

The Wildings

Royston Farm, Talewater, Talaton, Exeter, Devon EX5 2RR

Inspection dates

14 October 2020

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1)–2(1)(b)(ii)

- Leaders' curriculum planning is at an early stage. Although the proprietor has drafted a policy for the curriculum, the associated plans and schemes of work have not been drawn up for this setting. The principal, who is also the chair of the proprietor board, has identified a particular approach using a commercial scheme that he intends the school to follow. Leaders' thinking about how this will be adapted to this setting is not developed sufficiently.
- Leaders have yet to decide on the approaches the school will take to develop pupils' language skills and reading.
- There are no plans in place for the teaching of physical education.
- The standard in this paragraph is unlikely to be met.

Paragraph 2(2)–2(2)(i)

- Teaching staff have developed a personal, social and health education programme which is built on the school's ethos of connection, democracy, equality and self-awareness. Activities, such as 'kitchen-table' discussions, have been designed to talk about current topical issues and explore the importance of a variety of concepts, including the rule of law and appreciation of different cultures.
- Plans for careers education include providing pupils with independent, impartial advice and guidance. Staff expect older pupils' curriculum to reflect their career interests.
- The standard in this paragraph is likely to be met.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c)–3(g) and 4

- Teaching staff have not yet given enough thought to how lessons will be planned, or activities constructed, to ensure that pupils gain the new knowledge that they need to make good progress. Leaders have given some thought to using commercial tests to assess pupils' English and mathematical knowledge when they start at the school. However, there is insufficient thought as to how teachers will assess the other disciplines set out in the independent school standards (ISS).

- There is no assessment framework in place.
- The standards in these paragraphs are unlikely to be met.

Paragraph 3(b), 3(h)–3(j)

- Leaders' chosen approach to teaching demonstrates how pupils will be engaged in their learning, often through practical activities. Positive coaching techniques are likely to be used to promote good behaviour.
- Teachers are clear about using natural and planned opportunities to talk about British values and about the different characteristics that people have.
- These standards are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a)–5(d)(iii)

- Teaching staff have thought carefully about the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision is structured around the rule of law, helping pupils to recognise right from wrong, encouraging good behaviours and building self-respect and self-esteem, as well as respect for others. Staff have considered how they will ensure that pupils understand the role of public institutions and have an appreciation of other cultures, religions and faiths. Staff expect to use visits, such as to places of worship, to support this aspect of the curriculum.
- Weekly whole-school meetings, which include the pupils, are to be convened to make decisions and engage pupils in a democratic process.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a)–(b), 11 and 12

- The proprietor has not ensured that the latest safeguarding guidance issued by the Secretary of State has been complied with. Although the policy, which is posted on the school's website, meets requirements, it is not implemented fully in practice. The required arrangements for checking that prospective staff members and directors are suitable to work with children have not been completed in a timely manner.
- There is a health and safety policy in place. However, it is not implemented sufficiently well to ensure that the health and safety of pupils and staff are protected. The school site, both internally and externally, is not yet safe. Electrical works are incomplete, fire safety measures are not fully in place and dilapidated outbuildings pose a significant safety risk. Several of the necessary safety checks have not been completed. Where they have been completed, extensive action plans for remedial works have been drawn up.
- The standards in these paragraphs are unlikely to be met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a)–(c), 10, 13, 14, 15 and 16, 16(a)–(b)

- Leaders have drafted a behaviour policy that sets out how good behaviour will be promoted and the sanctions that may be used, including the option to exclude a pupil.

- An anti-bullying policy is in place.
- Leaders have developed a first-aid policy, trained staff and ensured that first-aid equipment is available.
- Staff to pupil ratios are expected to be one adult to each pupil. These arrangements are likely to ensure that adequate supervision of pupils is in place.
- The proprietor has developed a system for recording the admission of pupils to the school and maintaining an on-going record of their attendance. Both of these documents meet the requirements set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations. They take notice of the most recent guidance issued by the Department for Education.
- Leaders have written a policy and established a system for carrying out risk assessments. It takes an approach where hazards are identified, the likelihood of an incident is assessed and the possible severity of any injury or harm is considered. Risk assessments include suitable actions to reduce the likelihood, and minimise the extent of, any injury.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are not likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(b), 18(2)(d) and 18(3)

- Leaders have not ensured that all the necessary pre-employment checks have been completed. Only two of the five appointed members of staff have a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced disclosure or have been checked against the list of persons barred from working with children.
- Many staff started at the beginning of September or October but checks on their suitability have only recently started.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not likely to be met.

Paragraph 18(2)(c)–18(2)(c)(iv)

- Leaders have checked each member of staff's identity, right to work in the United Kingdom, qualifications and medical fitness.

Paragraph 20(6)–20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(iii), 21(6)

- The chair of the proprietor board has not arranged for the other two directors to have a DBS enhanced disclosure or checks against the list of persons barred from working with children in a timely fashion. The directors were appointed on 27 November 2019 but their applications for the necessary checks were only submitted in recent weeks.
- The proprietor has not ensured that directors who have lived or worked abroad have had the additional checks that are required. Neither director has had the necessary checks about their suitability to manage a school.
- The standard in this paragraph is not likely to be met.

Paragraph 20(6)(b)(ii) and 20(6)(c)

- The proprietor has checked each directors' identity and right to work in the United Kingdom.

