



Material Change Inspection Report

Odyssey House School

July 2024

School's details

School	Odyssey House School			
DfE number	872/6015			
Address	Odyssey House School Buckhurst Court London Road Wokingham RG40 1PA			
Telephone number	0118 229 3000			
Email address	info@odysseyeducation.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Nick Hall			
Chair of proprietors	Ms Charu Kashyap			
Proprietor	Odyssey Education Services Limited			
Age range	7 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	23			
	Juniors	8	Seniors	15
Date of inspection	4 July 2024			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Odyssey House School is an independent, co-educational day school for pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Founded in 2019, the school is owned and governed by a company with two directors, one of whom is chair. The school currently comprises two sections: a primary school for pupils aged 7 to 11 years and a secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 18 years. In May 2023, the school moved to its current site in Wokingham.
- 1.2 The school has identified all pupils as having SEND. All pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- 1.3 The previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in July 2023.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.4 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 total capacity from 48 to 60 pupils. 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
ISS Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
ISS Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
ISS Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
ISS Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
ISS Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
ISS Part 4, paragraphs 18 - 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
ISS Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 25 (premises and accommodation)	Met
ISS 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 Leaders implement safeguarding arrangements effectively. Staff know the children well. They notice small behavioural changes that potentially communicate worries. Adults create an environment that allows pupils to talk and be listened to through verbal and non-verbal methods. Pupils choose to use the specific calming areas provided when dysregulated and potentially vulnerable. Leaders designed these areas as semi-open to the corridors, reducing risk whilst maintaining dignity.
- 2.5 Staff and proprietors are suitably trained. Members of the safeguarding team demonstrate sufficient knowledge to undertake their roles. They maintain appropriate dialogue with many local authorities. They have sufficient status and adequate time to carry out their roles effectively. New staff members undergo a comprehensive induction process to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. This induction includes the content of the current statutory guidance, the school's safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, whistle-blowing procedures, and the behaviour and anti-bullying policies. The safeguarding team provides all staff with regular training updates, including about changes in guidance and safeguarding themes that reflect the school context. The safeguarding team and other staff show appropriate awareness of the potentially changing safeguarding needs which may arise due to the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
- 2.6 The proprietor has suitable knowledge and experience to provide the safeguarding team with regular support, appropriate challenge, and suitable oversight. Systems for handling any allegations against adults working in the school are effective and include prompt liaison with external agencies.
- 2.7 Leaders ensure that safeguarding records are kept securely. These records demonstrate appropriate and timely action when welfare concerns arise, and appropriate liaison with parents and relevant agencies.
- 2.8 Adults teach the pupils how to stay safe online, and families are given materials and advice to help and support them at home. Suitable filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
- 2.9 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed change to the total number of pupils.

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

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 The school has a suitable written health and safety policy covering the areas identified by current guidance. Leaders and appropriately qualified staff ensure that systems are in place which implement the policy fully. They have regular meetings to discuss and monitor all aspects of health and safety. The proprietor has an effective overview of this process. New staff are provided with suitable health and safety information during the induction process, and all receive regular training updates as

required by their roles or emerging issues. All appropriate checks are undertaken, recorded and monitored.

- 2.12 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed change to the total number of pupils.

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

- 2.13 The school meets the standard.
- 2.14 Leaders implement an appropriate fire risk policy, which complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. A suitably qualified external agency completes regular fire risk assessments: the most recent one completed immediately prior to the opening of the newest classrooms. Leaders addressed the action points of the risk assessment promptly and remedial action is planned in the case of non-urgent items. Adults and pupils regularly undertake evacuation drills. Times are recorded and updates to staff training are carried out when necessary. Leaders are acutely aware of the potential for evacuation procedures to cause distress to pupils and plan accordingly. Fire alarms and extinguishers are regularly serviced and appropriately located around the school site. Fire doors are kept closed or are on automatic closers, and escape routes are clear. The building in which the additional pupils will be accommodated is currently below its capacity, and an additional escape route was installed during the recent upgrade. Therefore, leaders do not envisage issues with escape routes.
- 2.15 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed change to the total number of pupils.

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

- 2.16 The school meets the standard.
- 2.17 Leaders ensure appropriate supervision of pupils at all times of the day. Staff timetables include supervision allocation to provide a suitable number of adults on duty during breaks and lunchtimes. The school has planned effectively for any potential additional risk from introducing a greater number of pupils: including deployment of more staff and altering the nature of supervision duties.
- 2.18 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed change to the total number of pupils.

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standard.
- 2.20 Leaders have implemented a suitable risk assessment policy and make appropriate arrangements to identify risks. Action is taken to mitigate and reduce risk in advance of activities. Pupils have individual risk assessments which allow staff to support their needs. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated; staff can access them electronically. Staff producing risk assessments for local trips, activities, or around the school receive, appropriate training. Suitably qualified senior staff oversee the risk assessment process.
- 2.21 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed change to the total number of pupils.

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

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 Leaders effectively and consistently implement the recruitment policy, which has due regard to the procedures outlined in current statutory guidance. The school undertakes all required checks prior to appointment to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors. A single central register of appointments (SCR) is maintained as required.
- 2.24 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed change to the total number of pupils.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23-25]

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 There are sufficient toilets and washing facilities for the current and proposed number of pupils. The medical facility is suitable accommodation for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. It contains a basin and is near a toilet. Any maintenance issues are recorded by staff and promptly rectified. Classrooms are suitably sized and are sufficient in number to accommodate the proposed increase in the number of pupils. Rooms have suitable acoustics and lighting to support learning. There are adequate supplies of clearly labelled drinking water. There is a supply of hot and cold water for washing, and the hot water does not pose the threat of scalding. There is appropriate provision for outdoor play or recreation.
- 2.27 It is likely that the standards will continue to be met with the proposed change to the total number of pupils.

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

- 2.28 The school meets the standard.
- 2.29 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively to ensure the independent school standards are met consistently and the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted. The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured the preparations for the proposed increase in numbers have been undertaken with due regard for these standards.
- 2.30 It is likely that the standard will continue to be met with the proposed change to the total number of pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that the increase in capacity from 48 to 60 pupils is approved.

4. Summary of evidence

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