

Woodend Farm School

Woodend Farm, Hatfield Road, Witham, Essex CM8 1EH

Inspection date

1 March 2023

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1)(a)–(b), 2(2), 2(2)(a)–(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(h)–(i)

- The directors have applied to the Department for Education (DfE) for full-time provision for up to 16 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who are aged 6–11 years.
- All pupils will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Many pupils attending the proposed school are likely to have experienced disruption in their earlier schooling. The directors have designed a curriculum that caters for the needs of the pupils who will attend the school. The intention of the directors is for pupils to enter one of four curriculum pathways to meet pupils' needs. There are plans to identify each pupil's starting point before they are admitted to the school.
- The directors propose to deliver a bespoke curriculum to meet pupils' individual needs. The directors will make use of a range of information from previous education placements, such as EHC plans, alongside the views of pupils and their families. A range of teaching and learning strategies will be employed to suit pupils' academic and social development.
- The planned curriculum covers literacy, mathematics, science, history, geography, computing, physical and aesthetic and creative education, and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Some of the curriculum content will be delivered through themes. Detailed plans are in place that identify what pupils need to know and learn.
- The directors have planned a coherent programme to promote pupils' personal development and well-being. Plans include teaching pupils about self-awareness and the importance of developing positive relationships.
- Pupils will have the opportunity to participate in activities that enrich the curriculum. These are linked to the planned themes and include visits to local organisations and groups.

Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(a), 2A(1)(d)–2A(2)

- Pupils who attend the school will learn about healthy lifestyles and relationships in an age-appropriate way. In delivering this aspect of the curriculum, the directors propose to make links with the planned PSHE programme and parts of the science curriculum. The proposed school's relationship and sex education policy is available for parents and carers on request.

Paragraph 3, 3(a)–(j), 4

- The head of learning has appropriate qualifications and knowledge to teach and support the delivery of the curriculum. Newly appointed staff have a secure understanding of supporting pupils who have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. The directors have thought carefully about how they will use this knowledge to provide SEMH support to pupils through the curriculum.
- The directors have a well-considered programme of induction and training for new staff when they are employed to work at the school.
- To inform teachers' planning, curriculum plans note the prior knowledge pupils need. This is to ensure that pupils revisit previous knowledge and that teaching builds pupils' learning step by step. Plans include the important vocabulary, skills and activities that pupils need to learn. Leaders have placed a high priority on the use of phonics to teaching early reading.
- The head of school has put in place a system for checking pupils' progress through all aspects of the curriculum. It is proposed to use this information to adapt pupils' learning plans so that these appropriately meet pupils' needs.
- All the teaching spaces are contained in a single building. There are four teaching spaces, as well as a separate area for supporting pupils' sensory needs. There is a large area for creative activities. These are well organised and fit for purpose.
- The directors have developed a suitable process for reporting to parents about a child's academic and social achievement, as well as commenting on the child's behaviour.
- The four independent school standards that relate to the quality of education are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- The work to promote pupils' PSHE is a core aspect of leaders' proposed curriculum. Plans are integrated into each theme to help build pupils' self-esteem, independence and confidence.
- As part of the approaches to managing behaviour, pupils will be encouraged to think about the consequences of their actions. This is to help pupils develop greater personal and social responsibility.
- The school's aims and vision are underpinned by fundamental British values. The school's ethos and use of the PSHE curriculum are likely to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils effectively.

- The directors have ensured that this independent school standard is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a)–(b)

- The directors have put in place suitable arrangements and procedures to keep pupils safe. The arrangements are identified in an up-to-date safeguarding policy. The processes to be followed clearly state how to identify and deal with concerns related to child protection. The policy draws on local and national guidance, ensuring that appropriate measures are established.
- The designated safeguarding leads have received relevant safeguarding training so that they fully understand how to carry out their roles. They have ensured that appropriate training and regular updates will be provided for all staff.
- Safer recruitment processes are in place, and appropriate checks have been completed on the staff already appointed to work at the school.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a)–(b), 10

- The school's positive behaviour policy sets out clearly the systems for supporting and managing pupils' behaviour. The policy includes information about how staff will be trained in the school's approaches. This will help staff to understand the reasons for pupils' challenging behaviour and how to provide pupils with the appropriate support.
- There is a suitable policy in place for promoting anti-bullying throughout the school.
- The directors intend to make use of an electronic system for recording behaviour-related incidents. They will use this system to identify trends and patterns of behaviour to ensure that staff are providing pupils with the right support.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14

- The directors have ensured that policies for health and safety, fire safety and first aid are suitable and are being implemented effectively. The directors have commissioned checks by qualified specialists relating to fire safety, as well water tests to check for the presence of Legionella.
- Fire-safety signs, lighting, alarms and smoke detectors are in place. Regular checks ensure that the equipment remains in good working order. Staff who have already been appointed understand their roles during fire evacuation procedures. Staff who join the school will receive the necessary safety training as part of their induction.
- A director and the head of learning have received first-aid training. Suitable arrangements are in place for the recording and reporting of accidents and medical concerns.
- The directors have drawn up a supervision of pupils policy to ensure that pupils learn and play safely.

