



Material Change Inspection Report

The Levels School

June 2024

School's details

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| School name | The Levels School | | | |
| DfE number | 933/6014 | | | |
| Address | The Levels School Etonhurst 7 Bath Road Ashcott Somerset TA7 9QS | | | |
| Telephone number | 01458 211014 | | | |
| Email address | office@thelevelsschool.co.uk | | | |
| Headteacher | Mrs Caroline Cook | | | |
| Chair of governors | Mrs Geraldine O'Sullivan | | | |
| Proprietor | The Levels School Ltd | | | |
| Age Range | 8 to 18 | | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 76 | | | |
| | | | Prep | 8 |
| | Seniors | 68 | Sixth Form | 0 |
| Date of inspection | 10 June 2024 | | | |

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 The Levels School is a co-educational day school. Opened in January 2021, the management of the school is overseen by the governing body. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Sixty-eight pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Many have diagnosed co-occurring conditions or diagnoses, including specific learning difficulties and autistic spectrum condition. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. Several different local authorities, including Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and Dorset, place pupils in the school. The school's previous inspection was conducted by Ofsted in November 2021.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase its capacity from 75 to 95 pupils and change the lower age range from 8 years to 7 years. The school has acquired additional premises in close proximity to its present accommodation to facilitate the proposed increase in capacity. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs).

| Regulations which were the focus of the inspection | Team judgements |
|---|-----------------|
| Part 1, paragraphs 2 - 4 (curriculum; relationships and sex education; teaching; and framework for pupil performance) and Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils) | Met |
| Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding) | Met |
| Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety) | Met |
| Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety) | Met |
| Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils) | Met |
| Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment) | Met |
| Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors) | Met |
| Part 5, paragraph 23 (toilet, washing and changing facilities) | Met |
| Part 5, paragraph 24 (accommodation for medical needs) | Met |
| Part 5, paragraph 25 (maintenance) | Met |
| Part 5, paragraphs 26–29 (acoustics, lighting, water supply and outdoor space) | Met |
| Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information) | Met |

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| Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management) | Met |
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2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum, relationships and sex education (RSE), teaching, framework for pupils’ performance; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2–4 and Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 The quality of education provided, including that of RSE, meets all requirements for the pupils.
- 2.3 The curriculum, which is appropriate for current pupils of all ages and abilities is suitably documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work and covers the required breadth of material. The current curriculum programme followed by the school includes schemes of work which are suitable for pupils with SEND from the proposed earlier age of seven years. The school makes appropriate provision for those with SEND, and the school’s provision meets the requirements of individual pupils’ EHC plans.
- 2.4 An effective programme of personal, social and health education, which includes the requirements for RSE, is implemented successfully, together with appropriate careers guidance for older pupils.
- 2.5 Teaching enables all pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. Teaching is designed effectively to meet pupils’ individual needs. There are sufficient and suitably qualified teaching staff, including for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils’ performance is in place.
- 2.6 Provision for the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriate. It promotes principles which enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence; distinguish right from wrong; accept responsibility for their behaviour; and acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions. It furthers tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. It encourages respect for other people, including those with protected characteristics.
- 2.7 The school is likely to continue to meet the standards if the starting age is lowered as proposed.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.8 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.9 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 The safeguarding policy is implemented effectively at all levels. The policy includes details of Prevent duty guidance and is further supported by suitable policies covering the staff code of conduct, safe recruitment, whistleblowing and e-safety. These are understood and implemented appropriately by staff. The safeguarding team ensures that safeguarding matters are reported, recorded, collated and monitored effectively and that appropriate actions are taken. There are effective relationships with local agencies and safeguarding leaders make appropriate referrals. The safeguarding arrangements are reviewed annually with suitable diligence. The safeguarding team has sufficient capacity to ensure effective safeguarding implementation regarding the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

