

# The Wildings

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

## Inspection dates

24–25 February 2021

### 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)(a)–2(2)(i)*

- Leaders are ambitious for pupils, who will have significant special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), particularly social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of what they want pupils to learn. This includes academic, as well as personal, social and emotional development. The curriculum focuses on the right priorities to help pupils recover from difficult starts in other schools and settings.
- Since the previous pre-registration inspection, leaders have undertaken significant work with external consultants to redesign the school's curriculum. As a result, the curriculum model is designed to reflect the context of the school. It is likely to ensure that pupils learn well.
- Leaders have ensured that, in most subjects and key stages, knowledge is broken down into small steps to help pupils know and remember more.
- There is still some work to do to complete the full curriculum offer, particularly for a few foundation subjects in key stages 3 and 4. While this is being finished, the proprietor has ensured that there are acceptable schemes of work in line with the national curriculum for all pupils.
- Leaders intend to use pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans, alongside curricular aims, to ensure that pupils are supported and challenged effectively. Teachers will adapt lessons or sequences of learning to take account of the needs of each pupil, to help them catch up as quickly as possible.
- Schemes of work and curriculum plans cover all required areas, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and creative education. Pupils are likely to benefit from a rich curriculum to fulfil their different learning and developmental needs.
- Leaders and teachers will check pupils' progress and attainment frequently. Assessments correspond with the school's new curriculum model. If pupils fall behind

teachers will implement agreed actions, as part of the pupil's 'individual growth plan', to swiftly identify and resolve any issues.

- Leaders have taken the right steps to tackle weaknesses identified during the previous pre-registration inspection. For example, staff training has been effective in developing teachers' understanding of early reading and phonics. As a result, pupils are likely to benefit from a coherent and well-planned reading strategy, including daily systematic, synthetic phonics sessions.
- Similarly, leaders have taken sound advice to implement a new mathematics scheme of work. In the short term, the headteacher will plan, teach and assess pupils in this subject, to be assured of the quality of mathematics teaching in the school.
- Curriculum plans are likely to foster respect for others. Teachers will plan activities to explore pupils' thinking and develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. For example, there are plans for pupils to visit places of worship to learn about different religions and cultures.
- Leaders have already given much thought to providing high-quality and impartial careers advice. Leaders want pupils to gain relevant experience and qualifications to help them onto the next stage of their lives, including employment for post-16 students.

#### *Paragraph 3, 3(a)–(j)*

- Teaching will use specialised techniques and follow the advice of other experts, including behavioural therapists and educational psychologists. The recommendations of other professionals will inform how lessons are delivered, to get the best for pupils.
- The proprietor has invested in resources to help pupils to catch up. For example, there are teaching aids to promote early mathematics and reading. Teachers demonstrate that they know how to use these, so pupils can get off to a quick start when they arrive.
- The school has appropriate technological equipment, such as laptops and other devices, ready for pupils. These will also enable pupils to work remotely.
- Leaders have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school's communication policy recognises the importance of calm interaction with pupils. Staff are highly trained and experienced to work with vulnerable pupils, including those with SEMH needs. Consequently, there is likely to be an orderly and respectful environment, to help pupils develop socially, emotionally and academically.
- Lessons are unlikely to be discriminatory in any sense. Leaders' plans show clear intentions to promote British values, including democracy, the rule of law and tolerance. These will be linked to the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, to help pupils learn more about themselves and understand the world around them.

#### *Paragraph 4*

- Leaders have an agreed assessment framework, matched to the school's curriculum and pupils' EHC plans. Assessment information will be used to adapt teaching and learning, including interventions, to help pupils catch up.

