

Wetheringsett Manor School

Church Street, Wetheringsett-cum-Brockford, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5QX

Inspection date

11 October 2022

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1)–2(1)(b)(i)

- Leaders have developed a curriculum that is broad, ambitious and closely aligned to pupils' needs. Staff teach content in a logical order and revisit key concepts often to embed pupils' knowledge and skills. This helps pupils to understand and interpret new and novel concepts.
- Reading and mathematics have been given priority in the curriculum. This approach gives pupils the knowledge to access, interpret and communicate their thinking across the curriculum.
- Leaders have reviewed and refined the assessment systems and staff are now more precisely focused on checking the most important knowledge that pupils must acquire and remember. In particular, the use of baseline assessments ensures that the curriculum is tailored to new pupils' individual needs. This helps pupils to hit the ground running when they join the school.

Paragraphs 2(2)(e)–2(2)(e)(iii)

- All pupils have regular access to impartial, appropriate careers guidance from qualified professionals. This has helped pupils to consider their options through a more informed lens and to focus their efforts on their future goals.
- Staff at the school have established positive relationships with a range of local employers. This has enabled pupils to access high-quality work experience in a number of sectors. Leaders have provided significant assistance and support to providers to ensure these placements are a success.

Paragraphs 3–3(g)

- Staff possess a strong understanding of the curriculum. They benefit from regular training from leaders to help them understand the content of the curriculum and how best to deliver this. Members of support staff have been helped to gain recognised

qualifications, helping them to adapt the curriculum for pupils with greater competence and confidence.

- The independent school standards outlined in Part 1 are now fully met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b)

- Leaders possess a clear and realistic understanding of the risks that pupils face. They have ensured that the safeguarding procedures in the school are clear, aligned with national guidance and understood by all staff. These procedures are published on the school website.
- The curriculum places appropriate emphasis on the challenges faced by the young people in the school. Staff help pupils to carefully explore issues such as criminal exploitation, online abuse and sexual violence in an age-appropriate way. Pupils develop a strong understanding of these concerns and the harm they can cause. This leaves them prepared to make positive choices in the future.
- Staff are trained to identify concerns and understand they may hold essential pieces of information about pupils' welfare which must be passed on. Leaders have robust processes for quickly and securely collating, analysing and sharing this information. They navigate a number of agencies and local authorities efficiently to share concerns.
- The standards in Part 3 of the independent school standards continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1)–34(1)(b)

- Senior leaders have significant experience and draw on this to help plan, deliver and review the improvements in the school. They wisely draw on the wider company for support when needed, helping them to quickly gain access to expert knowledge in areas such as curriculum development.
- The proprietor body uses a number of quality assurance processes which, when combined, give them an accurate understanding of the school's performance. By drawing on governors' reports, external consultants and key performance data, the proprietor body identifies which aspects of the school are working well, and any areas that need further investigation. This has already led to improvements and leaves the school well placed to improve further.
- Given the strength of leadership and proprietary oversight, the independent school standards outlined in Part 8 are now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets 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; and
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential; and
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 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(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 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; and
- 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

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; and
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	148058
DfE registration number	935/6027
Inspection number	10257188

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

Type of school	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Mr Mark Jeffries
Annual fees (day pupils)	£47,000 to £79,000
Telephone number	01449 703 935
Website	www.wetheringsettmanor.co.uk
Email address	office@wetheringsettmanor.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	2 to 9 November 2021

Information about this school

- The school opened on 3 November 2020. It provides specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils also have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

- The school was graded requires improvement in its first standard inspection in November 2021. Inspectors concluded that the school failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- All pupil places are funded by their local authorities.
- The school uses Acorn Digital Learning to provide off-site remote education for a very small number of pupils.
- The school occupies three buildings, all on the same site. The converted 'Manor' house provides classrooms and dining and social spaces for the majority of pupils. The 'Cottage' is used for much smaller groups or individual tuition, mainly for those pupils with ASD. The 'Stable' is used for administration and first-aid facilities. There are a range of other buildings on site that will be brought into use in time, including rooms that are already ready for fitting out as fitness spaces.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- During this unannounced inspection, the lead inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher. He also met with the chair of the local governing body who acts as regional director of the proprietor board and the proprietor of the Acorn Care and Education Group.
- The inspector visited four lessons in all key stages. He spoke with pupils to gain their views of the school and to discuss their learning and looked at their work.
- The inspector also spoke with teaching and support staff to consider the support they have had to deliver the curriculum and keep children safe.

Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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