



Material Change Inspection Report

Forest Preparatory School

June 2024

School's details

School	Forest Preparatory School			
DfE number	358/6008			
Address	Forest Preparatory School Moss Lane Timperley Altrincham Cheshire WA15 6LJ			
Telephone number	0161 980 4075			
Email address	office@forestschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Graeme Booth			
Chair of proprietors	Mr Mark Malley			
Proprietor	Bellevue Education International Ltd			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	209			
	EYFS	71	Juniors	138
Date of inspection	25 June 2024			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Founded in 1924, Forest School is a co-educational independent day school. The school consists of an early years setting for children aged between two and five years; the lower school for pupils aged between five and seven years; and the upper school for pupils aged between seven and eleven years. The school is part of Bellevue Education group, whose directors act as the school's proprietors. Management and governance of the school are overseen by the group's education committee. The school has 27 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is one pupil with an education, health and care plan. Fifty-four pupils speak English as an additional language of whom a small number receive additional support in the classroom. The previous inspection was a progress monitoring inspection in October 2023.

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 capacity from 202 to 218 with effect from September 2024. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4 paragraphs 18-21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5 paragraphs 23-29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6 paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8 paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 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

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 The school's safeguarding policy and procedures are effectively and consistently implemented. This ensures that the school addresses pupils' individual needs across all age ranges, including in the early years. Leaders have made arrangements that are likely to ensure that the school continues to meet the requirements following the proposed increase in the number of pupils.
- 2.5 The safeguarding team has undergone the necessary training in accordance with the local safeguarding partnership procedures. Other staff are appropriately trained and are regularly updated to ensure they can fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. All concerns are recorded electronically and referred appropriately to ensure there is effective oversight of pupils' wellbeing. The safeguarding team works closely with parents and external agencies to offer additional support. Child protection records are suitably detailed and stored safely.
- 2.6 The safeguarding team, supported by well-trained staff, provide individualised additional support for pupils' wellbeing. Pupils are taught to use technology safely and be alert to potential online dangers, both in school and at home. Monitoring and filtering of technology are effective.
- 2.7 Safeguarding records indicate that the school effectively communicates and refers concerns to external agencies. They confirm the pupils' response that they feel safe in school because they can access trusted adults who listen to their concerns, provide a response, and take appropriate action.
- 2.8 Staff clearly understand the whistleblowing policy and know when and how to report concerns regarding colleagues or senior leaders. They know to contact the designated local authority officer (LADO) if their concerns are not addressed.
- 2.9 The proprietors support the pupils' wellbeing through a committee structure with the skills and knowledge to implement an effective safeguarding policy. The governors are trained appropriately in safeguarding. A nominated governor is in regular contact with the safeguarding team. The governing body monitors safeguarding suitably and holds senior leaders to account, while providing appropriate support.

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

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 An appropriate health and safety policy is implemented effectively to keep pupils, staff, and visitors safe. Suitable checks are carried out and recorded to ensure the building is maintained safely and staff are provided with suitable training to carry out their duties. Leaders have reviewed and updated their health and safety procedures, and the school is likely to continue to meet the requirements with the proposed increase in capacity.

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

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 A suitable external fire risk assessment is carried out, and leaders have addressed all subsequent recommendations. Monthly fire evacuation drills are conducted and recorded, and the school has extended their evacuation procedures to include evacuation from the assembly point, if required. Staff receive annual fire training and there are designated fire marshals to provide oversight. The fire safety arrangements will likely continue to meet requirements with the proposed increase in capacity.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 Staff provide appropriate supervision for pupils during break times and outdoor play. Additional staff have been recruited to the early years setting, to further enhance the school's appropriate ratios. Since the start of the academic year, every classroom has a teaching assistant. Supervision rotas have been reviewed and additional staff added to existing lunchtime provision. The current supervision arrangements are likely to meet requirements with the proposed increase in capacity.

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

- 2.16 The school meets the standard.
- 2.17 The school has an appropriate risk assessment policy. Since September 2023, all risk assessments in the school have undergone review. The headteacher oversees all risk assessments, ensuring that the risk assessment policy, which outlines effectively the process for assigning responsibility, identifying risks, and implementing appropriate control measures, is followed. Staff assess all areas of the building that pupils can access, including specialist areas such as the art room. When planning educational visits, staff assess the specific needs of pupils and provide suitable mitigation. The school's arrangements for managing risks are likely to continue to meet requirements with the proposed increase in capacity.

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

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 Leaders ensure that staff involved in recruitment receive appropriate training and possess an understanding of safe recruitment practices. Before commencing their post, the school conducts the required checks for all staff, supply staff, and governors. Additionally, contractors must provide detailed records of their checks, which are reviewed alongside the school's additional checks when they arrive on site. Details of checks are entered appropriately on a single central register of appointments. The school's arrangements for ensuring the suitability of all adults are likely to continue to meet requirements with the proposed increase in capacity.

Premises and accommodation – [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 29]

- 2.20 The school meets the standards.
- 2.21 The school provides appropriate toilets and changing facilities and makes suitable provision for the medical needs of its pupils, including children in early years. The premises are consistently well-maintained to meet health and safety requirements. The proposed total capacity identified in the material change request can be accommodated in existing accommodation. The lighting and acoustics

in the building are appropriate and there is sufficient drinking water available to meet the needs of the proposed capacity. Pupils can access well-maintained and suitable outdoor spaces for physical education and recreation. An additional fire door with vision panel has been installed in early years to enhance the school's evacuation plan. The school's arrangements are likely to continue to meet requirements with the proposed increase in capacity.

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

2.22 The school meets the requirements for providing parents with information about safeguarding. Details of the safeguarding arrangements are published on the school's website.

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

2.23 The school meets the standard.

2.24 The proprietors and senior leaders demonstrate the necessary skills and knowledge to enable the school to meet all required standards consistently. They prioritise the wellbeing of the pupils and fulfil all safeguarding requirements, including those for early years. Proprietors use a detailed compliance tracker to maintain a consistent implementation of the Standards. The plans in place for the proposed increase in pupil numbers are likely to ensure that the school continues to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to increase its total capacity from 202 to 218 pupils be approved. Planning for the change is effective and most necessary steps to support the change have been taken already. Remaining actions are scheduled to be completed by September 2024.

4. Summary of evidence

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