

# White Trees Independent School

13a London Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 5NA

**Inspection date**

15 February 2023

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)*

- Safeguarding is prioritised in the school. A current and relevant safeguarding and child protection policy is published on the school's website. It references the most recent government guidance.
- Leaders have a robust system of recording safeguarding concerns. Staff training ensures consistent reporting of all concerns. This helps to build a profile for each pupil. Leaders use this information to identify where individual pupils and families may be in need of additional support.
- The designated safeguarding lead closely monitors all safeguarding concerns. Appropriate and timely action is taken, including engagement with external organisations, when needed.
- Several members of staff have completed training as designated safeguarding leads. All staff and governors receive regular training and updates around safeguarding. This includes specific training in the 'Prevent' duty and online safety.

#### *Paragraph 11*

- The health and safety policy is available on the school website. Leaders carry out regular checks to ensure that their policies are put into practice effectively.
- A detailed risk assessment is in place for the new proposed site. This identifies the hazards and mitigations to reduce the risk of harm. This has been carefully considered.

#### *Paragraph 12*

- All sites, including the new proposed site, have all required fire safety measures in place. This includes regular checks on fire extinguishers. Leaders keep detailed records of maintenance and certification. There are records of when fire evacuation practices take place.

#### *Paragraph 14*

- Leaders ensure that effective supervision of pupils is in place. Most pupils receive one-to-one support. Leaders have clear plans in place to ensure that this ratio is maintained if the material change is granted. Leaders have plans in place to grow pupil numbers slowly. This is partly to ensure that recruitment of staff maintains the one-to-one support that is currently in place for pupils.

#### *Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- Leaders have an established system for risk assessment that is in place. Risk assessments identify risks associated with the sites, activities that are undertaken and individual pupils that attend the school.
- Information, for example during morning handover from care homes, informs planning and provision for individual pupils on a daily basis.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is approved.

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

##### *Paragraphs 17, 18(1)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(1)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3)(b) and 21(6)*

- The single central record meets the statutory requirements. Appropriate recruitment and suitability checks are carried out for all members of staff and members of the governing body.
- All senior leaders and relevant governors have completed safer recruitment training.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is approved.

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

##### *Paragraphs 22, 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)*

- The current school premises, based on two sites, meet the needs of current pupils and staff at the school. There have been no significant changes to these sites since the last inspection. A new site, previously registered as a school, will accommodate all additional pupils if the material change is approved.
- Suitable separate toilets and washing facilities are in place. There is sufficient cold water to enable flushing. Hot water supplied to the washbasins poses no risk of scalding.
- There are separate toilet facilities for those with a disability and for staff, volunteers and visitors to the school.
- A medical room is appropriately equipped for those who need medical attention. The medical room, located in the vicinity of a toilet, includes a wash basin with hot and cold water for washing.
- Rooms are well lit by natural light. There is good heating and ventilation in all classrooms. Classrooms look out over the local countryside or the mainly grassed school grounds. The rooms are in a very well-maintained state and are well equipped. The rooms are suitable for up to 40 pupils.
- External lighting provides safe entry and exit of the school site.

- Drinking water is available throughout the site via portable cooling fountains. If the material change is approved, leaders will increase the number of these units as the number of pupils at the site increase.
- There are no changing facilities at the new site. Leaders intend to use local facilities such as leisure centres and gymnasiums to provide physical education. This is in line with the other two school sites.
- The grounds include an all-weather basketball court and a grassed area and benches which are suitable for pupils to use in their breaktimes.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is approved.

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

### *Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)*

- The local governing body has effective systems in place to monitor the work of school leaders. The proprietor, governors and leaders work together effectively.
- Leaders demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards.
- There are effective welfare and safeguarding systems in place. These would ensure that this provision is maintained if the material change request is approved.
- Leaders have developed a well-considered plan to increase pupil numbers. As with the previous material change, leaders plan to increase pupil numbers gradually over a two-year period if the material change request is approved. This is to ensure that staff of a high quality are recruited to maintain the good standard of education during the period of growth.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is 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	140655
DfE registration number	919/6053
Inspection number	10267412

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 school
Proprietor	Emma Barr
Chair	Christina Wells
Headteacher	Laura Bull
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,500 per term / £82,000 per year
Telephone number	01279 658518
Website	<a href="https://whitetrees-group.co.uk/education">https://whitetrees-group.co.uk/education</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:laura.bull@whitetrees-school.com">laura.bull@whitetrees-school.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	10 to 12 November 2021

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18	11 to 18	11 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	33	78	78

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	20	To be determined
Number of part-time pupils	13	To be determined
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	33	78
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	33	78
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	33	78

## Staff

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	35	To be determined
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

## Information about this school

- White Trees Independent School provides education for pupils who experience social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties.
- The school opened in 2014 and moved to its current location in 2017. An additional school site is located in Little Hallingbury. This is two miles from the main school site.
- The school is registered to take a maximum number of 38 pupils from the age of 11 to 18 years.
- The previous standard inspection of the school in November 2021 judged the school to be good. A material change inspection, to consider an increase of the maximum permitted number of pupils on the school roll from 24 to 38, took place in April 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to the proprietor's request to increase the maximum permitted number of pupils on the school roll from 38 to 78.
- The proprietor intends to cater for the additional pupil numbers at a new site located at Purley Farm, Colne Road, Coggeshall, Colchester, Essex, CO6 1TH. The site had previously been registered by a school and had been approved by Ofsted.
- The purpose of the inspection was to determine whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the requested material change is granted.
- The inspection was carried out at the two existing sites and the intended new site. The inspector spoke with members of the senior leadership team, the designated safeguarding lead, the chair of the governing body and the proprietor. He spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- The inspector reviewed the information and policies that are published on the school website.
- The inspector completed a tour of all three premises to check compliance with the independent school standards. He analysed relevant documents including leaders' plans for extending the provision to increase the number of pupils. He also reviewed documents relating to health and safety, fire safety checks and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Wayne Jarvis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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