- Teachers will undertake regular checks of pupils' progress. Assessment information will be shared with pupils, parents and carers, as well as the local authority, so that all interested parties know how each pupil is getting on.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

### *Paragraph 5, 5(a)–5(d)(iii)*

- Leaders are keen to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The school's policy has a strong rationale and sets out appropriate content for pupils, including citizenship in key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The SMSC and PSHE education policies are likely to promote pupils' understanding of British values. For example, the PSHE education policy promotes the school's 'states of being' principles, to help pupils become successful and understand how to make positive contributions in the world around them.
- Leaders have successfully incorporated the school's communication policy with the PSHE education policy to promote positive behaviour. As a result, staff have agreed principles to help pupils take responsibility for their behaviour and actions.
- Staff will use a range of methods to support pupils' SMSC development. For example, communal meetings will encourage pupils to share their thoughts and feelings. Leaders expect this to be an important way to help pupils to bond with one another and resolve disputes.
- British values are at the heart of the school's ethos and the SMSC curriculum. The headteacher provides strong assurances of the importance of this, including protecting pupils from radical and partisan political views.
- Teachers are expected to challenge stereotypes and tackle any radical or extremist views. Pupils will be taught how to stay safe in modern Britain. It is likely that the school will effectively promote The Equality Act 2010 with regard to the protected characteristics.
- Leaders want pupils to have an active stake in decision-making and to be involved in the running of the school. For example, leaders expect pupils to provide their thoughts and views directly to the governing body.
- The proprietor has ensured that staff are highly trained and experienced to work with pupils who have SEMH needs. For example, the pupil and family support worker is qualified to provide counselling for pupils, including on matters such as controlling anger, low self-esteem and body positivity.
- 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 has ensured that the school complies with the latest safeguarding guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The child protection and safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. Leaders, staff and governors demonstrate good knowledge of safeguarding arrangements, including child protection.

- The proprietor has ensured that all staff are trained and eligible to work with pupils, particularly given the vulnerable nature of pupils who are likely to be placed in the school. For example, all necessary checks of current staff and governors comply with the requirements of 'Keeping children safe in education (2020)'.
- The proprietor has ensured that the school has an online program to log pupil welfare concerns and to ensure that these are followed up swiftly. Staff understand the importance of making timely referrals to children's services. They know how to deal with any allegations made against members of staff, including the headteacher and proprietor.
- Leaders are implementing safeguarding and health and safety policies prior to the school's opening, where these are pertinent. For example, the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) risk assessment is in full effect for staff and visitors, and safer recruitment processes are currently being used to appoint staff.
- Leaders understand their responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. They are well prepared and trained to care for the most vulnerable pupils who will be joining them.
- The culture of safeguarding is likely to be effective.

#### *Paragraphs 9–10*

- The proprietor has ensured that there is a written behaviour policy. The policy takes full account of the vulnerable nature of pupils attending the school, including those with SEMH needs or autistic spectrum disorder. Pupils are likely to be supported well to attend and achieve.
- Leaders consider the use of sanctions, particularly exclusion, to be a last resort. Details of sanctions for pupils' misbehaviour, including exclusion, are already published on the school's website.
- The school has an anti-bullying policy that, along with the communication policy, aims to promote harmonious relationships through communication, mutual respect and tolerance.

#### *Paragraphs 11–12*

- The proprietor has ensured that there is an appropriate written health and safety policy. This covers the range of risks associated with the running of the school. The proprietor has completed a range of audits and external checks to ensure that the school is ready to open.
- The proprietor has appointed a knowledgeable health and safety officer with first-hand experience of work in other industries, including construction and the fire service. As a result, health and safety practice is likely to be strong, so that the safety and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors can be assured.
- Leaders are fully aware of their duty to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. As a result, the accommodation and premises have fire extinguishers, well-lit emergency lighting, fire doors and a designated fire assembly point. The health and safety officer regularly checks the school's equipment and maintains appropriate logs.

### *Paragraphs 13–15*

- A first aid policy has been drafted and is already published on the school's website.
- All staff have completed paediatric first aid training to an acceptable standard. The proprietor has stipulated that this will be a requirement for all staff appointed to work in the school.
- Leaders anticipate that all pupils will have an EHC plan. As a result, they expect that pupils will have individual supervision, as required.
- 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 an online program to align pupils' attendance with other records and personal data. This can be reported to the placing local authorities on a regular basis.
- The admissions register is likely to be well maintained, including keeping a track of onward destinations, to prevent pupils becoming missing from education.

