

Woodend Farm School

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

Inspection date

5 November 2025

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 1 to 4

- The curriculum at Woodend Farm School is well designed to meet the needs, aptitudes and interests of pupils. There are clear curriculum plans in place that increasingly identify the important knowledge that pupils need. The proposed secondary curriculum identifies and builds upon the knowledge pupils will have gained in the primary provision. This will build pupils' core knowledge and skills of literacy and numeracy. In addition, a broad range of pathways and assessment routes tailored to pupils' needs have been identified and planned. These will allow pupils to gain appropriate qualifications and pursue their interests in a range of subjects.
- The school has accurate systems to assess pupils' knowledge and skills. Staff know how pupils like to learn. Staff use this knowledge, with increasing precision, to adapt the curriculum so that pupils can learn well. This provides assurance that pupils in the proposed secondary provision will likely be able to achieve well from their starting points.
- The school has clear plans so that pupils in the proposed secondary provision will receive impartial careers education and guidance. Pupils will encounter people from a range of professions. The school would provide opportunities for pupils to explore different types of education and employment, including through the provision of work experience.
- The school's existing personal, social and health education provision is effective. The proposed secondary curriculum clearly identifies important knowledge, for example personal space and consent, and online safety that the school wants secondary pupils to learn. This is in line with statutory expectations around relationships, sex and health education. A clear policy is in place that sets out provision, how parents are consulted and their right to withdraw pupils from sex education. Leaders expect staff to teach these key concepts regularly in lessons and assemblies to help pupils build positive relationships now and in the future.

- Leaders have improved the effectiveness of teaching. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. As a result, pupils usually learn well across a broad range of subjects. This has improved pupils' achievement and boosted their engagement with the curriculum. Staff use consistent approaches and form positive relationships with pupils. These help pupils settle and focus on their work. These established routines and approaches would be used in the secondary provision. This would enable pupils to make a positive transition to the next stage in their education.
- In the proposed secondary provision, the same assessment systems will be used to ensure continuity for pupils who remain at the school. Staff will continue to check whether pupils have met key objectives and use this information to guide curriculum pathways and qualifications. For pupils joining in key stages 3 or 4, these systems will help staff quickly identify learning needs and set precise short-term targets informed by their education, health and care plans (EHC plans), so that support is tailored and success is encouraged.
- The proprietor has ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of the material change.

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

Paragraphs 5 to 5 (d)(iii)

- The curriculum and work of the school support pupils to develop confidence, independence and respect for others through positive relationships and a values-led culture. Pupils learn about the protected characteristics and fundamental British values. This prepares them for life in modern Britain.
- Teaching and activities promote awareness of right and wrong, diversity and different cultural perspectives. This is done impartially, pupils are encouraged to express opinions, make choices and engage meaningfully in school life. These foundations provide a strong basis for preparing pupils in the proposed secondary provision for adult life, including democratic participation, community engagement and personal development. The proposed secondary curriculum has been carefully planned to ensure that pupils have the knowledge they need to make appropriate choices and take an active part in the community.
- The proprietor has ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 7, to 7(b) and 32(1)(c)

- The safeguarding and child protection policy aligns with statutory guidance. It can be accessed on the school website. The proprietor ensures that staff receive regular

safeguarding training. They know how to report promptly any safeguarding concerns. Staff are vigilant and report any safeguarding issues to the designated safeguarding lead.

- The school has embedded robust systems to identify and address any safeguarding concerns in a timely and appropriate manner. Staff swiftly seek advice and support from external agencies. They are tenacious in their approach to protect pupils from harm.
- The school ensures that it effectively communicates with parents and carers so that any potential risk of harm to pupils can be mitigated.

Paragraph 11

- The proprietor has ensured that all required health and safety policies are in place and are complied with. There are regular checks on health and safety. The proprietor makes sure that these checks are thorough so that the site is well maintained and safe. Any areas requiring action are risk assessed and swiftly followed up, such as the provision of additional fencing on the field at the proposed secondary provision.

Paragraph 12

- Both sites have fire risk assessments in place. These checks are detailed to ensure any risks are identified and addressed. Effective fire safety training and equipment are provided. There are clear escape routes.

Paragraph 14

- The average class size is approximately four pupils. The proprietor has recruited additional staff to deliver the curriculum and to support with pastoral care if the material change is approved to further increase pupil supervision and support. There is a robust induction process in place for new staff.

Paragraph 16, to 16(b)

- There are robust risk assessment systems and processes across both sites. These include appropriate risk assessments for off-site activities, such as the use of local facilities used for swimming lessons.
- Risk assessments are well considered and suitably tailored to the specific needs of pupils. They are reviewed and adapted appropriately as needed to mitigate risk for all.
- The proprietor has ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of the material change.

