

Helm Academy Pudsey

Sunfield Place, Pudsey, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS28 6DR

Unique reference number (URN): 152706

Pre-registration inspection report:

19 August 2026

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards if it is registered

The purpose of this inspection was to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the proposed school's likely compliance with the independent school standards (the standards) and associated requirements that are required for registration as an independent school.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

When we carry out pre-registration inspections of proposed independent schools, we report on the provider's likely compliance with part 8 of the standards first. Under part 8, the proprietor is required to ensure that the school meets all of the 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.

The proprietor has a clear vision for the school. They have partnered with experienced sector professionals who provide improvement support and consultancy. They proprietor possess the knowledge, experience and understanding appropriate to their roles. The school has established clear communication systems that support the robust quality assurance, helping to ensure that the standards are consistently met over time. The staff and proprietor have a wealth of experience in the sector, which has informed the plans, structures and systems that will provide high-quality education provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The proprietor has invested time and effort in creating a school that is designed to meet the needs of the pupils it intends to admit. This is evident in the curriculum offer, resources, and the development of the building. Together, the proprietor and

headteacher have set a clear and ambitious vision, aiming for high expectations from the start.

Decisions made relating to curriculum design, the structure of the day, and classroom layout all have a clear rationale. Pupils' care and needs are central to the education offer. This is reflected in both strategic and practical decisions, including the design of a clear turning circle to minimise pupils' transition into the building at the start of the day.

The management information system contributes to effective safeguarding oversight and forms part of a wider approach to monitoring pupils' welfare, attendance and progress. It provides leaders with the information they need to identify concerns, monitor patterns and take appropriate action when required. The standards in this part are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Curriculum

The vision for the proposed school is supported by a broad and balanced curriculum offer. The curriculum is underpinned with clear plans that outline what the intended pupils need to know and learn. The curriculum is designed to be flexible and adaptable to pupils' needs. The school is clear that meaningful qualifications are part of its ambitious curriculum offer. These range from functional skills to GCSEs.

Reading is central to the proposed school's curriculum offer. It is woven through the curriculum subjects. The range of phonics programmes the school can provide reflects leaders' recognition that pupils may have previously been taught phonics through different approaches.

The personal, social, health and economic education and relationships and sex education and health education curriculum is well designed. Leaders have diligently thought carefully about the needs of pupils with SEND and have in place a programme to help them understand life in modern Britain. This is mapped across all subject areas to create a curriculum that revisits important knowledge and learning over time.

The proprietor and headteacher value the importance of careers education. They have in place an external, independent careers adviser who will provide pupils with impartial advice on the next steps in education, training and employment. This reflects leaders' commitment to preparing pupils for their future lives.

Teaching

The curriculum plans offer a clear picture of the knowledge and skills that the school wants pupils to acquire. The proprietor and headteacher are fully aware that pupils may arrive at the proposed school with gaps in their knowledge. This forms part of the assessment process and supports the identification and removal of barriers to learning for pupils.

Subject specialists have been recruited to help deliver the proposed school's ambitious curriculum. A planned professional development offer is in place. This will ensure that staff are fully aware of pupils' needs, how to meet them and to continue to develop their subject-specific knowledge.

The planned classrooms and the school site are well-resourced and have ample space, both indoors and outdoors, to accommodate the proposed number of pupils. Subject-specific teaching resources are in place and ready for use. Leaders have created calm spaces throughout the school to support pupils to regulate their emotions and reset when needed.

Assessment

Leaders have crafted an assessment process that will be both formative and summative. This is designed to enable teachers to evaluate pupils' starting points and measure their progress over time. The assessment framework aligns with the curriculum's intended endpoints. This will enable teachers to identify and address misconceptions and check that learning has been securely embedded.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

The school has woven pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the academic and extracurricular offer. Understanding the world in which pupils live and how to be a positive member of society is an explicit feature of the intended curriculum. Understanding and applying fundamental British values, alongside the commitment to equity, underpin the proposed school's offer.

The celebration of diverse cultural events throughout the year is planned to broaden pupils' understanding of different beliefs, cultures and communities.

Leaders are clear about the importance of preparing pupils to function in successfully in modern society. Life skills and community participation, through

opportunities such as work experience and educational visits, form part of the wider school offer.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Safeguarding

The proprietor and headteacher have ensured that the school's safeguarding reflects the most up-to-date statutory guidance. The policy clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of all staff and outlines clear procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Leaders have established appropriate systems and procedures to support safeguarding. These are intended to help create a safe environment in which pupils can learn and thrive.

Behaviour and supervision of pupils

The school's behaviour policy explains how leaders and staff will respond to behavioural incidents. It is designed to meet the needs of pupils with autism and social, emotional, and mental health needs.

The school environment is arranged to promote calm behaviour and focused learning. Leaders have created quiet rooms that pupils can use at any time. These rooms have open doors, ensuring pupils are not secluded. Resources such as beanbags and light machines are available in the rooms to help pupils feel calm and reduce anxiety.

The school plans to assess each pupil's needs and help staff understand the factors that may affect behaviour and how to provide appropriate support for pupils.

Anti-bullying

A clear anti-bullying policy is in place to ensure staff are trained to help pupils understand their behaviour and its impact on others. The policy promotes a calm approach, emphasising reconciliation and supporting pupils to make positive choices in the future.

Health and safety, fire and first aid

The proprietor and headteacher have implemented appropriate health and safety arrangements. A dedicated health and safety monitoring system is in place to

ensure that all health and safety, fire safety, and first aid policies are implemented as intended.

