

Wetheringsett Manor School

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

Inspection date

8 August 2024

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h) to 2A(2)

- The school has created appropriate curriculum plans and schemes of work for key stage 2.
- The school provides support to key stage 3 pupils at the early stages of reading. Leaders have decided upon a programme to use to teach any key stage 2 pupil phonics should they require this.
- The curriculum is broad and should provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their knowledge across a range of subjects. The school has carefully designed the timetable so that pupils have a wide curriculum offer while ensuring an appropriate focus on securing important reading, writing and mathematical knowledge.
- Staff understand how to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils as set out in their education, health and care plan (EHC plan). An additional special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) has been appointed to oversee key stage 2 provision.
- The school has carefully considered what pupils need to learn in the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum in key stage 2. Within this, leaders, have identified appropriate content they will teach around relationships. This curriculum should provide pupils with the knowledge they need when they move into key stage 3.
- The school has a well-established approach to teaching pupils about careers. Leaders have planned how to further develop careers education to begin in key stage 2.

Paragraphs 3 to 3(j)

- The school has appointed staff who have relevant experience and knowledge in teaching key stage 2. This includes staff who are trained in the school's chosen approach to teaching phonics.

- Leaders have already added capacity to the teaching team through the appointment of new teachers and teaching assistants across all key stages.
- The school provides ongoing training, so staff develop their own subject and teaching knowledge.

Paragraph 4

- The school has effective systems in place to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum.
- The school has carefully planned how to use assessment during pupils' induction to identify any specific gaps in key stage 2 pupils' phonics knowledge. This should enable the school to provide appropriate support for pupils who are in the early stages of reading.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part were met at the previous inspection and are likely to remain met if the material change is approved.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraphs 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The school places a high priority on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The school plans to use its existing 'Wetheringsett 101' curriculum to teach key stage 2 pupils to develop important life skills.
- The school has carefully considered how trips and visits will enhance pupils' wider development. It has planned to link these to what pupils study in class to further deepen their understanding.
- There is an active student council already present within the school. The school intends to have pupils from key stage 2 take up these positions of responsibility. Leaders also intend to use older pupils as 'buddies' and positive role models for younger pupils in school.
- The PSHE curriculum is a central part of the school and teaches pupils fundamental British values and how to keep safe. The school has carefully timetabled the teaching of PSHE to ensure it provides pupils with sufficient opportunities to secure their understanding of important knowledge around themes such as diversity, consent and healthy relationships.
- This standard was met at the previous inspection and is likely to remain met if the material change is approved.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The school provides staff with regular and relevant training so they understand how to identify the signs a pupil may be at risk of harm. The school has planned staff training specifically on supporting younger pupils at the beginning of the next academic year.
- Staff log concerns using the school's agreed systems. Leaders take swift action on

concerns that staff raise. This includes seeking support from external agencies when required.

- The school has appointed additional designated safeguarding leads in readiness for the increase in numbers and change in age range.

Paragraph 11

- The school has suitable policies and procedures relating to health and safety. The site team completes regular checks on the school premises to ensure they are safe, such as testing the temperature of water.

Paragraph 12

- There is an appropriate fire risk assessment in place. Where action points arise from the risk assessment, the school takes prompt action to mitigate risk.
- The school completes regular checks on the fire alarms, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers.
- There are clear procedures for safely evacuating the school site.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils work in small classes with an appropriate number of teachers and teaching assistants to support pupils' specific needs.
- The school has already increased the size of the teaching, pastoral, administration, catering and maintenance team in preparation should the material change be approved.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- There are appropriate risk assessments in place. These identify what the likelihood is of risks occurring and the severity should they occur. Staff implement these risk assessments effectively.
- These standards were met at the previous inspection and are likely to remain met if the material change is approved.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18(1) to 18(3), 19(2) to 19(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(b)(iii), 21(1) to (21)(8)

- The school has clear procedures in place for the safer recruitment of staff.
- Staff responsible for completing pre-employment checks have the knowledge they need to do this.
- The school records information accurately onto the single central record.
- The school understands what checks they need to complete in the event they use supply staff.
- The standards in this part were met at the previous inspection and are likely to remain met if the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23(1) to 23(2), 24(1) to 24(2), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1) to 28(2)(b), 29(1) to 29(1)(b)

- The school site is well maintained and suitable should the material change be granted.
- There are specialist class spaces for pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4. These are suitable places for pupils to learn.
- Leaders have enhanced the space available through the creation of additional facilities for pupils to study mechanics and hair and beauty.
- There is a purpose-built area for key stage 2 pupils. This contains a medical room, toilet facilities, communal space and two classrooms. This area is appropriate for the number of key stage 2 pupils the school intends to admit.
- There is ample outside space for pupils to study horticulture and for physical education (PE). There is also an indoor sports hall for PE lessons.
- There are areas throughout the school and outside for pupils to use during their free time.
- Throughout the school site, pupils have access to drinking-water and suitable toilet facilities.
- The school is currently improving access to the school for taxis. This is so that more cars can come onto the school site to drop off and collect pupils.
- The standards in this part were met at the previous inspection and are likely to remain met if the material change is approved.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy reflects relevant statutory guidance and is available on the school's website.
- This requirement was met at the previous inspection and is likely to remain met if the material change is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has rigorous systems in place to quality assure the work of the school. These systems provide assurances to leaders that the school consistently meets the standards.
- School leaders work collaboratively with other leaders from schools within the proprietor group. This provides leaders with both challenge and support.
- The school is proactive at using external expertise to further quality assure the quality of education on offer.
- There has been careful consideration put into the growth of the school. The change in

age range is to meet the increasing demand from local authorities for key stage 2 placements. Leaders have ensured they have put in place an appropriate curriculum and employed staff with the requisite knowledge and expertise to teach key stage 2 pupils.

- This standard was met at the previous inspection and is likely to remain met if the material change is approved.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor ensures that the school meets schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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	148058
DfE registration number	935/6027
Inspection number	10340988

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	Mark Jeffries
Annual fees (day pupils)	£49,000 to £90,000
Telephone number	01449703935
Website	www.wetheringsettmanor.co.uk
Email address	office@wetheringsettmanor.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	4 to 6 July 2023

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18	7 to 18	7 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	72	100	100

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	72	100
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	72	100
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	72	100
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	72	100

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	23	28
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	10	13

Information about this school

- The school is an independent special school. There is a governing body which is responsible for governance of the 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.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- All pupil places are currently funded by Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk or Hertfordshire local authorities.
- The school does not currently use any alternative education provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in July 2023, when it was judged to be good overall. At this inspection, the school also met all of the standards. This

inspection also considered a material change to increase the capacity to 72 pupils. The material change was subsequently granted by the Department for Education (DfE).

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE in response to a request from the proprietor for a material change.
- The school is currently registered for up to 72 pupils aged 11 to 18. The proprietor has requested that the DfE increase its capacity to 100 pupils. The proprietor has also requested a change of its lower age range to seven years old. This is the first time that the proprietor has requested these changes to be considered.
- The inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body, the regional director and chair of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, a SENDCo and staff.
- The inspector checked the school's single central record of background checks for adults working at the school.
- A range of documents relating to the curriculum, safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety and school development were scrutinised.
- The inspector toured the school site with leaders.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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