

Wemms Education Centre

Woodstock House, Woodstock Lane North, Long Ditton, Surrey KT6 5HN

Inspection date

4 August 2022

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 1–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g)–2A(1)(d)–2A(2)–4

- Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum which is tailored to support each pupil's needs and experience. The curriculum has supported learning effectively in the past for those year groups educated at the school's previous location. It provides regular opportunities for pupils to revisit and reinforce earlier learning. Teachers adapt the curriculum according to pupils' individual needs.
- Leaders are now in the process of updating the curriculum to support learning for the additional year group the proprietor intends to admit. This work is nearly complete, with suitably sequenced content planned in nearly all subjects. However, the Year 4 English curriculum is currently at an early stage of development. Leaders have made a start by identifying the key texts which will be used to teach English in this year group. However, the detail of what will be taught, and when, has not been finalised.
- Pupils have often had a difficult time in education prior to joining the school, including periods of time outside the education system. Leaders work closely with pupils and parents to assess pupils' needs and to ensure a smooth transition into the school. Leaders use assessment information to identify individual targets for pupils. These are discussed and agreed with pupils and parents, and shared with staff, along with strategies and approaches to be used to support each pupil.
- The curriculum policy states leaders' ambitions for pupils' academic, personal and social development. One of the school's overarching aims is to offer 'a safe and nurturing community to those who are stifled by mainstream education'.
- The formal curriculum includes study of a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, physical education (PE), humanities, and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils also study a range of creative arts subjects, such as music, drama and art.
- Pupils who need extra help with reading follow a specialised reading programme which includes the teaching of phonics. Teachers check pupils' reading skills carefully when they join the school and plan support accordingly. Leaders intend to provide

library areas in the recently acquired building and have identified suitable spaces which are currently being developed. The school has an extensive range of books which will be added to the library once the library shelves are secured.

- Leaders give the development of speaking skills a high priority. Pupils are taught to express themselves clearly and confidently. Public speaking lessons, combined with activities such as mock interviews, help to equip pupils with important personal skills for future education and employment.
- The school uses a commercially produced PSHE programme. This includes a suitable range of topics, such as identity, the celebration of difference, and healthy lifestyles. The programme includes provision for the teaching of statutory relationships and sex education. The school's PSHE curriculum is supplemented with a range of additional activities. For example, external speakers give talks on subjects such as drug awareness, water safety and first aid.
- Most pupils continue into the school's sixth form. The sixth-form curriculum is built around each pupil's experience, interests and stage of development. For example, some pupils who have gaps in their learning due to a period out of education have the opportunity to study GCSE courses in subjects such as English, mathematics, geography and psychology, as well as A-level courses. Leaders enrich the sixth-form curriculum with courses which help to prepare pupils for future lives, such as financial management and driving lessons.
- No pupils were present during this inspection. However, leaders described striking examples of success for individual pupils as a result of the school's approach and its curriculum. All pupils achieve nationally accredited qualifications, including GCSEs and A levels. Last year, for example, all those who sat the English GCSE examination achieved Level 4 or above.
- The proprietor has not ensured that all the standards contained in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- Opportunities to support pupils' personal development are threaded through the curriculum. Leaders have high expectations of pupils, who are expected to behave responsibly and respect others.
- The curriculum incorporates regular opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about world religions and key religious festivals, such as Diwali, Eid and Hannukah.
- Fundamental British values are promoted through the school's PSHE programme and its welcoming and inclusive ethos. The school provides a wide range of trips and visits to enhance learning and understanding. Destinations for previous trips have included, for example, the House of Commons, The Design Museum and St Paul's Cathedral.
- A weekly after-school club, called 'Wicked Wednesdays', gives pupils the opportunity to develop personal skills and interests through activities such as arts and crafts, camp-building, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and board games.
- The school is likely to meet the requirements in this part of the standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- Leaders make sure that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. They provide regular training and updates about safety issues and ensure that new staff are suitably trained. Several members of staff have completed designated safeguarding lead training. Leaders plan to ensure that a member of staff trained in safeguarding always accompanies trips out of school.
- Leaders have updated the safeguarding policy to ensure its compliance with the latest statutory guidance. The policy is available on the school's website.
- The trustees have completed safeguarding training. Additional safeguarding training is scheduled for all trustees in the autumn term.
- The school has established robust arrangements for managing and monitoring internet use by pupils and staff, including procedures for blocking any attempts to access the school's information and technology systems from outside the school.
- The school's existing perimeter fence was being replaced with a higher fence at the time of the inspection to limit the risk of anyone entering the site unnoticed. Pupils will not be allowed to leave the school site during the school day.
- Ongoing building work means that the proprietor was unable to ensure pupils' safety and welfare at the time of the inspection. In addition to omissions in the premises and accommodation detailed under Part 5, many rooms and corridors contained building materials and unwanted equipment which had not been removed.

Paragraphs 11, 14, 16

- The health and safety and risk assessment policies are fit for purpose. Leaders have established clear procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risks. A large number of staff are trained in mental health first aid.
- Proprietors have made suitable arrangements to ensure that pupils are properly supervised. Planned staff supervision ratios are appropriate.