- 2.12 Pupils can express concerns, are listened to and receive appropriate support, including early help, and there is due regard for their mental health. This is confirmed in records of safeguarding incidents. Pupils confirmed they feel safe at school. Staff understand child-on-child abuse, including issues such as sexual harassment and sexual violence, and take appropriate action when incidents occur. Their understanding is appropriate to the particular learning needs of the pupils at the school. Training in safeguarding, including for staff, all members of the safeguarding team and the governors, is comprehensive, including appropriate attention to handling allegations and online safety. The use of technology by pupils is suitably controlled and they receive suitable guidance on how to stay safe on line. Where allegations are made, the school responds appropriately, making prompt referral to external agencies, including the Disclosure and Barring Service and Teaching Regulation Agency if necessary.
- 2.13 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased and the starting age is lowered, as proposed.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11]

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 The school meets health and safety requirements. The proprietor and senior leaders oversee and monitor health and safety effectively. Staff interviewed demonstrated an effective understanding of health and safety matters. Suitable training regarding health and safety is in place for staff. Pupils feel that the school is a safe environment and inspection evidence supports this view.
- 2.16 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased and the starting age is lowered as proposed.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.
- 2.18 The school's fire risk policy is implemented effectively. Recommended actions from the most recent fire risk assessments, including those for the proposed additional premises, have been appropriately prioritised and carried out in a timely manner. Staff receive appropriate fire safety training and demonstrate suitable awareness of risks, prevention and procedures in a fire emergency. Appropriate equipment is provided and maintenance of alarms and other equipment is effective. Regular fire drills are held and pupils are confident regarding evacuation procedures.
- 2.19 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased and the starting age is lowered as proposed.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]

- 2.20 The school meets the standard.
- 2.21 Suitable guidance and procedures are in place to ensure pupils are supervised effectively throughout the school day, including when offsite and engaged in outdoor activities. Suitable arrangements have been made for supervising the route pupils would take between the existing and proposed additional premises.
- 2.22 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased as proposed.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16]

- 2.23 The school meets the standard.
- 2.24 There is an appropriate risk assessment policy which provides for systematic risk assessment and pays attention to key areas of risk and pupils' welfare. These include pupils' activities onsite and offsite, and specific aspects of risk related to their SEND. Staff receive relevant training and completed risk assessments are checked, monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness. The school has risk assessed the proposed increase in numbers of pupils and introduction of younger pupils, and additional premises effectively.
- 2.25 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased and the starting age is lowered as proposed.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21]

- 2.26 The school meets the standards.
- 2.27 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.28 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased as proposed.

Premises and accommodation – toilet, washing and changing facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23]

- 2.29 The school meets the standard.
- 2.30 Toilet, washing and changing facilities are suitable in number and quality, particularly regarding pupils' hygiene, personal privacy and dignity requirements.
- 2.31 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased as proposed; the planned additional premises includes suitable and sufficient facilities.

Premises and accommodation – accommodation for medical needs [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 24]

- 2.32 The school meets the standard.
- 2.33 The school has suitable accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils.
- 2.34 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased as proposed; the planned additional premises include suitable and sufficient facilities.

Premises and accommodation – maintenance [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25]

- 2.35 The school meets the standard.
- 2.36 The school premises are maintained to a suitable standard. Routine and emergency maintenance tasks are carried out efficiently.
- 2.37 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased as proposed. Maintenance arrangements are sufficient to ensure that the planned additional premises will be maintained to the same standard as pre-existing accommodation.

Premises and accommodation – acoustics, lighting, water supply and outdoor space [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 26–29]

- 2.38 The school meets the standards.
- 2.39 Acoustics, internal and external lighting, drinking water, water supply and outdoor space are each of a suitable standard.
- 2.40 The school is likely to continue to meet the standards if pupil numbers are increased as proposed; the planned additional premises include all these provisions.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.41 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.42 The school meets the standard.
- 2.43 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are met consistently, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. The leadership and management have prepared comprehensively regarding the proposed material change.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the material change request be approved. The school currently meets all of the standards inspected and these standards are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved, including within the planned additional premises.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors. He visited different areas of the school, observed lessons and talked with groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.