

# Wemms Education Centre

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

**Inspection date**

31 August 2022

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely 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 2–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g)–4*

- Leaders have developed a suitable curriculum which is tailored to support pupils' individual needs. The curriculum provides regular opportunities for pupils to revisit and reinforce earlier learning.
- Leaders have recently reviewed and updated the curriculum to support learning for the additional year group (Year 4) the proprietor proposes to admit. This work included refining the curriculum for Years 5 and 6 so that pupils' learning will be closely linked to what they already know.
- A curriculum policy is in place. It lays out clearly 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'. Schemes of work and sample lesson plans are also ready for staff to refine further as they plan learning for individual pupils or pupil groups.
- 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 and teaching staff use assessment information to identify individual targets for pupils. These are discussed and agreed upon with pupils and parents, along with strategies and approaches to be used to support each pupil.
- The formal curriculum includes the study of a suitable range of subjects. These include 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 and drama.
- 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. The school has three library areas which contain an extensive range of books and reading material.

- 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 provisions 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 interests and future plans. Some pupils who have gaps in their learning due to previous periods 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.
- The school was not open during this inspection. However, leaders are able to evidence striking examples of success for individual pupils as a result of the school's approach and its curriculum. All pupils achieve nationally accredited qualifications, such as GCSEs and A levels. Last year, for example, all those who sat the English GCSE examination achieved Level 4 or above.
- School leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in part 1 are likely to be met if the material changes, with modifications to the proposed maximum number of pupils, are approved. The application proposes extending the school's registered capacity from 60 to 180. Current teaching accommodation is more suited to up to 120. Trustees and school leaders agreed with Her Majesty's Inspector that a sensible compromise to the proposed maximum number of pupils would ensure that the school continues to provide a suitable education for all pupils, including those already registered at the school.

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

### *Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)*

- Opportunities to support pupils' personal development are threaded throughout the curriculum. Leaders have high expectations of pupils, who are expected to behave responsibly and respect others.
- At the last standard inspection in February 2020, the personal development and behaviour and attitudes of pupils were judged to be outstanding.
- 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 include 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 board games, arts and crafts, camp-building and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- School leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in part 2 are likely to be met if the material changes, with modifications to the proposed maximum number of pupils, are approved.

### 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 appropriate designated safeguarding lead training.
- Leaders have recently updated the safeguarding policy to ensure that it is compliant with the latest statutory guidance. The policy is available on the school's website.
- Trustees have completed appropriate 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.

#### *Paragraphs 11, 12, 14, 16–16(b)*

- The health and safety and risk assessment policies are fit for purpose. Leaders have established clear procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risks.
- Appropriate staff are trained in first aid or mental health first aid. Some staff have undertaken additional training to equip them to act as fire marshals or to carry out their roles linked to health and safety for instance.
- Leaders have made suitable arrangements to ensure that pupils are properly supervised at all times. Planned ratios of staff to pupils are appropriate.
- The proprietor recently commissioned an audit of fire safety arrangements which was carried out by a specialist fire safety company. Action has been taken to rectify minor issues identified by the audit. A fire risk assessment is in place. Equipment such as fire extinguishers and the school's fire alarm system is serviced by suitably qualified professionals at regular intervals.
- School leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in part 3 are likely to be met if the material changes, with modifications to the proposed maximum number of pupils, are approved.

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

#### *Paragraphs 18(1)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3)(b), 21(6)*

- Leaders are knowledgeable about current statutory safeguarding guidance and the requirements of part 4. All the correct checks are carried out on staff and trustees.

- The single central record complies fully with statutory requirements. The school does not make use of supply staff.
- School leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in part 4 are likely to be met if the proposed material changes are approved.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

##### *Paragraphs 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2)–29(1)(b)*

- Refurbishment work is now complete after the proprietor obtained the new school site in June 2022. Since then, trustees, leaders and staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that the premises are ready to admit pupils in September 2022.
- The school buildings are equipped with suitable toilet and washing facilities for pupils and staff. Shower facilities are also available, including in the school's swimming pool and sports hall complex. The school's swimming pool is clean and well maintained, with life-saving equipment provided. A suitably equipped medical room is available.
- A tour of the school site showed that works to remedy problems with fire safety signage, insecure library shelves, loose wiring and suitable locks on doors identified at the last material change inspection have been completed.
- Classrooms are suitably lit and well ventilated, with appropriate furniture ready for use. Free-standing water fountains are in place to provide pupils with drinking water.
- The school is set in extensive and attractive grounds, which include a meadow area and school allotment. 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 have been checked and serviced. External light-sensitive floodlights are located throughout the site.
- The site includes three buildings that the previous school used. The proprietor does not intend to use these buildings as teaching spaces at this time.
- School leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in part 5 are likely to be met if the material changes, with modifications to the proposed maximum number of pupils, are approved.

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

##### *Paragraph 34(1)–34(2)*

- The school has a successful track record in educating pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders at all levels are highly knowledgeable about teaching pupils with SEND.
- The principal is 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 current pupils' needs.
- Leaders have taken into account the impact of the proposed material changes on pupils already registered at the school. The intention is to increase the numbers on the school roll gradually over time. During this inspection, leaders, including trustees, agreed that the proposed increase in maximum number of pupils to 180 is over-

optimistic in light of the accommodation currently available. This is especially the case when pupils' complex needs are taken into account.

- The trustees, who were previously members of the school's advisory board, are currently developing their new roles following the school's recent acquisition of charitable trust status. They intend to develop and expand the board of trustees further to provide a broader range of expertise and skills.
- School leaders have ensured that all relevant standards in part 8 are likely to be met if the material changes, with modifications to the proposed maximum number of pupils, are approved.

## **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.

## School details

Unique reference number	142416
DfE registration number	936/6006
Inspection number	10249447

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 changes 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
Principal	Joy Wemms
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,000
Telephone number	01372 276 499
Website	<a href="http://www.wemms.co.uk">www.wemms.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:joy@wemms.co.uk">joy@wemms.co.uk</a>
Date 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	64	180	120

### *Reason for inspector's recommendations*

Current accommodation is more suitable for up to 120, not the 180 asked for as part of the original proposal. School leaders and trustees agreed with Her Majesty's Inspector regarding this recommendation during the site visit.

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Not applicable
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	64	180
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	64	180
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	60	180
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	60	180

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	32	50
Number of part-time teaching staff	30	Not applicable

## 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. Most pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has recently acquired new premises because the lease on its previous site has expired. Although not open to pupils at the time of this inspection, the school is technically operating outside of its registration, having moved sites. However, the school has not implemented the proposed material changes in full (it has not extended the pupil age range for instance).
- The school's entry on the government's 'Get Information about Schools' website currently shows the previous registered address.



- The school is currently operating beyond its registered capacity, having 64 pupils on roll, when registered for up to 60.
- The last standard inspection took place in February 2020 when the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be good and all the independent school standards were found to be met. An emergency inspection took place in December 2020 when all independent standards that were checked were found to be met.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the proprietor has applied to make changes to the school's registration. The proprietor wishes to change premises and increase the number and age of pupils on roll.
- This was the second inspection regarding these particular material changes. The first took place on 4 August 2022.
- The inspector met with the principal, the vice-principals and other leaders. He also met with trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees. The inspector toured the school site and accommodation.
- The inspector met with leaders to assess the suitability of the school's curriculum, particularly with a focus on extending the age range of pupils who attend the school.
- The inspector checked a wide range of policies, records and documentation in relation to the specific independent school standards that were checked at this inspection.

## Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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