

Witham Prospect School

Old Harbour Farm, Newark Road, Norton Disney, Lincolnshire LN6 9JR

Inspection date

6 July 2023

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)(a), 3, 3(c), 3(f), 3(g)

- At the standard inspection, inspectors found that the curriculum did not make clear what pupils needed to learn and when. The curriculum was not implemented effectively. Staff did not identify the small steps of knowledge that pupils needed to learn. Additionally, inspectors found that phonics was not taught coherently or consistently.
- The proprietor has appointed a new director of education and a new curriculum leader who have recently taken up post. They have brought about significant improvements in a relatively short period of time.
- The school's curriculum has been overhauled. Overall, it is well planned and sequenced. It makes clear the precise content that pupils are expected to acquire at each stage of their education. It takes account of pupils' starting points and stages of development.
- Through identifying 'key take away learning points', the curriculum makes clear the most important, small steps of knowledge that pupils are expected to know and remember.
- Staff have been trained to deliver the new curriculum. The curriculum leader has modelled lessons to demonstrate good practice for colleagues. They have coached staff in lesson planning. They have visited lessons and provided feedback. Weekly 'teacher meets' see staff receive ongoing training, guidance and support. Staff say that they feel more confident in teaching the curriculum.
- Although at an early stage of implementation, pupils are beginning to learn and remember curriculum content. For example, older pupils, when preparing ingredients for cottage pies, made links with the work that they had done previously on sushi dishes.
- There is a systematic approach to assessing the impact of the curriculum. Teachers check termly on how well pupils are progressing. Leaders use this information to adapt lessons. However, there is more to do to ensure that assessments check closely on how well pupils acquire the precise content of the curriculum.
- Teaching phonics has been prioritised. It is taught every day. The phonics programme is well structured. Sounds are taught in a logical manner.
- Staff have been trained to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Staff use

appropriate resources and develop pupils' knowledge of vocabulary. Lessons are closely matched to the sounds that pupils know. Staff adapt teaching effectively to meet each pupil's individual needs.

- The phonics leader carries out frequent checks to ensure that phonics is being taught as expected. They support staff in embedding and extending pupils' phonic knowledge across the curriculum and throughout the school day.
- Pupils are beginning to know and remember sounds. Most can identify some of the sounds contained in familiar words.
- The school meets the requirements that were checked in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- All staff understand and consistently apply the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff record all concerns, regardless of how small they might appear.
- Regular staff training covers a broad range of safeguarding topics. Leaders check that staff keep up to date with their training.
- Staff know pupils well. They are alert to any changes that might indicate that pupils need help. Leaders act swiftly to ensure that the necessary support is put in place. Staff take appropriate steps to make sure that pupils are kept safe from any potential risks in the classroom or around the school.
- Safeguarding records are fit for purpose.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school website.

Paragraph 15

- At the standard inspection, inspectors found that the proprietor had not fulfilled their legal responsibility to maintain an accurate register of pupils' attendance.
- Leaders have changed the way they keep registers. Teachers record pupils' attendance twice daily. Registers are accurate and up to date. Consistent coding systems indicate why pupils are absent.
- The proprietor regularly checks that registers are being completed accurately.
- The school meets these independent school standards (the standards) and requirements checked in these parts.

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

Paragraph 21(1), 21(5)–21(5)(a)(i)

- At the standard inspection, inspectors found that the proprietor had not made sure that information about safer recruitment checks for supply staff was recorded accurately on the school's single central record.
- The school's single central record meets requirements. This includes the necessary checks that are carried out on supply staff.
- The school meets the requirements that were checked in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(b)

- At the time of the standard inspection, inspectors found that the proprietor had not ensured that the school consistently met all the standards.
- The school meets all the standards and requirements that were checked during this inspection. The proprietor has ensured that leaders and managers demonstrate and fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- The school now meets the requirements that were checked in this part.

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.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - 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 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

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

- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(5) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to supply staff–
 - 21(5)(a) whether written notification has been received from the employment business that–
 - 21(5)(a)(i) checks corresponding to those referred to in sub-paragraph (3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vi) and (vii) have been made to the extent relevant to any such person.

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	146971
DfE registration number	925/6011
Inspection number	10293755

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	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Proprietor	Longboat Special Education Limited
Chair	Jeffrey Kinder
Headteacher	Karen Smith
Annual fees (day pupils)	£119,840 to £164,860
Telephone number	01522789067
Website	www.withamprospect.co.uk
Email address	info@withamprospect.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	7 to 9 February 2023

Information about this school

- Witham Prospect School is an independent special school.
- The school provides education for pupils aged between 11 and 19 years. All pupils have a diagnosis of severe learning difficulties, complex needs and associated challenging behaviour. Many of the pupils have a diagnosis of autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by several different local authorities.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The headteacher was absent at the time of the inspection.
- Two new senior leaders have been appointed since the previous inspection. These are a

director of education and a curriculum leader.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education (DfE), the registration authority for independent schools.
- The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection. In line with the commission, the inspection took place without notice.
- The DfE required the school to submit an action plan. Ofsted evaluated this plan on 26 April 2023 and deemed it to be unacceptable. The DfE rejected the action plan on 23 May 2023.
- The inspector met with the director of education, the curriculum leader, the leader responsible for safeguarding and a director. He met with the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector visited lessons. He spoke with pupils during these visits.
- The inspector considered documentation relating to the curriculum, phonics, safeguarding and training. He reviewed the school's single central record and safeguarding records. He also reviewed the school's admission and attendance registers.
- The inspector met with a group of staff regarding the curriculum, teaching, phonics and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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