

White Trees Independent School

13a London Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 5NA

Inspection dates

8 April 2022

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

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1)(c)

- The safeguarding and child protection policy is published on the school's website. Leaders ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly and reflects the most recent statutory guidance.
- Staff receive regular and relevant training to ensure that their knowledge is kept up to date. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront of everybody's mind. Staff are confident in the arrangements for safeguarding pupils.
- The designated leader for safeguarding is knowledgeable about her role. She maintains efficient records and follows up concerns promptly. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to ensure that children and families get the support they need.
- Leaders have established clear systems for reporting, recording, and monitoring safeguarding concerns. These systems are suitable to maintain the effectiveness of safeguarding if the number of pupils is increased.

Paragraph 11

- The health and safety policy is published on the school website. The policy is reviewed regularly. Leaders and the proprietor carry out regular and detailed checks to ensure that the policy is being implemented consistently and effectively.

Paragraph 12

- All required fire safety measures are in place at both sites. Leaders have the appropriate certification to demonstrate that regular fire-safety checks are carried out by the relevant authority.
- Leaders ensure that regular fire evacuation practices take place. They maintain clear records of how well each evacuation has been carried out. They identify any additional measures, which are actioned promptly to ensure that the fire evacuation procedures are carried out consistently well.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders carefully consider the needs of individual pupils, and of groups of pupils, when they are determining the level of supervision that is required. Leaders regularly review the size of teaching groups and the number of supervising adults to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Leaders have established a systematic and comprehensive approach to risk assessment that supports the safeguarding and welfare of all pupils.
- Risk assessments clearly identify the risks associated with all activities and those associated with specific locations. Risk assessments inform effective planning and review of the provision for pupils on a daily basis. Documentation is detailed. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and appropriately.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is approved.

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

Paragraph 17

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3)

Paragraph 19(2), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3)

Paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c)

Paragraph 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b), 21(8)

- Leaders ensure that all the required checks are carried out before a member of staff is employed to work at the school. The proprietor ensures that the school's procedures are followed rigorously for all staff appointments. This includes the appointment of school governors.
- The single central record of pre-employment checks is comprehensive and up to date.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 22

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 23(2)

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

Paragraph 25

Paragraph 26

Paragraph 27, 27(a), 27(b)

Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The school premises meet the needs of current pupils and staff at the school.
- Leaders have carefully considered how they will accommodate the requested increase in pupil numbers. Leaders have detailed plans to show how the new total number of pupils can be accommodated across both existing buildings. This includes the use of additional space at the London Road site that was not considered as part of the previous material change request in July 2020.
- 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

- The proprietor, leaders, and governors demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards. The governing body reflects a range of relevant skills and experience. There is effective working between the proprietor, leaders, and the governing body.
- Effective systems are in place to ensure the safety, safeguarding, and welfare of pupils. Leaders actively promote the well-being of pupils through the curriculum and therapeutic provision. The well-being and safeguarding of pupils would be maintained if the material change request is approved.
- Leaders have developed clear and realistic plans to accommodate 38 pupils across the combined school sites. If the material change request is approved, leaders plan to increase pupil numbers gradually over two years. This is because leaders are focused on maintaining a good standard of education for all pupils while the changes are implemented.
- The school is likely to meet the requirements for this part of the independent school standards.

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	140655
DfE registration number	919/6053
Inspection number	10220439

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 school
Proprietor	Emma Barr
Chair	Richard Hilditch
Headteacher	Laura Bull
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,500 per term, £82,500 per year
Telephone number	01279 658518
Website	https://whitetrees-group.co.uk/education
Email address	laura.bull@whitetrees-school.com
Date of previous standard inspection	10–12 November 2021

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18	No change	No change
Number of pupils on the school roll	24	38	38

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	17	Not yet determined
Number of part-time pupils	7	Not yet determined
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	24	38
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	24	38
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	24	38

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	28	35
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this school

- White Trees Independent School is a day special school. It provides education for boys and girls who experience social, emotional, and/or mental health difficulties.
- There are currently 24 pupils on the school roll, all of whom have an education, health and care plan.
- The school opened in February 2014 and moved to its current location in 2017. Additional school accommodation is located in Little Hallingbury, two miles from the main school site.

- The school is registered to take a maximum of 24 pupils from the age of 11 to 18 years. Leaders clearly state that they do not intend to admit pupils between the ages of 16 to 18. The provision is in place for existing pupils who may need additional time or additional support to enable them to access the next stage of their education or employment.
- At the previous standard inspection in November 2021, inspectors judged the school to be good.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to consider the school's request for a material change. The proprietor body would like to increase the maximum permitted number of pupils on the school roll from 24 to 38.
- The purpose of the inspection was to establish whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the registration authority grants the requested material change.
- The inspector met with the proprietor and the headteacher. The inspector spoke with the chair of governors and with a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- The inspector scrutinised the information and policies that are published on the school website.
- The inspector reviewed leaders' plans for extending the provision to include an increase of 14 pupils.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the school's arrangements for safeguarding. The inspector looked at the school's single central record of the checks that are carried out before staff are employed to work at the school.
- The inspector scrutinised documentation, including risk assessments and fire safety checks, and toured the premises of both school sites to check that these were compliant with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Katherine Douglas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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