

The Wildings

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

Inspection date

10 December 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)(a)–2(1)(b)(i)

- The proprietor has a written curriculum policy. However, leaders do not have a clear enough idea of what they want pupils to learn at different stages and in specific subjects. This means pupils who may already have significant gaps in their learning are likely to struggle to catch up, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Leaders do not have suitable schemes of work for the different ages, aptitudes or needs of the pupils. For example, curriculum plans for pupils working in the school's 'establishing' phase (which is comparable to the early years foundation stage) do not specify what to teach pupils at the early stages of reading and mathematics.
- Leaders have not planned well enough the small steps, or 'building blocks' of knowledge, that pupils must learn to progress well. The curriculum has too many gaps and does not sequence knowledge in a coherent way. As a result, pupils are unlikely to know or remember more over time.
- The standard in this paragraph is unlikely to be met.

Paragraph 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a)–2(2)(i)

- Leaders have a well-developed plan to promote fundamental British values. This is likely to permeate the work of the school. It is a core part of the school's curriculum, designed to help pupils be prepared for the world around them.
- The curriculum is planned to provide a range of different experiences for the pupils. These include outdoor learning and visits. There is a strong focus on promoting personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education to enable pupils to gain confidence and self-esteem.
- Staff have clear plans for careers education, including independent, impartial advice and guidance. The proprietor has much experience and local knowledge to provide pupils with a range of work placements and opportunities, to further their preferred career choices and interests.
- The requirements in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f)

- The proprietor intends to undertake assessments to check what pupils know when they join the school, particularly in English and mathematics. It is not clear how these will be used, alongside an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), to help pupils overcome any academic barriers they may face.
- Gaps in teachers' subject knowledge are likely to hinder pupils' progress in some subjects. For example, teachers lack understanding of the effective teaching of early reading and phonics. Current plans are likely to be counterproductive as these rely too much on pupils guessing, rather than applying the principles of systematic, synthetic phonics to decode.
- There is still some confusion about what content is to be taught and the best ways to achieve this. As a result, teachers are unlikely to be well placed to use effective teaching methods in lessons over time.
- The standard in this paragraph is unlikely to be met.

Paragraph 3(b), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j)

- Teachers appointed to the school have a background in working with pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. They are familiar with the kinds of challenges that such pupils are likely to face. Consequently, the teachers understand the complexity of pupils' needs and are likely to know how to provide the right care and support to pupils.
- The proprietor has a clear set of principles to help pupils manage their behaviour. These are based on research. For example, the proprietor is working with staff to promote an environment which reduces sensory overload for pupils.
- Staff are seeking to promote a 'family feel' to the school. This may be as part of lessons, as well as informally such as having conversations around the kitchen table. Teachers are keen to promote communication and language to help pupils' personal, social and emotional development.
- The school's PSHE education curriculum has been well designed to promote pupils' well-being and encourage them to think of others. PSHE education lessons are planned to have a specific focus on fundamental British values.
- The requirements in this paragraph are likely to be met.

Paragraph 4

- The proprietor has an emerging framework for evaluating pupil performance. This is mostly linked to English and mathematics. However, the school does not have a sufficiently reliable assessment model to check how well pupils are doing in all subjects.
- The standard in this paragraph is unlikely 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)

- Leaders have given much thought to the PSHE education curriculum. There are appropriate plans to promote pupils' understanding of fundamental British values that are likely to help pupils to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have clear plans to promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence. They fully understand the need for this, as most pupils are likely to have SEMH needs.
- Leaders' plans take full account of pupils' need to learn about public institutions and services in England. For example, pupils are engaging with the local police to see the positive side of the constabulary's work. The proprietor is keen to ensure that pupils will develop tolerance and respect for others, including those with different views and religious beliefs. Policies and plans reflect leaders' ambitions to develop pupils' moral compasses, including respect for people of all ages, races and sexual orientations.
- Teachers are expected to challenge stereotypes and tackle any radical or extremist views. Pupils will be taught how to stay safe and make valuable contributions to the world around them.
- Leaders intend to give pupils a voice through various activities, including weekly whole-school meetings. Leaders want pupils to have key responsibilities for the running of the school. For example, pupils will be taking turns to cook meals for eating and socialising together.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a)–(b)

