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 32, 32(1)(c)

- The proposed school has a safeguarding policy that reflects current statutory guidance. The policy will be published on the school's website.

- The proprietor is suitably skilled to ensure that pupils are kept safe while they are at school. The proposed school has an appropriate system to record any safeguarding concerns and actions taken.
- The proposed school plans to deliver a range of safeguarding training to staff. This will include annual updates to any statutory documentation. Some senior staff have already been appointed and have received appropriate safeguarding training in advance of the opening of the proposed school.
- The proposed school is aware of possible safeguarding risks to pupils within the local area. It recognises the vulnerabilities that pupils who come to the school may have.
- The proposed school intends, within its curriculum, to ensure that pupils are taught about many different ways in which they can keep themselves safe. This will include risks within their local community and when they are online.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a) to 9(c), 10

- The proprietor has written an appropriate behaviour policy. It sets out clearly the proposed school's approach to rewards and sanctions. There is a system to record pupils' behaviour, including any serious incidents. The record-keeping system will allow the school to monitor pupils' behaviour and attitudes, identifying any patterns or trends. This will enable the proposed school to support pupils, who may need help to improve their behaviour.
- The proprietor has ensured an effective anti-bullying policy is in place. It indicates how pupils will learn about different types of bullying and seeks to avoid, as much as possible, bullying occurring at the school.

Paragraphs 11 to 16(b)

- The proposed school has ensured that there are appropriate health and safety policies in place, including for first aid. The proprietor will ensure that a sufficient number of staff receive first-aid training for the number of pupils on roll. Some senior staff have already been appointed and have completed appropriate first-aid training.
- The proprietor has ensured that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. It has systems in place to ensure that all required checks are undertaken. For example, all necessary checks of firefighting equipment are made. The proposed school has established clear procedures for the evacuation of the building in the event of a fire.
- The proprietor intends to employ enough staff to ensure that pupils will be supervised well during the school day. The proprietor has established systems to ensure that the school's admission and attendance registers will comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024.
- There is a suitable risk assessment policy in place. The proposed school has an appropriate range of risk assessments for the premises and activities that pupils will complete. Risk assessments are displayed at various locations around the school to support staff when they move to different locations to teach the pupils. Risk assessments clearly identify any potential risks and control measures to mitigate the risks.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(1) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(5)(a)(ii) to 21(6)

- The proprietor has put in place an electronic single central record. All required checks on staff working at the school are completed before employment commences. These include medical fitness, the right to work in the United Kingdom and qualification checks. Members of the proprietor body have completed safer recruitment training.
- The proprietor does not intend to use supply staff. However, it is clear about what checks would need to be made on supply staff where necessary.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- There are suitable, separate toilet and washing facilities that are provided for the sole use of pupils. Toilets are lockable from the inside and have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. Checks are made on the water temperature so that it does not pose a scalding risk to pupils or staff.
- The proposed school has on-site showers and changing facilities for pupils to use. It intends to use local leisure facilities for pupils' physical education. A suitable risk assessment is in place for the use of local facilities.

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

- The proprietor has ensured that a suitable medical room is available for the care of pupils who are sick or injured. It is suitably equipped and located near toilet and washing facilities.

Paragraphs 25 to 27(b)

- The school building has been renovated to a high standard. The proprietor has thought carefully about how to use the space inside the building to ensure that it is appropriate for pupils. It features seven classroom spaces, a well-equipped kitchen and social area and various rooms, where interventions or pastoral support will be provided.
- Classrooms have suitable lighting and acoustics. External lighting is provided by street lighting, which would enable staff and pupils to leave the building safely.

Paragraphs 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c), 28(2) to 28(2)(b), 29(1) to 29(1)(b)

- Pupils can access drinking water from a supply located on each teaching floor of the proposed school. It is clearly marked as drinking water. This is always readily available for pupils.
- There is a carefully designed outdoor space, which will allow pupils to play outside. The proprietor has considered the needs of pupils when designing this outdoor space.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1) to 32(1)(d), 32 (1)(f) to 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b)(ii) to 32(3)(f)

- The proposed school has a written statement of its aims and ethos on its website.
- The proposed school's website will contain all relevant and required policies and information required by the standards.
- The website also contains the required information about the proprietor, including its address and contact details.
- The proposed school has a clear format for reporting termly pupils' progress and attainment to parents.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33 to 33(k)

- The proposed school has a complaints policy, which is available to parents on its website.
- The policy sets out the procedures the school will follow if it receives a complaint. It identifies the formal and informal processes. All stages of the complaints process include appropriate timescales.
- Information for parents about the next steps they can pursue if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint are included within the policy. This includes information about where they can make representation to an independent panel and that they can be accompanied by another person if required.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The proprietor shares a clear and ambitious vision to provide an inclusive and inspiring education for the pupils the school intends to admit. This vision for the proposed school is shared by all members, including the executive headteacher who is already in place.
- The proprietor is committed to ensuring that all the standards are consistently met. It uses its knowledge and skills in running other independent schools to ensure that this proposed school is likely to meet the standards.
- The proprietor will ensure that staff have suitable qualifications and experience to carry out their roles effectively. This includes expertise in working with pupils with SEND and looked-after children. The proprietor has effective working relationships with the local authority that is likely to place pupils at the school.

- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed school opens.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has a suitable accessibility policy in place for the proposed school. The proposed school has systems in place to ensure that adaptations can be made for pupils to access the curriculum.
- The proposed school is likely to meet schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 if it opens.

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	151670
DfE registration number	357/6050
Inspection number	10400065

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	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	First Steps Together Ltd
Chair	Matthew Bonilla
Headteacher	Natalie Odgen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,000 to £69,000
Telephone number	0330 1180974
Website	www.firststepstogether.co.uk
Email address	n.odgen@firststepstogether.uk

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	45	45

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	45
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	45
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	45
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	45

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located at 103 Crescent Road, Dukinfield SK16 4HG.
- It is proposed that the school will provide full-time education for up to 45 pupils, aged between 11 and 16 years.
- The proposed school will cater for pupils with SEND. It is intended that it will cater for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is expected that all of the pupils will have an EHC plan.
- The proprietor is a limited company called First Steps Together Limited. It is made up of two directors.
- An executive headteacher has already been appointed and is in post. The proprietor intends to employ a head of school, who will solely work at this school when it opens. There is a governing body in place.
- The proprietor does not intend to use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to determine if the school is likely to meet the standards if the DfE registers the school.
- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with the chair of the proprietor body and the executive headteacher. He also met with other senior leaders, who hold various positions within the company.
- The inspector made a tour of the site, both internally and externally, to check the suitability and safety of the premises.
- The inspector scrutinised and evaluated a wide range of documents provided by the school, including safeguarding information, statutory policies and the proposed school's curriculum.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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