Paragraph 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(ii)–(iii), 21(3)(a)(v)–(vi) and 21(3)(b)

- The proprietor has not maintained the single central record in accordance with the requirements set out in the ISS. The details of many checks are missing as they have not been completed. There are errors in the dates of some of the checks, such as medical fitness checks.
- The standard in this paragraph is not likely to be met.

Paragraph 21(1), 21(2), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(iv) and 21(3)(a)(vii)–(viii)

- Where the proprietor has carried out checks, such as identification and right to work in the United Kingdom, these are recorded accurately.
- The proprietor does not intend to employ agency staff but knows what they should do if they use them.
- These standards are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 25, 27, 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(d) and 29(1)–29(1)(b)

- The premises are currently undergoing extensive refurbishment, including new kitchen and bathroom installations, electrical rewiring and the installation of a new oil tank. Many of the required tests have not been undertaken because the work has not been completed.
- The outdoor area is not safe for pupils to play. There are too many hazards, such as former outbuildings and structures, that are in disrepair and pose many risks. Boundaries are not secure, and the provision of external lighting is not sufficient.
- Water temperatures are too high and pose a scalding risk.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not likely to be met.

Paragraphs 23(1)–23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(2), 26, 27(a), 28(1)(a)–(c) and 28(2)–28(2)(b)

- The premises include several bathrooms which pupils can use. Each is an individual unit and has a toilet and wash-hand basin. Several also have an over-bath shower.
- Leaders have identified the staff work room as a space for pupils who feel sick or require medical examination or treatment. This is adjacent to a bathroom.
- Drinking water is available in the kitchen throughout the school day. There are signs to indicate that the water is safe to drink.
- The acoustics and lighting within the main building are adequate.
- The standards in these paragraphs are likely to be met.
- Overall, the standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(c), 32(1)(f)–32(3)(f)

- The proprietor has ensured that all the required policies are in place and are available to parents on request. Most are available on the school's website. These include policies on admissions, the curriculum, pupil behaviour and health and safety.
- The school's website includes contact details for the school, proprietor and the governance lead for the school. It also sets out the school's vision, values and ethos.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The proprietor has drafted a complaints procedure that follows a graduated approach. The procedure expects most complaints to be resolved informally but makes provision for formal complaints to be investigated. A complaints panel is to be convened should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the outcome.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- Leaders, including the proprietor, have not demonstrated the level of skill and knowledge appropriate to their roles. Insufficient attention has been paid to curriculum planning and resourcing the curriculum. The arrangements for staff recruitment checks do not show an appreciation of the ISS in parts 3 and 4.
- Arrangements to actively promote the well-being of pupils are insufficient. Leaders have not ensured that the important standards relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety are likely to be met.
- The buildings and grounds need extensive refurbishment. Much of this work is underway but leaders have not had the time or resources to be able to ensure that the premises are likely to meet the standards.
- The standard in this part is unlikely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have reflected the school's vision and ethos of inclusion and respect through their planning and policies. They are cognisant of the requirements to ensure the building and grounds are accessible to those who will access the site.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	148180
DfE registration number	878/6085
Inspection number	10165387

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 day school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	MiMe Heuristics CIC
Chair	Michael Rees-Lee
Principal	Michael Rees-Lee
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000 – £50,000
Telephone number	01392 692212
Website	www.thewildings.co.uk
Email address	info@thewildings.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	N/A	7 to 18	7 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	20	5

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- Restrictions imposed by the local planning authority limit the site to five pupils until works to improve the access to the site are completed.

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	N/A	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	N/A	20
Number of part-time pupils	N/A	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	20
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	20

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	5	12
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	3

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located in a converted farm house approximately one mile west of the village of Feniton, Devon.
- The school will also make use of the extensive grounds, including a forest school area. There are some on-site sporting facilities, but it is anticipated that most of the physical education provision will be outdoor activities, such as climbing and mountain biking.
- Leaders anticipate all pupils who join the school once open will have an education, health and care plan. The school is equipped to cater for pupils who have multiple special educational needs including autism spectrum disorder, alongside social, emotional and mental health or cognitive and learning needs.

- The school is owned by MiMe Heuristics, a community interest company. The school's principal, who is also a director, along with two other directors, fulfil the role of proprietor.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the Secretary of State for Education. It was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- This was the first pre-registration inspection.
- Discussions were held with the principal, directors and therapeutic educators.
- The inspector undertook a check of the premises and evaluated the policies required under the independent school standards. He reviewed other documents and checked the school's single central record.
- The proposed school is not currently operating.

Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
 - 2(1)(b)(ii) do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-

- 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 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.
 - 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 18(2)(a) no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act;
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 18(2)(d) the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment.
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if-
 - 20(6)(a) MB-
 - 20(6)(a)(i) is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that individual is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 of that Act; and
 - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction

made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;

- 20(6)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the Chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB-
- 20(6)(b)(i) where relevant to the individual, an enhanced criminal record check;
- 20(6)(b)(iii) where, by reason of MB's living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish MB's suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Chair of the school considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

■ 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is –

- 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether-
- 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
- 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
- 21(3)(a)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
- 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d);
- 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

■ 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation each member ("MB") of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 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.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –

- 27(b) external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable-
 - 29(1)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and
 - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

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-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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