

# Inspection of The Wildings

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

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Inspection dates: 28 to 30 June 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils experience high-quality care and support. Staff build strong relationships with pupils and families. For example, during lunchtimes pupils and staff sit together and enjoy home-cooked food. Staff model effective communication at social times. This helps pupils to interact with each other.

All pupils have previously had negative experiences of school. In contrast, pupils settle quickly here. Parents and carers are very positive about every aspect of school life and how it is developing their children personally and emotionally.

Pupils value the school. They talk openly about the difference that attending is making. Pupils' conduct is usually good. Pupils are becoming much more self-aware. They are developing self-management skills and some resilience.

All pupils work one-to-one with adults. This helps pupils feel safe and ready to learn. Pupils like exploring big questions in sequences of work. This helps them build knowledge over time. However, staff's expectations of what pupils can achieve academically are not high enough.

Pupils experience a range of activities to broaden their horizons. For example, pupils enjoy going to the beach, mountain biking and doing bike maintenance. There is a strong focus on equality. If bullying happens, staff sort it out.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The proprietor and the governing body have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards and the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders and governors place a sharp focus on meeting pupils' social and emotional needs. As a result of the leaders' and teachers' support, pupils' well-being improves once they join the school. Pupils' attendance and their ability to regulate their emotions improve considerably.

Pupils study a range of subjects. Most pupils are keen to learn. However, there are some weaknesses in the implementation of the curriculum. For example, some sequences of work do not use pupils' individualised academic targets from education, health and care (EHC) plans well enough. This slows pupils' learning down.

The curriculum is well thought out in some subjects, for example in mathematics. However, at times, teaching is not matched to pupils' needs well enough or pupils' misconceptions are not addressed consistently well. Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils and adults read together every day. Staff assess pupils' reading ability in the first few weeks of being in school. There is a phonics scheme of work in place. However,

the teaching of reading is not always built on what pupils already know. Pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge they can.

Leaders are working with specialists to remedy the weaknesses in the curriculum. They are revamping the curriculum to prioritise the essential knowledge that every pupil needs to know and by when. These new approaches require staff to use pupils' EHC plan targets explicitly. However, it is too soon to see this translating to pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Leaders are considerate of staff workload. Leaders provide staff with training in the school's methods of teaching, support and care. Some staff benefit from effective coaching and support. All staff receive training at the beginning of the academic year. However, the induction for staff joining mid-year does not ensure consistency in the application of some policies and procedures. In addition, leaders do not yet have full insight into the quality of education pupils receive. As a result, pupils' academic experiences and outcomes remain too variable.

Pupils benefit from impartial careers guidance. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is ensuring that pupils learn about right and wrong, democracy and law. The relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education curriculums are comprehensive. Staff provide individual programmes to ensure that all pupils access and learn RSE and health education content well. The curriculum for religious education is being refined further to ensure that all pupils can access this.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The proprietor body ensures that all pre-employment checks to ascertain the suitability of staff to work with children are in place. Governors assure themselves that safeguarding systems are secure. The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and on the school's website.

Staff are alert for the signs that might mean pupils are at risk of harm. Staff know to record any concerns they have. Leaders follow these up promptly. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to keep pupils safe. Pupils feel safe. They learn a lot about local safeguarding risks, such as county lines.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Pupils' academic EHC plan targets are not translated or broken down into a well-formed and ambitious curriculum for some pupils. Essential learning is missed out or staff do not give this high enough priority. Leaders need to ensure that staff address pupils' EHC plan targets and provide the bespoke curriculum pupils need to learn well across the full range of subjects.

- Teaching is not always built on what pupils already know. Pupils do not learn as well as they could. Some units of work do not allow pupils to practise and deepen their skills and knowledge. Pupils' misconceptions can go unaddressed. Leaders must ensure that teaching is firmly built on what pupils know already so that pupils learn well and are prepared for their next stage of education.
- Leaders do not have enough oversight of the quality of education pupils receive. Teaching and therefore pupils' academic experiences remain too variable. Some pupils do not learn enough in some subjects. Leaders need to ensure and assure themselves that the curriculum includes everything it should and is implemented consistently well in every subject.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148180
<b>DfE registration number</b>	878/6085
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212966
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	5
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	MiMe Heuristics
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mike Rees-Lee
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£75,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 692212
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thewildings.co.uk">www.thewildings.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@thewildings.co.uk">info@thewildings.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. Pupils 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 for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- At the time of the inspection there were no pupils attending post-16 education.
- The school is owned by MiMe Heuristics, a not-for-profit community interest company. The school principal is also a director of MiMe Heuristics. The school is managed by directors with key responsibilities for the running of the company. There is also a separate governing body.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, who is also one of the two directors of the proprietor body. Inspectors also met with other senior staff, governors, teachers and therapeutic educators.
- An inspector talked with a representative from Torbay local authority and two members from the youth offending team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science and PSHE education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- An inspector also spoke to staff about the curriculum in some other subjects, including religious education and physical education.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 6 and 7 read.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation. They met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school and the single central record. They considered how well leaders act on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils and staff about safe working practices.

- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to the pupil and staff surveys. An inspector also spoke with parents and carers during the inspection to gather their views.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Jen Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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