



Material Change Inspection Report

SwitchED2

October 2023

School's details

School	SwitchED2			
DfE number	943/6007			
Address	SwitchED2 Ulpha Farm Meathop Grange-Over-Sands Cumbria LA11 6RG			
Telephone number	01539 552066			
Email address	jo@switched2.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Coates			
Proprietor	Mr Andrew Coates			
Age range	8 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	12			
	Juniors	0	Seniors	12
Date of inspection	30 October 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1.1 SwitchED2 School is an independent, co-educational day special school for pupils who require alternative provision to mainstream schooling. The school opened in March 2018 and is situated on a working farm in a rural area of south Cumbria. Pupils are accommodated in two purpose-built, temporary cabins installed within a large barn. They are taught in mixed-age classes. The proprietor, who oversees the running of the school, also holds the post of headteacher. An above average number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. All pupils have been referred by their local authority or by educational psychologists or other agencies. All pupils currently on roll have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupil has English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in February 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 maximum capacity from 8 to 16 pupils and to increase the upper registered age limit from 16 to 18 years. The school does not intend to increase its pupil roll further until new larger premises on the existing site are completed in September 2025. The increase in the upper age limit is designed to enable those pupils requiring an extended period at the school to conclude their accredited coursework to do so. 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 (curriculum), 2A (relationships and sex education), 3 (teaching) and 4 (framework for pupil performance), and Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	Met
Part 1, paragraph 2A (relationships and sex education)	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 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, paragraphs 25–29 (maintenance, acoustics, lighting, water supply and outdoor space)	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, 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 continue to be suitable for pupils with SEND beyond statutory school age. The school makes appropriate provision for those with SEND and EAL, and the school’s provision meets the needs of those pupils with 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. There are sufficient and suitably qualified teaching staff. 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 age range and total pupil numbers are increased 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 designated safeguarding lead (DSL), oversees the deputy DSL and ensures that safeguarding matters are reported, recorded, collated and monitored effectively and that appropriate actions are taken. The DSL has an effective relationship with local agencies and makes appropriate referrals. The DSL and deputy DSL have sufficient capacity to ensure effective safeguarding implementation regarding the proposed increase in pupil numbers. The safeguarding arrangements are reviewed

annually in liaison with external advisors on behalf of the proprietor. They have appropriate knowledge, liaise closely with the DSL and enable the proprietor's effective oversight.

- 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 behavioural and learning needs of the pupils at the school. Staff training in safeguarding, including for all members of the safeguarding team and the proprietor, is comprehensive including appropriate attention to handling allegations and online safety. The use of technology by pupils is suitably controlled. Where allegations are made the school responds appropriately making prompt referral to external agencies, including the Disclosure and Barring Service and Teaching Regulation Agency.
- 2.13 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers and the age range are increased as proposed. In particular, the school has considered the additional safeguarding implications of extending the age range to accommodate pupils of sixth-form age.

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 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 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 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.
- 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 their activities onsite and offsite, and specific aspects of risk related to their SEMH and SEND. Staff receive relevant training and completed risk assessments are checked, monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness. The school has risk assessed the proposed changes to numbers and the age range of pupils effectively.
- 2.25 The school is likely to continue to meet the standard if pupil numbers are increased 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, 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 new 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 new 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 new 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 new 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 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 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 new premises.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the proprietor who is also the head, senior leaders and other members of staff. He visited different areas of the school, the proposed site of the planned new premises, observed lessons and talked with groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.