- The proprietor complies with the latest safeguarding guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. The proprietor and staff demonstrate good knowledge of safeguarding arrangements, including child protection, so that pupils are likely to be kept safe.
- Leaders ensure that staff and governors are fully trained to look after pupils. For example, all necessary checks on staff and directors comply with 'Keeping children safe in education' (2020), and staff training is robust.
- The proprietor and staff demonstrate strong knowledge of safeguarding procedures. For example, staff know how important it is to make timely referrals to children's services, and how to deal with allegations made against members of staff.
- The culture of safeguarding is likely to be effective.

Paragraphs 9–10

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a written behaviour policy. This sets out the school's aims and intentions. The policy takes full account of the vulnerable nature of the pupils, particularly those with an EHC plan, who are the pupils most likely to be admitted to the school.
- Sanctions for misbehaviour, including exclusion, are published on the school's website. Leaders consider the use of sanctions to be a last resort.

- The school has an anti-bullying policy, which, along with the behaviour policy, aims to promote harmonious relationships and de-escalation through talk, communication and language.

Paragraphs 11 and 12

- The proprietor has ensured that there is an appropriate health and safety policy. This is a comprehensive document. The health and safety officer, who is also a fire marshal, has the main responsibility for implementing and checking the impact of this policy.
- Leaders are fully aware of their duty to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The school has been risk assessed by an external specialist. As a result, the accommodation and premises have fire extinguishers, well-lit emergency lighting, fire doors and a fire assembly point on the lawn. The fire marshal checks the school's equipment and maintains logs appropriately.

Paragraphs 13–15

- The first-aid policy is available on the school's website.
- All staff have received first-aid training to an acceptable standard. The health and safety officer and proprietor have completed advanced first-aid training.
- Leaders anticipate that all pupils will have an EHC plan. Consequently, staff will ensure pupils receive individual supervision. Leaders will also designate a 'champion', to act as a key worker, for every pupil in the school.
- The proprietor has appropriate plans to ensure that admission and attendance records are likely to be maintained rigorously, and in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Leaders intend to use systems used widely across the local authority, particularly in recording pupils' daily attendance.
- The admissions register is likely to be well maintained, including keeping a track of onward destinations, to prevent children from missing education.

Paragraph 16, 16(a)–(b)

- Leaders have written an appropriate risk assessment policy. This reflects the uniqueness of the provision and locality in which it works.
- Risk assessments will be implemented for various activities, such as learning outside or taking part in off-site excursions. In addition to these, every pupil will have an individual risk assessment, matched to their EHC plan, and reviewed on a regular basis. As a result, leaders expect pupils to arrive and work safely in a range of activities at school.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(3), 19(2)–19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c)

- The proprietor ensures that all the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out as required by the statutory guidance and the independent school standards.

- The proprietor ensures that all members of staff and directors are subject to the same enhanced criminal checks. All records are complete, including checks on those who have worked overseas and prohibition checks.

Paragraph 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- The single central register is well maintained and legible, being in an electronic format. All aspects relating to individual checks are appropriately maintained and recorded. Leaders ensure it is checked and updated regularly to reflect accurately the school's staffing arrangements.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–24(2)

- The school has newly fitted and refurbished toilets and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils. These can be secured from the inside for use by one pupil at a time.
- There are fully functioning showers on site. However, for physical education, pupils will use a local sports centre, where pupils aged 11 years or over are expected to use the changing and showering facilities.
- The school has a designated room for the short-term care of pupils, including medical emergencies. The room has a portable bed with access to a first-aid kit. It is conveniently located adjacent to a separate toilet and washroom.
- Leaders ensure that these facilities comply fully with the independent school standards (ISS).

Paragraph 25

- The school has recently undergone a full refurbishment. This has included asbestos removal and fitting a new kitchen. Since the first pre-registration visit, there has also been a high fence fitted to ensure safe boundaries. All windows on the first floor have restrictors. The work has been completed to a high standard to meet all required health and safety regulations.
- At the time of this inspection, some waste still had to be removed from the site and a few rooms needed to be cleared or tidied. The CCTV system was not fitted. There was some cosmetic work, such as painting in the kitchen, still to do. However, there is nothing that poses a risk of harm to pupils, and any outstanding work can be easily remedied before the proprietor's proposed opening date of January 2021.

