



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Material Change Visit

Liberty Woodland School

June 2022

School's details

School	Liberty Woodland			
DfE number	315/6029			
Address	Liberty Woodland School Morden Hall Road Morden SM4 5JD			
Telephone number	0208 648 9775			
Email address	office@libertywoodlandschool.com			
Headteacher	Mrs Leanna Barrett			
Proprietor	Little Forest Folk Ltd.			
Age range	4 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	55			
	EYFS	16	Primary	39
Date of visit	30 June 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Liberty Woodland School is a co-educational day school adjacent to Morden Hall Park. Pupils are accommodated in Morden Lodge, a renovated nineteenth-century house and in yurts which are specially adapted as classrooms including power and smokeless log burners for heating. This accommodation is linked to the school's focus on outdoor learning. The proprietor of the school is Little Forest Folk Ltd., and the work of the school is overseen by a board of seven governors. The school has 12 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), one of whom has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a material change inspection conducted by Ofsted in August 2021.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an announced material change visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase its upper age limit from 11 to 16 and increase its capacity to 132 pupils. The visit 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 visit	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraph 2 (curriculum)	Met
Part 1, paragraph 3 (teaching)	Met
Part 1, paragraph 4 (framework for pupil performance)	Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)	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 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 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

Quality of education provided – curriculum [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2]

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 The school has a curriculum policy and schemes of work suitable for pupils up to the age of 16. Plans for the secondary phase are based on the International Baccalaureate (IB) middle years programme (MYP). The planned curriculum provides appropriate experiences in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education. Planning supports pupils effectively in acquiring speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. It takes into account the age, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an EHC plan. The school also provides suitable personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) with suitable plans in place for pupils up to the age of 16. These include appropriate careers guidance, work-related experience, and an effective policy for relationships and sex education. The school utilises its extensive outdoor facilities effectively in ways which will provide appropriately for older pupils and prepares all pupils for life in British society. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

Quality of education provided – teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 3]

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 Suitably qualified and experienced staff are appointed and these have the requisite skills and knowledge to teach the curriculum up to the age of 16. Appropriate training of staff, leadership and governance has been undertaken in order to ensure that teaching of secondary-age pupils is well placed to enable them to make good progress. Additional support has been suitably planned for older pupils with SEND. The teaching is well-planned across all subjects including the use of a range of appropriate resources and extensive use of the outdoor environment. Discussions with staff highlighted their appropriate knowledge and understanding of the IB MYP requirements. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the school's classroom behaviour management policy and strategies and how this will apply to older pupils. During discussions older pupils preparing for secondary school stated how the school successfully supports them in preparing personally and academically for the next stage of their education. Inspection evidence supports this view. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

Quality of education provided – framework for pupils' performance [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 4]

- 2.5 The school meets the standard.
- 2.6 The school currently has an appropriate assessment and tracking system in place for the primary stage of the school. Assessment in the EYFS uses effectively the early learning goals and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) to track children's attainment and progress and to plan the next steps of learning and early intervention if required. As the pupils move through the school assessment is criterion referenced against curriculum objectives in line with the schools aims and planning. Appropriate plans are in place to assess pupils in the secondary phase against the MYP criteria. The school is well-prepared to implement the MYP assessments and has a suitable all-through framework to assess pupil performance. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.7 The school meets the standard.
- 2.8 The school promotes values which are fundamental to life in Britain through its PSHEE programme, assemblies and a variety of activities and events which take place throughout the year. The PSHEE scheme has been suitably extended to meet the needs of pupils up to the age of 16 and cover relevant topics. During discussions pupils spoke with mature understanding of the way learning outdoors and the beauty of nature enables them to think deeply and to develop spiritually. They showed clear understanding of the importance of having respect for others regardless of their background or the protected characteristics of age, disability, religion, belief and sexual orientation. Opportunities to promote tolerance and harmony are particularly provided through assemblies and group discussions at the beginning and end of the day. Pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. The school's restorative justice approach enables pupils to consider the impact of their behaviour on others and to resolve any conflicts so that all concerned may move forward positively.
- 2.9 The school's focus on independent learning and resilience through outdoor learning prepares pupils effectively for the responsibilities of the wider world. Through the PSHEE programme, project learning and discussion of global issues pupils develop respect for democracy and how to evaluate information in order to achieve a balanced view. Opportunities to support a range of charities and the school's ethos of sustainability enable pupils to make meaningful contributions to the lives of others within the school, the local community and the wider world. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7]**Safeguarding policy**

