

Witham Prospect School

Old Harbour Farm, Newark Road, Norton Disney, Lincolnshire LN6 9JR

Inspection dates

3 April 2019

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(2)(i)

- The school's curriculum policy sets out arrangements for each pupil to have an individualised timetable, which takes account of the pupils' cognitive starting points and progress towards agreed learning targets. The curriculum at key stage 3 will have an emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy, communication and life skills. A sample key stage 3 timetable demonstrates that the broad and balanced curriculum provides access to all the areas of learning required by the independent school standards.
- The planned curriculum at key stage 4 is similarly broad and balanced. Additional vocational subjects are also available to pupils, including horticulture, hospitality, and hair and beauty. All pupils will receive independent careers advice and guidance, including individual support to access appropriate pathways at age 16.
- The planned post-16 curriculum places an emphasis on the development of life skills and independence. The curriculum is designed to provide additional time for further personal development and learning for students who require additional time to prepare for the transition to further education or employment on leaving school. The curriculum will continue to include vocational learning, together with work-related learning and access to local community facilities.
- Planned group sizes will not generally exceed six pupils and will include one-to-one support when this is a requirement of a pupil's education, health and care plan. Pupils will have access to individual therapeutic support, dependent on the nature of their individual needs.
- The school's policy for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) sets out strategies to address communication and interaction, cognition and learning, sensory and physical needs, together with pupils' emotional, social and mental health needs. Each class teacher will act as the special educational needs coordinator for pupils in their class, while the headteacher will oversee the implementation and recording of all pupils' pathway planning.
- The school's policy includes a commitment to promote fundamental British values

through all experiences provided for pupils.

Paragraph 3, including all related sub-paragraphs and paragraph 4

- The school's teaching and learning policy refers to the national teachers' standards as the benchmark for the quality of teaching. The policy emphasises the importance of the learning environment, including the use of therapeutic and sensory experiences.
- The school's policy for assessment and accreditation sets out the requirement for the baseline assessment of the starting points for each pupil. These include assessment of pupils' cognitive, social and emotional development. The school's curriculum policy anticipates that most pupils admitted to the school will be working at levels below those typical for pupils this age.
- Each pupil will have an additional needs plan which will set out targets for progress across the curriculum. Regular assessments will be based on an assessment scheme with criteria appropriate to the needs of the school's proposed pupil group, together with regular teacher assessments of progress. Pupils will work towards suitable external accreditations, appropriate to pupils' individual starting points.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

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

Paragraph 5 and all related sub-paragraphs

- Senior leaders have prepared policies for the promotion of British values, and for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The policy defines key skills to be developed in each of the four components of pupils' personal development. These include a sense of self, impact on others, social skills, appreciation and respect.
- The SMSC policy includes several planned themes and activities which relate to the requirements of the paragraphs in part 2 of the independent school standards. Pupils will study democracy and the law. Senior leaders plan to establish a school council, using a democratic process, to enable the pupils' voices to be heard in the development of the school.
- Planning documents include resources related to different faiths, places of worship and the use of themed days, and plans for external visitors covering a variety of faiths and belief systems. Pupils will learn about a variety of local and community services through visitors to the school and off-site visits to, for example, places of worship, the library, the post office and healthcare providers.
- The school's long-term plans for citizenship and personal and social development include a variety of learning experiences related to confidence and responsibility, relationships and respect, communities and cultures and ethnic diversity.
- A balanced approach is expected in all discussion of values and beliefs, within the context of British values.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- The school's safeguarding policy has regard to the latest government guidance. All members of staff must read the appropriate sections of this guidance and receive mandatory safeguarding training during their induction. Additional update training is to be provided at appropriate intervals. The designated safeguarding lead and the responsible governor have both received the required training.
- The school has produced additional policies which expand and support procedures and expectations set out in the safeguarding policy. These include documents related to managing allegations against staff, staff conduct, sexual violence and harassment between pupils, and safeguarding against sexting and from sexual exploitation.
- School policies provide clear guidance for staff about types and indicators of abuse, and how to manage and report a disclosure from a pupil. Additional information includes advice about contacting appropriate external agencies, including statutory agencies of the local authority. The policy provides important information for staff about peer-on-peer abuse, child sexual exploitation, children missing from education and preventing radicalisation.
- Senior leaders have established suitable arrangements for recording concerns and maintaining confidential records of any cases.

Paragraph 9 and all related sub-paragraphs, and paragraph 10.

- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies have regard to government guidance. These policies emphasise the importance of the organisation's culture and positive behaviour management, including the use of rewards and consequential sanctions. Additional advice includes the use of proportionate physical intervention and possible exclusion. The focus of these policies is on strategies to avoid behaviours of concern.
- The school has appropriate arrangements in place for the management and recording of any behavioural or bullying incidents.

Paragraphs 11 to 15

- The proprietor has produced a comprehensive set of policies and procedures for managing all aspects of health and safety. Senior leaders have established detailed procedures for regular checks on all aspects of health and safety, including fire safety.
- The proprietor has ensured that a detailed premises fire-risk assessment has been completed. Staff have commenced regular checks and records related to all aspects of premises and fire safety. Arrangements are in place for regular servicing and maintenance of all services and equipment by external contractors.
- Additional policies and procedures have been produced for first aid, together with arrangements to ensure that all staff are suitably trained. Registers are in place to record pupils' admissions and attendance.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- Senior leaders have produced a risk assessment policy, together with risk assessments for all aspects of the premises, off-site visits, challenging behaviour, classroom activities and the outdoor play area. Arrangements are in place to produce individual

pupil risk assessments as pupils are admitted to the school.

- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

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

Paragraphs 18(1) to 18(3)

- The proprietor has completed all required checks on the suitability of staff appointed to date. These include enhanced checks with the disclosure and barring service, checks on identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, overseas checks, and qualifications where required. Checks are also completed to ensure that no member of staff is barred from working with children or is subject to a prohibition order.
- Senior leaders are trained in safer recruitment and have produced a suitable policy for the recruitment of staff. Two references are taken up for all appointments, and medical checks are completed as part of any offer of employment.

Paragraphs 19(1) to 19(3)

- The school does not propose to appoint any members of supply staff through an agency.

Paragraphs 20(6) to 20(6)(c)

- The proprietor has completed the required checks on the suitability of members of the proprietorial body. These include Section 128 checks on disqualification or prohibition from management.

Paragraphs 21(1) to 21(7)(b)

- The proprietor has created a suitable template to record details of all required recruitment checks for staff and members of the proprietorial board. Details of existing members of the proprietorial body and staff have been entered on this single central register.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1) to 24(2)

- The premises and accommodation have been extended and refurbished to a high standard. They meet all the requirements for the provision of toilet and washing facilities, showers, and the provision of suitable medical facilities, including accommodation for the short-term care of any sick or injured pupils. There is a suitable locked room for the storage of medication.
- Classrooms are of a suitable size to support effective learning and planned group sizes. Each classroom has a kitchen area which includes labelled drinking water and appropriate fire safety equipment. Each classroom has access to an individual securely fenced outdoor space to extend learning and provide for relaxation. Similarly, each classroom opens on to a shared external courtyard with a sheltered pagoda and extensive learning equipment. A short route through the building leads to a large grassed play area, including a covered shelter, fitness stations, benches and seating.
- A central dining room, adjacent to a commercial-style kitchen, is easily accessible

from each classroom. Additional internal spaces include a soft-play room, a sensory room and a family/meeting room. Additional rooms provide for administrative and management offices, together with a staff room.

Paragraph 25 to 28(2)(b)

- Good attention has been given to health and safety requirements throughout the premises, including in teaching rooms and play spaces. The internal acoustics and lighting are suitable to enable effective learning.
- External lighting has been provided to ensure safe access to and from the premises. Appropriate emergency lighting is in place.
- Water supplies meet requirements for temperature control of hot water and labelled drinking water in suitable locations.

Paragraphs 29(1) and 29(1)(a) and (b)

- The external boundaries of the school are securely fenced and entry to the building is internally controlled. The school occupies an extensive site with sufficient space for outdoor play and recreation, and for further development of planned facilities to include a gymnasium, swimming pool and small animal care.
- The premises and accommodation have been developed with careful attention to the curriculum and learning arrangements suitable for the proposed pupil group.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(b) and all related sub-paragraphs

- The school's website provides parents and carers with access to all required school policies and information. The proprietors and headteacher have a secure understanding of the requirements of the independent school standards in relation to the provision of information.
- The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website, together with the school's prospectus and a range of additional school policies. Senior leaders have plans to ensure that details of pupils' academic performance, and the report of any Ofsted inspection of the school, are provided to parents. They also have clear plans to provide an account of income and expenditure to placing authorities. A template has been constructed to provide termly progress reports to parents.
- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33 to 33(k)

- The proprietors have created a complaints policy and procedures which take full account of the requirement for informal, formal and appeals stages to the investigation and resolution of any complaints. They have taken full account of the requirements of the independent school standards, including those for appropriate record-keeping, confidentiality and timelines.
- The complaints policy and procedures are available to parents through the school's website.

- The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) and 34(1)(a) to 34(1)(c)

Paragraphs 34(1) and all related sub-paragraphs

- The school's proprietors and senior leaders are very familiar with the learning requirements for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The proprietor also has extensive experience in the development of premises and accommodation suited to the educational needs of these pupils. The proprietor and senior leaders have applied their experience effectively to the production of policies and the creation of appropriate systems and procedures for Witham Prospect School.
- The headteacher has appropriate experience of senior leadership in a similar setting. He has worked closely with the proprietors and contractors to ensure that the development of the premises and accommodation meets the needs of prospective pupils. He has led the production of extensive policies, procedures and records tailored to the requirements for high-quality education in this setting.
- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school has produced an appropriate draft accessibility plan. It is likely to fulfil its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

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	146971
DfE registration number	925/6011
Inspection number	10099219

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 special school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Longboat Special Education Limited
Chair	Jeffrey Kinder
Headteacher	Paul Stevens
Annual fees (day pupils)	£79,000 to £89,500
Telephone number	01522 789067
Website	www.withamprospect.co.uk
Email address	paul@withamprospect.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	Not applicable	11 to 18	11 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	24	24

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	Up to 24
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	24
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	24
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	24

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	27
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	Not known
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this proposed school

- Witham Prospect School is located in Norton Disney in Lincolnshire. This new school occupies premises previously used as a hotel and events centre. The premises and accommodation have been reconfigured and refurbished to provide full-time education for up to 24 pupils in the age range 11 to 18 years.
- Witham Prospect School is seeking registration as an independent special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, limited verbal communication, and associated challenging behaviour. The proprietor is Longboat Special Education Limited, a company with a long history of working with adults and young people with severe learning difficulties.
- The school is due to open once the registration is approved by the Department for Education.
- The school does not propose to use the services of any external providers.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to assess whether the school is likely to meet all the independent school standards if registered as an independent school. This is the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector met with the chair of the proprietorial body and the headteacher and informally with additional members of the proprietorial body.
- The inspector toured the premises and accommodation. The premises are ready for occupation once registration with the Department for Education has been approved.
- The inspector scrutinised several school policies, procedures and records to check the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards. He discussed all aspects of policy implementation with the headteacher and the chair of the proprietorial body.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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