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

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

- The proprietor ensures that there are robust and effective procedures in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff and governors.

- Staff who complete the background checks on staff and those responsible for governance understand and follow safer recruitment requirements.
- The school's single central record is kept up to date and meets statutory requirements. The local governing body checks this regularly to ensure that it is accurate.
- The school currently does not use supply staff. It understands the background checks that are required if supply staff are employed.
- The proprietor has ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of the material change.

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 existing and new premises are well designed and maintained to ensure the health, safety and well-being of staff and pupils. The buildings include classrooms with sufficient space for small classes, well-positioned offices, changing and first-aid rooms. Each room is well lit, ventilated and insulated so that pupils are comfortable and focused to facilitate learning. There is a communal area suitable for a range of activities. There are individual, lockable toilets, as well as clean and well-maintained changing and showering facilities. No hot water poses a scalding risk. Drinking water facilities are clearly labelled.
- There is a separate medical room on the secondary site. This provides a space to care for pupils who are unwell. There are toilet and washing facilities nearby. The room has its own sink. There is space for pupils to lie down. There are also secure facilities for the storage of medicines. All medical treatments or injuries are recorded in the school's online system. The school does not currently have any pupils with complex needs.
- The secondary site has sufficient space to accommodate the material change if approved. Additional fencing has been erected in addition to dense hedges around the perimeter of the site.
- There is a large field at the secondary site with copious space for physical education lessons and for play. These facilities will also be used by primary age pupils. There is a well-maintained area for woodland activities used by pupils across the age range.
- The proprietor has ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The school leaders and the proprietor have a secure understanding of the independent school standards. They ensure that these are scrutinised and checked for compliance.
- Since the last standard inspection, the proprietor and those responsible for governance have strengthened the systems used to hold leaders to account for the standards. They have added additional capacity through the appointment of leaders and administrative staff. They have commissioned and used external support to further develop the curriculum and to improve teaching and assessment. Checks on the delivery of the curriculum have become more regular and precise. Consequently, there is robust oversight of these standards in place.
- The school improvement priorities are realistic. These are based on leaders' accurate evaluation of the standards and the quality of education offered. The school makes effective use of externally provided expertise to develop the curriculum, assessment and teaching.
- The school and the proprietor have carefully considered the impact of increased pupil numbers and the establishment of a secondary provision on existing pupils and staff. They provide staff with professional development and support for their well-being to ensure they can carry out their duties effectively. Due to their successful approach to managing the needs of pupils who currently attend the school, the school and the proprietor, therefore, demonstrate the capacity to manage the expansion requested.
- The proprietor has ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of the material change.

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	149597
DfE registration number	881/6094
Inspection number	10423540

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	Integrity Education Ltd
Chair	Robert Saggs
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Gemma Quantrill
Annual fees (day pupils)	£61,285 to £82,400
Telephone number	013 7679 0202
Website	www.woodendfarm.school
Email address	admin@woodendfarm.school
Date of previous standard inspection	18 to 20 June 2024

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	6 to 11	6 to 16	6 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	21	40	40

Pupils

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

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	21	40
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	21	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	21	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	21	40

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	24	31
Number of part-time teaching staff	3	3

Information about this school

■ Woodend Farm School is an independent day school for pupils with an EHC plan. It caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities related to autism. Some pupils also have specific learning difficulties, physical needs and/or social, emotional and mental health needs. The school caters for up to 16 pupils aged 6 to 11 years of age. Pupils are referred to the school by local authorities.

■ The school provides full-time education for its pupils.

■ The school operates across two sites. The primary provision is based at Woodend Farm, Hatfield Road, Witham, Essex CM8 1EH. If the material change is approved, pupils of secondary age would be placed at Woodend Farm Secondary Provision, Southern Fields, West Hanningfield, Great Baddow, Chelmsford CM2 8HN.

■ Since the last standard inspection, a new executive headteacher has been appointed.

■ The proprietor has delegated responsibilities to the local governing body to monitor the progress and performance of the school.

■ The school currently does not use any alternative provision.

■ The last standard inspection took place in June 2024. At this time, the school was judged as good. All standards were met.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) in response to a request from the proprietor for a material change to be considered.
- The school is currently registered for up to 21 pupils from age 6 to 11. The proprietor has requested that the DfE increase the school's capacity to 40 pupils and to extend the age range of pupils to 6 to 16. This is the first time that the proprietor has requested this change.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives of the proprietor body and the local governing body. He also spoke to a representative from a local authority, who commissions pupils to attend this school. He also spoke to the school improvement partner.
- The lead inspector toured the proposed secondary site with leaders. An inspector checked the school's single central record of background checks on adults working at the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised curriculum plans and a range of documents relating to safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety and school development. Inspectors visited lessons and spoke to staff.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Daniel Short

His Majesty's Inspector

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