

# Wemms Education Centre

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

**Inspection date**

9 November 2022

**Overall outcome**

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

## Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7–7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)*

- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. The policy has been written to take into account current guidance and the context of the school. Leaders who wrote the policy are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They understand the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Staff safeguarding training is up to date and ongoing. Recruitment checks are administered by a specialist human resources company. Processes to recruit new staff are appropriate. Key staff have undertaken safer recruitment training.
- The single central record of checks on adults at the school is also administered by a specialist external company, with the oversight of leaders at the school. It contains all of the required information.
- The school uses an online system to record safeguarding and behaviour concerns. Staff have been trained in its use. This includes refresher training and additional monitoring and guidance for new staff. The system enables leaders to track safeguarding concerns closely. Records are detailed. One small amendment was made during the inspection in regard to minutes of a meeting and how these were recorded on the system.
- Pupils are positive about their school. When the inspector spoke to two separate groups, pupils were unanimous in their views that they feel safe at school. They talked openly about how they feel staff care for them and are always there if they have problems or worries.

*Paragraphs 9–10*

- The school has appropriate policies for behaviour and anti-bullying. The inspector witnessed nothing of concern regarding behaviour or attitudes to school at any stage of this unannounced inspection. Classroom visits, including a visit to the school's

swimming pool and sports complex, saw pupils engaged in learning and very happy to talk to the inspector.

- Levels of supervision are high. Much of the teaching is carried out on a one-to-one basis or in very small groups. Staff know pupils well. Pupils said that they think staff understand their 'uniqueness' and make allowances for their individual needs.
- Pupils commented without prompting about how much better they feel the new school premises are. They feel that they are not 'on top of each other' all of the time and that they have much better space to learn and play now. One said that some pupils do not have 'filters' when it comes to behaving perfectly all of the time. However, they feel that staff deal with problems both fairly and well.
- During formal meetings with the inspector, pupils were positive about the behaviour of others and how this impacts on their time in and out of school. They feel safe from bullying behaviour of any kind but know that there is always a danger of problems with friendships. They talked about how the school's curriculum helps with this.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about what is appropriate and what is not regarding relationships and friendships. They like that the school has taught them to 'speak up' when there are problems. One pupil talked about being given the tools to deal with any harassment she might encounter 'in the future'.

#### *Paragraphs 11–16(b)*

- The school has appropriate policies in place for health and safety, risk assessments and first aid. Much of the work linked to health and safety is carried out by external specialist contractors. The school's own site and grounds team cover day-to-day tasks. Staff are able to access the support of the site team through an online reporting system.
- A tour of the school's premises showed the building to be well maintained. Pupils talked positively about their new classrooms and the additional facilities the school now provides.
- Leaders have ensured that there is adequate cover in place for pupils' medical needs. This includes a school nurse. Most staff have undertaken first-aid training. Others have been trained as fire marshals. Training is ongoing. Update training for first aid and fire marshals was scheduled for the week following this emergency inspection.
- A fire risk assessment is in place. This has been completed by external specialists. Fire extinguishers, alarms and other equipment are all maintained by external specialist companies. Pupils have been briefed and have undertaken fire evacuation drills since the school opened on its new site at the start of this term.
- The school maintains appropriate admissions and attendance records. Staff use an online system to monitor pupils' attendance in lessons.
- A range of risk assessments are in place for different aspects of the school's premises and for activities such as off-site trips. Risk assessments contain an appropriate amount of detail. This includes information about individual pupils and their medical needs, for instance.
- All relevant standards in part 3 continue to be met.

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

### *Paragraph 34(1)–34(2)*

- Leaders are experienced and work as a collegiate team. Leaders at all levels understand their roles and responsibilities. The members of the senior leadership team are supportive of each other. The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable and carries out her role diligently. Deputy safeguarding leads are equally well informed.
- Leaders understand the independent school standards and the associated requirements. At the time of the inspection, they were in the process of updating the school's information on the government's Get Information About Schools website after the Department for Education (DfE) approved their recent material change request.
- Trustees have a solid understanding of the school. Their work is both strategic and hands-on in approach. The recent move to new premises at relatively short notice was handled well. Trustees are about to formally review this move. This will entail gathering the opinions of staff and other stakeholders to identify what went well and what still needs to be achieved to realise the full potential of the new premises.
- Trustees have good oversight of the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff. They have a wide range of experience in education and in areas such as safeguarding. Current trustees intend to grow the trust board over time. They have identified key areas where additional expertise would be helpful to the school. This includes supporting the school's recent registration with the charity commission.
- Part 8 continues to be 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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	142416
DfE registration number	936/6006
Inspection number	10259156

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	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 20
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	20
Number of part-time pupils	None
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>
Dates of previous standard inspection	25 to 27 February 2020

## 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 moved and opened in new premises at the start of this academic year. This move has recently been approved by the DfE as part of the proprietor's application for

material changes to the school's registration. As a result, the school's entry on the government's 'Get information about schools' website was inaccurate at the time of this emergency inspection. Leaders are addressing this.

- The last standard inspection took place in February 2020 when 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. Two material change inspections took place in August 2022 relating to the school's request to move to new premises, as well as for an increase in the age range and number of pupils on roll.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was an emergency inspection carried out at the request of the DfE after concerns were raised about the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school. As an emergency inspection, it was carried out with no notice.
- The inspector toured the school site, visiting classrooms, communal areas, the sports complex, including the swimming pool, medical room, kitchen and office accommodation. Classroom visits included talking to pupils and staff about the school and the quality of care and education it offers.
- A range of documents and policies linked to the DfE's request were scrutinised before and during the inspection. This included the school's single central record of checks on adults and other safeguarding records.
- The inspector met formally with two different groups of pupils to gather their views of the school.
- The inspector held a range of meetings. These included with the principal and other senior leaders. A meeting was held with the designated safeguarding lead and other safeguarding leaders.
- The inspector met with all four directors of the proprietor body, including the chair.
- The inspector held a discussion with the local authority designated officer as part of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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