

# Wessex Lodge School

Nunney Road, Frome, Somerset BA11 4LA

**Inspection date**

24 July 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*

- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the website. It shows due regard to the latest statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- Leaders have created an effective culture of safeguarding on both school sites. Staff receive comprehensive training on important issues, such as sexualised behaviour and county lines. They understand how to identify and report concerns. Record-keeping on the school's electronic system shows that leaders work swiftly and proactively with multi-agency safeguarding hubs to safeguard the welfare of pupils.
- A designated safeguarding team meet weekly to monitor ongoing concerns. They understand the vulnerabilities of pupils at the school and adapt the range of support provided accordingly. Governors keep the proprietor body informed about all safeguarding matters. Leaders have secure procedures in place to deal with the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

#### *Paragraph 11*

- Leaders place significant importance on the health and safety of the school sites. Premises staff take their responsibilities seriously. They ensure that the schedule of maintenance checks complies with the health and safety policy. For example, they test the hot and cold water supplies weekly. Staff use a 'near miss' form to report any potential hazards. Premises staff address any issues promptly. Leaders plan to implement the same exacting standards if the request for increased pupil numbers is approved.

#### *Paragraph 12*

- Leaders have thorough fire procedures. Trained staff carry out termly fire drills at both sites. They record how well staff and pupils evacuate the building, including pupils with personal emergency evacuation plans. Evacuation points are clearly signed. Fire equipment, such as alarms and extinguishers, are regularly checked and serviced.
- Leaders understand fire safety regulations. At the time of this inspection, the current fire risk assessment allows 35 pupils to be educated on the farm site. The proposed

additional five pupils will exceed this number by two. Leaders have already arranged for a new fire risk assessment to be completed in the coming weeks. If the material change is approved, they state that they will ensure the updated fire risk assessment complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 before admitting extra pupils.

#### *Paragraph 14*

- Although pupils were not on site during the inspection, leaders and staff describe effective supervision routines to prioritise pupils' safety. High staff-to-pupil ratios mean that pupils are adequately supervised, including during unstructured social times. The proposals for staff deployment and supervision are likely to be appropriate should the material change be approved.

#### *Paragraph 16*

- Leaders keep detailed risk assessments for various activities, such as working with sheep on the farm or using soldering irons. Staff regularly review and update risk assessments to ensure that they are relevant to each activity.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

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

#### *Paragraph 18*

- Senior leaders have undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training. They understand the checks that need to be made to confirm the suitability of staff to work with pupils before they start working at the school. A central human resources team supports school leaders in collating the necessary documentation, such as right-to-work and reference checks.

#### *Paragraph 19*

- Leaders do not employ supply staff to work at the school. However, they know what checks need to be carried out should it become necessary to do so in the future.

#### *Paragraph 20*

- Members of the proprietor body, Acorn Care and Education Ltd, have all had the statutory checks to determine their suitability in their roles, including section 128 checks.

#### *Paragraph 21*

- Leaders maintain a well-organised electronic single central record. It is compliant with current guidance. The regional director and designated safeguarding lead check the record regularly to ensure that it is accurate and complete.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

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

#### *Paragraph 23*

- Leaders have ensured that handwashing and toilet facilities are available to pupils on both sites. They offer suitable shower facilities on the farm site. Pupils at the Frome

site will continue to access a local leisure facility, where changing rooms and showers are available. The number of toilets and showers is sufficient for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

#### *Paragraph 24*

- Both sites have a designated medical room exclusively for pupils' use if they are unwell. These rooms contain a bed, toilet and appropriate washing facilities.

#### *Paragraph 25*

- The accommodation on both sites is well maintained. Dedicated site staff ensure that pupils' safety is of utmost importance. They rectify any health and safety issues quickly. The farm site, where all of the additional pupil numbers will be based if the material change is granted, includes attractive classroom cabins, a new design technology room and a well-equipped outside gymnasium. The site provides ample space to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers.

#### *Paragraph 26*

- Classrooms on both sites have suitable acoustics and ventilation. Leaders have carefully considered how new learning spaces on the farm site will further enhance the existing curriculum.

#### *Paragraph 27*

- Leaders have ensured that classrooms have suitable lighting. Outside, they provide external lighting to help maintain safe entry and exit to the main school sites for staff, pupils and visitors.

#### *Paragraph 28*

- Across both premises, drinking-water is available throughout the day. The water supply on the farm site is not suitable for drinking. Therefore, leaders provide bottled water and drinking-water stations across the building.

#### *Paragraph 29*

- Pupils benefit from outdoor spaces on both sites, including extensive fields on the farm site for team sports and areas to relax and socialise. Physical education will continue to take place off site for pupils educated at the Frome premises.
- 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*

- Leaders are dedicated to providing all pupils with the highest quality of education. They have taken a measured approach to the proposed increase in pupil numbers. By working closely with local authorities, they have identified the need for additional capacity to support vulnerable pupils in the local area. Leaders have given considerable thought to the extra staffing, training and learning spaces on the farm site to manage the growth in pupil numbers successfully.
- The proprietor body, governors and school leaders oversee the school's work effectively. Clear lines of accountability are in place. For example, the regional director and school improvement partner monitor the quality of the school's work through

regular visits. They report their findings to the proprietor body, which provides additional challenge.

- Leaders at all levels demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of the standards. Those standards considered as part of this material change inspection are likely to be met if approved by the Department for Education.
- The school is likely to meet the standard in part 8 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 that are relevant to the material change.

## School details

Unique reference number	133522
DfE registration number	933/6210
Inspection number	10303439

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 special school
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Kate Stradling
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,153
Telephone number	01373 453414
Website	<a href="http://www.wessexlodgeschol.co.uk">www.wessexlodgeschol.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:kates@enhancedlearningservices.co.uk">kates@enhancedlearningservices.co.uk</a>
Dates of previous standard inspection	8 to 10 March 2022

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	8 to 18	8 to 18	8 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	50	55	55

## Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	50	55
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	50	55
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	50	55
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	50	55

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	29	33
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	18	20

## Information about this school

- Wessex Lodge School offers specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional, mental health and behavioural needs.
- The school is located over two sites: Wessex Lodge School in Frome and Newmead Farm in Maiden Bradley.
- All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan. Pupils are placed at the school by their representative local authorities.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- A full standard inspection took place in March 2022, when the school was judged to be good.

## Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education commissioned the inspection in response to the proprietor's request to increase the maximum pupil capacity from 50 to 55. This is the second material change to the school's registration since its opening in 2005.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the site manager and other school staff. The inspector held a meeting with a representative from the proprietor body.
- The inspector toured both sites with leaders to check the suitability and safety of the premises for increased pupil numbers and the relevant standards.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school, including risk assessments, policies, the single central record and safeguarding information.
- The inspector did not speak to pupils as the school was closed for the summer term break.

## Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023