### *Paragraph 16, 16(a)–(b)*

- Leaders have written an appropriate risk assessment policy. This reflects the uniqueness of the provision and its context.
- Risk assessments will be implemented for different activities, such as learning outside, travel, or for handling certain tools. Every pupil will have an individual risk assessment, matched to their EHC plan. The risk assessment will be reviewed each week. Staff will use information to evaluate the pupils' 'growth plans', where risks and hazards will be checked routinely to keep pupils safe.
- Leaders will hold morning briefings and after-school catch-up sessions, each day, to check the pupils' well-being. These will be in addition to the routine activities already established to safeguard pupils.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

### *Paragraph 18(2)–18(3), 19(2)–19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c)*

- The proprietor is likely to ensure that all necessary pre-employment checks are completed in line with the statutory guidance of the Secretary of State, and the independent school standards.
- The proprietor has a comprehensive single central register that they rigorously check and maintain, in readiness for the school's opening. The single central register complies fully with the independent school standards. Leaders ensure that the full range of personnel checks expected of different staff, volunteers and leaders are to be checked before adults can work with pupils.
- The school is not expecting to use supply staff. The headteacher intends to provide cover, wherever possible, using staff whom pupils already know. This is to provide continuity and familiarity for pupils, as well as guaranteeing staff's eligibility to work with pupils.

- The proprietor has received the appropriate enhanced criminal checks from the Secretary of State, in anticipation of the school's opening.

*Paragraph 21(1)–21(7)(b)*

- The single central register is likely to be well maintained in an electronic format.
- 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 suitable 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 is a shower on site for pupils aged 11 years or over who may receive physical education, should it be needed.
- The school has a designated medical room for the short-term care of pupils, including for emergencies. The medical room is located next to a separate toilet and washroom with a suitable source of water.
- Leaders ensure that toileting, washing and emergency care or medical facilities comply fully with the independent school standards.

*Paragraph 25*

- The proprietor acquired the premises in October 2020. Since then, there has been some refurbishment, following its previous use as a private dwelling. The site provides suitable space for pupils' education, relaxation and recreation. The premises include a small lawned area and a separate car park, which is fully secured for pupils' safety. The school site, which includes up to three indoor classrooms and reception rooms, a kitchen and garden, is sufficiently large to accommodate five pupils, aged between seven and 18.
- At the time of this inspection, there were still some minor works to be completed. These mostly involved painting and decorating, particularly in the kitchen.
- Other works that should be completed, include fixing a few cracked paving stones, and generally tidying the outdoors. For example, removing weeds and brambles that are overgrown. It is entirely realistic for these minor issues to be fully resolved within a matter of days. Therefore, these do not interfere with the proprietor's plans to open in the spring term of 2021.

*Paragraphs 26–28(2)(b)*

- The acoustics and sound insulation are appropriate for the premises and the proposed activities as a special school.
- Rooms are well lit. There is a good source of natural light in every room. The premises benefit from double-glazed windows, which contribute well to the ventilation, light and sound insulation of the property.
- The school has appropriate external lighting. This requires five functioning external lights. There are plans to install further lighting along the driveway approaching the school, for added assurance when it is dark.

- The school has a suitable source of drinking water, coming off the mains supply, in the kitchen. Therefore, the school has a suitable supply of water which pupils will have access to whenever they need it.
- Drinking water sources are clearly marked for pupils.
- The temperature of hot water does not pose a scalding risk to users. Taps are pre-set on a thermostat to regulate the water temperature.
- All facilities for drinking and washing and the separate toilet areas are likely to be readily accessible to those who use the school, as needed, throughout the day.

*Paragraphs 29(1)(a)–(b)*

- The school has a small but useful outdoor space for pupils to play games for recreation, relaxation and as part of the curriculum. There is an area of lawn that can be used for small games and other physical activities to benefit pupils of all ages, including post-16 students. There is also a small yard with raised beds for planting flowers and crops.
- 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 independent school standards. For example, contact details, the complaints policy and information about the proprietor are readily available.
- The proprietor has already ensured that the school's remote education policy is available on the school's website for parents. This fully complies with the latest guidance, 'Review your remote education provision (January 2021)', as set out by the Department for Education.
- Leaders have plans in place to show how they have spent funding to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- 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 a comprehensive complaints policy that meets the requirements of the independent school standards. The policy provides information about the nature of different complaints and how these may be resolved, both on an informal or formal basis.
- The process for escalating a complaint is clear. This includes relevant timescales and details of support for the complainant. The proprietor has also produced an additional guide and flow chart to accompany the policy, to provide extra assistance for those who may need it.