Paragraphs 15, 16, 16(a)–(b)

- Appropriate admissions and attendance registers are in place in readiness for the proposed opening of the school. The directors intend to use an electronic system for recording pupils' attendance. Appropriate codes will be used to record absence.
- An admissions register template is in place and includes all the information that is required to maintain this register correctly.
- The school's risk assessment policy identifies the importance of creating risk assessments for the safe operation of the school. There are clear directions for staff to follow when planning different activities. The directors have carried out a variety of on-site risk assessments. These highlight the possible concerns and how control measures are put in place to mitigate risks.
- The nine independent school standards for the welfare and health and safety of pupils are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a)–(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a)–(d), 20(6)–20(6)(c)

- There are appropriate systems and processes in place for the recruitment of staff. Those with key responsibilities for making appointments have undertaken safer recruitment training. They know what checks must be carried out on staff who will be employed by the school.
- The directors are in the processes of recruiting additional staff. Staff who have already been appointed are suitably experienced and knowledgeable to support pupils' therapeutic needs.
- The directors do not intend to use supply staff but understand the safeguarding checks that are required should they do so.

Paragraphs 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a)–(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a)–(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a)–(b)

- The school's single central record is in place and includes all the required information.
- The four independent school standards for the suitability of staff and the proprietor body are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a)–(b), 24(1), 24(1)(a)–(b), 24(2)

- The building has a sufficient number of toilets for the intended number of pupils. There is an additional accessible toilet and showering facilities in case the need for these arises. Toilets for pupils are situated on the ground floor and have appropriate washing facilities, including hot and cold water. There is a separate toilet for adults located on the first floor.
- The medical room is appropriate in size and location. It includes a bed, washing facilities and a lockable medical cabinet with first-aid equipment. The medical room is situated close to two toilets.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a)–(b), 28(1), 28(1(a)–(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a)–(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a)–(b)

- The proposed building is newly built and in good order. It is clean and well suited to the teaching arrangements of the school. The building has appropriate acoustics, lighting and ventilation. Health and safety and risk assessment policies are detailed and appropriately implemented.
- There is a good-sized outdoor area that is covered with an all-weather surface. This will allow pupils plenty of space for physical education and for play during breaks and lunchtimes. Garden plots are being created to provide additional activities for pupils.
- The site is surrounded by high, metal fencing. Access-controlled gates will help to ensure pupils' safety.
- The seven independent school standards for the premises and accommodation are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a)–(c), 32(1)(f)–(j), 32 (2), 32(2)(a)–(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(d) 32(3), 32(3)(a)–(f)

- The directors are in the process of developing a school website that will provide access to required information. At present, the website includes the school prospectus and some key policies, such as the complaints policy and child protection (safeguarding) policy. All other required information is in place and would be made available to parents on request.
- The directors understand how to ensure that pupils' EHC plans are well managed.
- Pupils who attend the proposed school will be funded by the local authority. The directors have established a process to share information. This includes accounting for the income received and expenditure incurred in respect of any public funding for a pupil.
- The independent school standard regarding the provision of information is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a)–(k)

- The complaints policy includes the required information for parents, staff and leaders. There is a detailed explanation of the school's approach for dealing with informal and formal complaints. This includes the provision for a panel hearing, as well as the timescales and different stages of the process of managing a complaint.
- The arrangements for recording complaints and detailing actions are established.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)–(c)

- The school is overseen by a board of directors, who act as the proprietor body. Between them, they have a range of skills and experience. They understand how to check that the proposed school will continue to meet the independent school standards over time. The directors have put a monitoring schedule in place that will include regular reports from the head of learning and from directors' visits to the school.
- Alongside the head of learning, one director has wide experience and knowledge of working with pupils with SEMH needs. The directors plan to make use of education consultants to provide an external view of the proposed school's provision.
- There is no governing body at present.
- This independent school standard is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- There is an accessibility plan that outlines how pupils will be able to access the premises and the curriculum.
- The directors have ensured that this requirement is likely to be met.

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.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	149597
DfE registration number	881/6094
Inspection number	10275695

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Integrity Education Ltd
Chair	Robert Saggs
Headteacher	Nicola Overland
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000
Telephone number	01376 526326
Website	www.woodendfarm.school
Email address	admin@woodendfarm.school
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	6 to 11	6 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	16	16

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	16

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	16
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	16
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	16

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	5
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	6

Information about this proposed school

- The proprietor body is Integrity Education Limited. There are five directors. The school's proposed job title for the headteacher is 'head of learning'.
- The proposed school is situated in a new development on a farm close to Witham, Essex.
- The school will provide education for pupils with SEND. Pupils will be referred through the local authority, and all pupils will have an EHC plan. Pupils who attend the proposed school will have SEMH needs and/or a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- The proprietor body does not intend to make use of supply staff.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school.
- The proposed school is not in operation.
- The inspection was commissioned by the DfE. This was a one-day inspection and focused on compliance with the regulatory requirements of the independent school standards, safeguarding procedures and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The inspector met with the board of directors, the head of learning and the business manager. The inspector visited all parts of the proposed school's premises, including the outdoor areas.
- The inspector scrutinised the proposed school's documentation, including policies and procedures, curriculum information and safeguarding information, including the single central record.
- The inspector held a meeting with two new staff members who will be employed once the proposed school is opened.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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