The site has recently been updated. The school has a thorough fire risk assessment that is reviewed regularly. Leaders have received appropriate fire marshal training. During the inspection, certification for legionella, gas, and electrical safety checks was available for review. Documentation also includes records of routine inspections of fire doors, fire alarms, and emergency lighting.

The school's first-aid policy is well-defined and comprehensive. It includes clear procedures for storing and dispensing medication. Guidelines for providing first aid and for using supplies located throughout the school are also in place.

Admissions and attendance

The school's admission and attendance systems include all necessary information, which is stored electronically. Leaders are clear about how absence is recorded and the systems in place to encourage regular attendance. The system enables prompt identification of attendance issues and direct timely support to families when needed.

Pupils are expected to attend school regularly. This is outlined in the attendance policy, which is available to families prior to admission. School leaders are committed dedicated to supporting pupils, particularly those who have been absent for extended periods. Leaders set high expectations for attendance at the proposed school.

Risk assessment

The proposed school has clear processes for identifying and managing risks to pupils, staff, and visitors. Leaders have completed thorough risk assessments to support the safe operation of the proposed school.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

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

The recruitment checks made on staff, supply staff and the proprietor

The proprietor understands the importance of carefully checking the suitability of all staff and is knowledgeable about safer recruitment practices. Relevant staff have attended safer recruitment training. The school has procedures in place to ensure that all necessary background checks are completed before staff start employment.

The single central record of these recruitment checks

The single central record (SCR) documents all necessary employment checks as required by the standards. These include suitability assessments for the proprietor. Although the school currently does not intend to use temporary or supply staff, the proprietor understands the necessary checks required should the need arise.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Toilet and washing facilities, water supply, changing accommodation and showers

Leaders have ensured that the school premises are suitable for the proposed number of pupils. The proposed school building spans four floors and includes appropriate accessibility features including accessible toilets with hot and cold running water.

The school has suitable changing rooms. There are single-cubicle toilets, and showers for pupils' use after sports. Drinking water is readily available throughout the school and is clearly labelled in many classrooms.

Medical room and accommodation for pupils' therapy needs

The proposed school has a dedicated medical room with suitable handwashing facilities and a toilet. It is well stocked with first-aid equipment. A lockable safe is in the room for the secure storage of medicine, and a fridge is available for storing perishable items.

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils

The premises have been completed to a high standard. The proprietor has ensured that sufficient attention has been given to the health, safety, and welfare of pupils in the design and furnishing of the premises. For instance, soft corners have been added to some furniture to minimise the risk of injury.

Leaders have ensured pupils have suitable accommodation, furnishings and facilities to meet the needs of the intended pupils.

Lighting and acoustic conditions

The classrooms are well-lit and spacious, creating a calm and focused learning environment. The acoustics are suitable for educational activities.

Lighting can be dimmed where needed to help reduce sensory stimulation for pupils. Emergency lighting is installed on all fire exits and main entrances. Glow-in-the-dark emergency signs and strips are in place.

External lighting has been appropriately installed around the premises.

Outdoor space

The proposed school site provides ample outside space. Areas have been designated for outside play, physical education and socialising.

The outdoor provision includes both a hard surface space and a grassed area. The school also has nature areas, green spaces and gardens within a safe, secure and fenced environment.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 6. Provision of information

Leaders have a clear understanding of the information that must be made available, including policies on restrictive interventions, safeguarding, the curriculum and assessment procedures. Key health and safety policies and essential contact information, including how to reach the headteacher and the chair of the proprietor body, are readily available.

Systems for reporting pupils' achievements to parents are in place. The proprietor has a clear understanding of the need to report income and expenditure related to place commissioning to the relevant authorities. Additionally, the procedures for providing information about the annual review processes for pupils with education, health, and care (EHC) plans are in place.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The proprietor has ensured that the complaints policy complies with the relevant standards and is accessible on the school's website. It clearly explains the procedures for both informal and formal complaints, including timescales and arrangements for recording complaints.

The standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to register the provider as an independent school.

The school's accessibility plan

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

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. Inspectors checked the school's likely 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 updated 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 DfE commissioned Ofsted to conduct this inspection to assess whether the proprietor's planned arrangements are likely to meet the standards if registration to open is granted.

This was the proposed school's second pre-registration inspection. A previous pre-registration inspection was carried out on 3 December 2025.

The inspectors spoke with the chair of the proprietor's body and the headteacher during the inspection. They also considered the school's health and safety and safeguarding arrangements. The lead inspector also toured the school site.

The lead inspector confirmed the following information about the proposed school:

At the time of the inspection, no pupils were on roll.

The school proposes to admit pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and autism spectrum condition. All pupils will have an EHC plan. The school also intends to admit some pupils who are in care.

The school does not intend to use alternative provision.

Lead inspector

Richard Jones

His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector

Marcus Newby

His Majesty's Inspector

About this proposed school

Proprietor

Helm Academy Ltd
Fitri Brock

Chair of the proprietor body

Headteacher

Eve Bartlet

Type of school

Other independent special school

Capacity

40

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll

Provider's proposal: 40

Number of part-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll

Provider's proposal: 0

Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities on roll

Provider's proposal: 40

Number of pupils on roll who have an education, health and care plan, or who are looked after by a local authority

Provider's proposal: 40

Age range of pupils	Provider's proposal: 11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Provider's proposal: Mixed
Total hours operating as a school per week	Provider's proposal: 32.5
Total hours of teaching provided per week	Provider's proposal: 27
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Provider's proposal: 14
Number of part-time teaching staff	Provider's proposal: 0
Annual fees for day pupils	£65,000
Email address	e.bartlet@helmacademy.co.uk

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