- The complaints policy contains appropriate guidance and actions for how to proceed, should a complainant not be fully satisfied with an internal investigation.
- The proprietor has ensured that the complaints process is likely to be fair. The proprietor understands that the hearing panel must include at least one member who is independent of the management and running of the school. The complainant can attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing.
- It is likely that leaders will take all complaints seriously and record these diligently, as part of the school's policy and practice. These records will be made available for inspection purposes.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1)(a)–(c)*

- Since the previous pre-registration inspection in December 2020, the proprietor and governors have acted swiftly to tackle weaknesses identified in Part 1. For example, leaders have ensured that every member of staff has received high-quality training to teach daily systematic, synthetic phonics. Leaders have a comprehensive training package in place for this, to ensure that teachers continue to improve their skills and knowledge in early reading.
- Leaders continue to demonstrate a strong moral imperative. This drives their ambition to open the school. Their extensive experience of working with pupils who have complex SEND needs, particularly SEMH, means they are well placed to create a nurturing and ambitious school.
- Leaders have appropriate plans to be ready for opening, in line with the school's registration.
- The proprietor and governors are taking the right steps to ensure stringent accountability in their work. They have rightly identified that with the school being so small, they may be susceptible to conflicts of interest, or complacency. As such, the proprietor has already started to use external consultants to provide suitable challenge and advice. For example, in developing the curriculum.
- Both the chair of the governing body and proprietor insist that they will continue to use an independent school improvement partner. This is to maintain current levels of accountability and provide assurances of the quality of the provision.
- Leaders, including governors, demonstrate a secure understanding of the independent school standards.
- Leaders are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have already started to take the right action to plan for school improvement. For example, they are continuing their work to overhaul the curriculum offer, with the current focus on developing foundation subjects in key stages 3 and 4.
- The proprietor is likely to ensure that pupils will be kept safe. They have comprehensive policies relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety. 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 that adults are suitable to work with pupils.



- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an acceptable accessibility plan.

## **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	148180
DfE registration number	878/6085
Inspection number	10179573

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
Headteacher	Mike Rees-Lee
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000–£50,000
Telephone number	01392 692212
Website	<a href="http://www.thewildings.co.uk">www.thewildings.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@thewildings.co.uk">info@thewildings.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>	<b>Inspector's recommendation</b>
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	7–18	7–18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	5	5

## 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	5
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	5
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	5
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	5

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	4
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, near Talaton, in East Devon.
- Leaders expect all pupils to have an EHC plan. The school is expecting to open 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 will be for pupils with SEMH.
- The school is proposing to open for pupils aged from seven to 18 years.

- 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. The school has appointed a chair of the governing body who is separate from the proprietor.
- At this time, the school is not expecting to use any alternative provision.

## **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 inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education. It was the provider's third pre-registration inspection. The previous two pre-registration inspections took place on 14 October and 10 December 2020 respectively.
- This inspection took place over two days on 24 and 25 February 2021, due to restrictions caused by COVID-19. The first day was conducted remotely. This consisted of documentation checks and discussions with leaders, via video conference. The inspection was completed on-site the next day. This involved further discussions with leaders, and a review of health and safety policies (Paragraphs 11, 12 and 16). A check of the school's premises and accommodation (Part 5) was also undertaken.
- The inspector checked the school's safeguarding policies, and matters relating to safer recruitment and the single central register.
- The inspection also checked the school's website for details of its remote education policy, in line with the latest guidance, 'Review your remote education provision (January 2021)', as set out by the Department for Education.
- Discussions were held with the proprietor and other governors, including the chair of the governing body. The inspector met with teachers and the pupil and family support worker to evaluate information relating to Parts 1, 2, 3 and 8.
- The proposed school is not currently operating.

## **Inspection team**

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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