Paragraphs 26–28(2)(b)

- The acoustics and sound insulation are appropriate for the premises and any proposed activities as a special school.
- Rooms are well-lit and there is also a good source of natural light in every room. The premises benefit from newly fitted double-glazed windows, which contribute well to the ventilation, light and sound insulation on the property.
- The proprietor has ensured that the school is well-lit by the addition of five external lights for safe entry and exit to the school. There are plans to illuminate the driveway leading to the school.

- The proprietor has a safe source of drinking water, coming off the mains supply, in the kitchen. Leaders will stress the use and replenishment of water bottles for pupils during the school day. The school has a suitable supply of hot and cold water, including for use in the toilet area.
- Drinking water sources are clearly marked.
- The temperature of hot water does not pose a scalding risk to users. This has been corrected since the previous pre-registration inspection.
- All facilities for drinking, washing and the separate toilet area are likely to be readily accessible to those who use the school, as needed, throughout the day.

Paragraph 29(1)(a)–(b)

- The school has suitable outdoor space for pupils to play games for recreation, relaxation and as part of the curriculum. An area of lawn can be used for small games and other physical activities to benefit pupils of all ages.
- The standards in this part are likely 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 required policies are in place. Most are shared on the school's website or are available to parents upon request. These include policies on admissions, the curriculum, pupil behaviour and health and safety.
- The school's website publishes the necessary information to comply with the ISS. For example, contact details, the complaints policy and information about the proprietor are readily available.
- The proprietor also sets out the school's aims, values and vision on the website.
- 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 policy that meets the requirements of the ISS. The policy provides information about the nature of different complaints. It sets out how complaints may be resolved on an informal or formal basis, as required.
- The proprietor has ensured that there is a process to hear any appeals through an independent panel.
- It is likely that leaders would take all complaints seriously and record these diligently, as part of the school's daily practice.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)(a)–(b)

- Leaders, including the proprietor, do not have a sufficiently strong understanding of what, or how, key content of the curriculum is to be taught. This is likely to impact on different pupils in various subjects, including early reading and mathematics.

- Consequently, some standards in part 1 are unlikely to be met.
- Therefore, the standard in this paragraph is unlikely to be met.

Paragraph 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor and staff have ensured that pupils are likely to be kept safe. Policies and practice relating to pupils' welfare, and their health and safety, are robust. Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that recruitment and training for all staff and directors is completed in a timely manner. Checks are complete and thorough to ensure adults are suitable to work with pupils. These comply fully with part 4 of the ISS.
- Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the school premises and accommodation are likely to meet the ISS. Pupils' well-being and safety, in parts 3 and 5, are likely to be met.
- The requirement in this paragraph is likely to be met.
- The standard in this part is unlikely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an acceptable accessibility plan.

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	10172472

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
Chair	Mike Rees-Lee
Principal	Mike Rees-Lee
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000–£50,000
Telephone number	01392692212
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	Not applicable	7 to 18	7 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	20	5

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- The main school building and grounds are most suitable to accommodate a small number of pupils, particularly considering the likely age range and needs of the pupils.

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	20
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	20
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	20

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	12
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	3

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is located approximately one mile west of the village of Feniton, Devon.
- Leaders expect all pupils to have an EHC plan. The school is equipped to cater for pupils who have a range of special educational needs, including those with autism spectrum disorder, or cognitive and learning needs. However, the main category of specialist provision is expected to be for pupils with SEMH.
- The proposed school will be owned by MiMe Heuristics, a not-for-profit community interest company. The school's principal, who is also a director, fulfils the role of proprietor.
- The school is to be managed by directors with key responsibilities for the running of the company, as well as a separate governing body. There has been a lead governor appointed to provide additional support and challenge to the principal.

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 second pre-registration inspection. The first pre-registration inspection took place on 14 October 2020.
- Discussions were held with the principal, two directors (including the lead governor), a staff director and the teacher responsible for health and safety.
- 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 register.
- The proposed school is not currently operating.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.

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