Paragraph 12

- The proprietor has commissioned an audit of fire safety arrangements, which was carried out recently by a specialist fire safety company. The auditors provided leaders with verbal feedback at the time of their visit and leaders assert that the few actions identified as necessary have been addressed. However, the written fire safety report had not been received by the school at the time of this inspection and so was not available.
- Most fire exit routes are clearly indicated. However, two fire exits lacked suitable signage at the time of the inspection.
- All fire extinguishers have been serviced in the past few months. However, the proprietor intends to commission a further service of all the extinguishers and an audit to make sure that they are positioned appropriately following completion of the current building work.
- The proprietor has not ensured that all the standards contained in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 17–18(2)(e), 18(3)–18(4c), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3)(b), 21(6)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders are knowledgeable about current statutory safeguarding guidance and the requirements of Part 4.
- The single central record complied fully with statutory requirements at the time of the inspection.
- The school does not make use of supply staff.
- The school is likely to meet the requirements in this part of the standards.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- Building and refurbishment works are ongoing at the school's new premises. This means that it was not possible to access all rooms during the inspection. Leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that the premises are ready to admit pupils since the proprietor took possession of the buildings two months ago. However, renovations to date are not sufficient to ensure that all standards are met.
- The building is suitably equipped with toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils.
- The proprietor has scheduled the installation of a permanent medical room in the near future. In the meantime, suitable arrangements have been made to provide a temporary medical room, with nearby washing and toilet facilities.
- Work to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare is not yet complete. For example, in addition to omissions in fire safety signage, there was loose wiring from interactive whiteboards and an intercom system was evident in several rooms and corridors, library shelves were unsecured, and a loose display board cover had not been fixed properly.
- Some classrooms are nearing completion. These classrooms are suitably lit and well ventilated, with appropriate furniture ready for use.
- The proprietor intends to use free-standing water fountains to provide pupils with drinking water. These are due to be connected in the next few weeks but were not working at the time of the inspection.
- The school is set in extensive and attractive grounds, which include a meadow area and school allotments. The proprietor intends to use the grounds for a wide range of school activities, including outdoor play and PE. A survey of trees on the site has been completed and the play equipment and trim-trail has been checked and serviced. External light-sensitive floodlights are located throughout the site.
- The school's swimming pool is clean and well maintained, with life-saving equipment provided. Toilets and showers are provided for pupils' use in the pool building. The school also has a spacious hall, which will be used for PE and other activities.
- The site includes an additional building which was used by the previous tenant as a nursery. The proprietor does not intend to use this building in the near future. The building is currently used for storage and is kept locked.

- The proprietor has not ensured that all the standards contained in this part are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(2)

- The proprietor has a successful track record in educating pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at the school's previous location. Leaders are highly knowledgeable about teaching pupils with SEND. The principal is highly ambitious for pupils and is determined to ensure that every pupil achieves his or her full potential. She and her leadership team demonstrate a deep understanding of pupils' needs.
- The trustees, who were previously members of the school's advisory board, are currently developing their new roles as trustees following the school's recent acquisition of charitable trust status. They intend to develop a board of trustees which will provide a broad range of expertise and skills.
- The proprietor does not meet the standard in this part because some of the standards in other parts are not likely to be met.

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 that are relevant to the material change, as set out in the annex of this report.

School details

Unique reference number	142416
DfE registration number	936/6006
Inspection number	10248584

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Wemms Education Unlimited Limited
Chair	Alan Dean
Headteacher	Joy Wemms (principal)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,000
Telephone number	01372 276 499
Website	www.wemms.co.uk
Email address	joy@wemms.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	25 to 27 February 2020

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	10 to 20	8 to 20	8 to 20
Number of pupils on the school roll	50	180	180

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	50	180
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	50	180
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	48	180
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	47	180

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	32	60
Number of part-time teaching staff	30	40

Information about this school

- Wemms Education Centre offers education to pupils who have been unable to cope in mainstream education. Pupils typically have social, emotional and mental health needs. Almost all pupils have an education and health care plan to support their special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- This was the first material change inspection in respect to this particular change that the school has applied to make. The last standard inspection took place on 25 to 27 February 2020. The school was judged to be good and all of the independent school standards were found to be met. There was an emergency inspection in December 2020, when all independent standards that were checked were found to be met.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the proprietor had applied to make changes to the school's registration. The proprietor wished to change premises and increase the number and age of pupils on roll.
- This was the second material change inspection.
- The inspector familiarised herself with the school's context and inspection history prior to the inspection. She also viewed the school's website.
- The inspector met with the principal, vice-principals and other leaders. She also met with four trustees, including the chair of trustees. The inspector toured the school site and premises with the school's facilities manager, site manager, business manager and a trustee.
- The inspector checked policies, records and documentation in relation to the specific independent school standards in scope for this inspection, including the single central record and the safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, 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.

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.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].

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.
 - 28(1)(a) suitable drinking water facilities are provided.

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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