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 The school implements its arrangements effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. During discussions pupils stated confidently that they felt safe in school and that there are several members of staff to whom they can turn if they are worried or concerned. When pupils raise concerns they receive a suitable response and action is taken where necessary. Pupils understand how to stay safe online and the school monitors use of technology appropriately.
- 2.14 Safeguarding matters are suitably overseen by a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who is a member of the senior leadership team and who is supported by a deputy DSL. The DSL liaises effectively with the governor responsible for safeguarding to ensure effective oversight of safeguarding procedures, to monitor the implementation of the policy and to ensure that an annual review of safeguarding is undertaken in line with the local authority framework. During discussions, staff demonstrated that they understand their thorough training with regard to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE), including with regard to potential child-on-child abuse. They are suitably inducted in the school's procedures when they join the school, and this is enhanced through training sessions at the start of the school year and regular updates. The DSLs have attended the appropriate level of inter-agency training and attended online training through the local authority when the school moved to its present location.

- 2.15 The school maintains appropriate, confidential records of all child protection concerns and liaises appropriately with children's services including when making referrals and notifying the authority when pupils leave the school. The school liaises appropriately with the local authority designated officer (LADO) with regard to any staff concerns. Leadership and governance have considered carefully the contextual impact of older pupils being admitted to the school and have included this aspect into safeguarding policy, procedures and monitoring. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

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

- 2.16 The school meets the standard.
- 2.17 The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy which particularly takes into account the school's outdoor provision, for example, the maintenance of safe walkways. The premises are maintained to an appropriate standard including the safe storage of hazardous substances and the implementation of appropriate procedures for selecting and managing contractors. Detailed records are kept of all health and safety checks which are monitored effectively by leadership and the governor responsible for health and safety. There are appropriate procedures in place for planning and approving off-site visits. During discussions staff confirmed that they receive appropriate health and safety training and updates, and that any repairs or health and safety concerns are addressed promptly and thoroughly. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

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

- 2.18 The school meets the standard.
- 2.19 The school has a comprehensive fire risk assessment which has been produced in consultation with external professional contractors who were suitably qualified to do so. All recommendations in the fire risk assessment were implemented to the required standard prior to the school moving into the premises. Fire-risk control and daily monitoring are given a suitably high priority by leadership, governance and all staff. During discussions, staff highlighted appropriate understanding of the fire risks in their environment including the use of non-smokeless fires in the yurts and the amount of wood in the buildings and boardwalks. Records indicate that staff have received suitable training including the training of fire wardens. Fire drills are carried out competently at half-termly intervals and pupils and staff are confident with regard to evacuation procedures. Suitable fire signage is in place and emergency exits are kept clear. The school liaises appropriately with the local fire service in order to conform to local fire regulations and procedures. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

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

- 2.20 The school meets the standard.
- 2.21 The school has appropriate duty rotas in place which have been adapted ready to include the accommodation of secondary-age pupils when they are admitted to the school. Pupils are supervised diligently throughout the school day including through the clear designation of areas for pupils to interact during breaktimes. Mobile devices enable staff to communicate effectively with each other should additional support be required. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

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

2.22 The school meets the standard.

2.23 The school implements a suitable risk assessment policy which identifies key areas of risk and when risk assessments should be completed. Risk assessments are checked diligently by leadership and monitored appropriately by governors. Staff have received appropriate training in risk assessment. During discussions they highlighted how they conduct daily risk assessments, being suitably aware of the need to manage risk as part of conducting the vast majority of teaching outdoors. Staff assess risk effectively prior to any educational visits and these are checked and approved by leadership. A sample of risk assessments including those for risky areas showed appropriate measures in place to mitigate risk. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

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

2.24 The school meets the standards.

2.25 A number of new staff have been appointed since the previous inspection in preparation for teaching in the secondary stage. The required checks are carried out prior to appointment and recorded accurately on the single central register of appointments (SCR). Appropriate supporting documentation is maintained in electronic staff files. The safeguarding governor regularly monitors the SCR and staff files to ensure that the school continues to meet requirements. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

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

2.26 Suitable and sufficient toilet, changing and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils in the outdoor areas and in the main school building. Separate, clearly labelled facilities are available for staff and visitors. Suitable facilities for the disabled are provided. Separate and appropriate facilities including changing areas, toilets and showers have been installed for male and female secondary pupils. Toilet and washing areas are clean and suitably ventilated. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

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

2.27 The school meets the standard.

2.28 The school's medical room provides appropriate accommodation and facilities for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. The medical room has appropriate washing facilities and is located near to a toilet. There is a lockable cupboard in order that medicines are stored safely. The school has appropriately considered how to meet the needs of older pupils who may require medical support. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

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

2.29 The school meets the standard.

2.30 The school buildings and the yurts used to support outside learning are well maintained and checked on a daily basis for any issues that might compromise the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Any identified issues are rectified without delay. New accommodation has been designated for the use of secondary pupils within the main school buildings. They will also use a specially designed yurt and

outdoor learning area which is separate to the primary school area. The accommodation for the secondary-age pupils is of a suitable standard including access to utilities. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

Premises and accommodation – acoustics, internal and external lighting, drinking water and water supply, outdoor space for PE and play [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 26 – 29]

- 2.31 The lighting and acoustics are suitable in the main buildings and the yurts which are used to support outdoor learning. Suitable drinking water fountains are available in the main buildings and in the outdoor learning areas. There is extensive space for outdoor play which has been extended to take into account the needs of secondary pupils. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

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

- 2.32 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]

- 2.33 The school meets the standard.
- 2.34 Governance, leadership and management take appropriate responsibility to ensure that the school is compliant consistently and do so successfully. Governors have undergone suitable training in safeguarding and in preparing for the admission of secondary pupils. Governors have approved a carefully thought out roll out of the secondary phase in order that growth is manageable. Governors have ensured that the premises are suitable for secondary-age pupils. Governors have approved the appointment of suitable staff to implement the secondary curriculum. They have worked closely with staff in order that the school can meet the academic and personal development requirements of secondary pupils. Appropriate procedures for monitoring all aspects of compliance are in place. Governors ensure that the leadership and management of the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the well-being of pupils is actively promoted. The school is likely to continue to meet requirements with the increase in the upper age limit and increased number of pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change request

- 3.1 The school has put in place an appropriate curriculum and plans for pupils up to the age of 16. Suitable staff to lead and implement the MYP have been appointed. Appropriate training is in place to ensure leadership, staff and governors have the necessary skills to support teaching during the secondary stage including MYP assessments. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of secondary pupils is appropriately planned for through the PSHEE programme and pastoral care provision. Suitable accommodation and resources are in place for secondary pupils. Careful planning by leadership and governance has enabled the school to put in place detailed and comprehensive plans to accommodate secondary pupils up to the age of 16. The welfare, health and safety of pupils is of an appropriately high priority for governors, leadership and staff.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the school's application to extend its upper age range to 16 and increase capacity to 132 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 chair of governors and a member of the governing board. She visited different areas of the school, observed lessons and talked with groups of pupils and staff. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.