



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Solefield School

February 2023

School's details

School	Solefield School			
DfE number	886/6038			
Registered charity number	293466			
Address	Solefield School Solefields Road Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1PH			
Telephone number	01732 452142			
Email address	office@solefieldschool.org			
Headteacher	Mrs Helen McClure			
Chair of governors	Mr Robert Clewley			
Age range	4 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	150			
	EYFS	7	Pre-prep	17
	Prep	126		
Date of inspection	22 February 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Solefield School is an independent day school for male pupils aged 4 to 13 years in Sevenoaks, Kent. It was founded in 1948 and became a charitable trust in the 1980s. The school is administered by a governing body. A new head has been appointed since the previous inspection. The school comprises two departments: pre-prep, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for pupils aged 4 to 7 years; and prep, for pupils aged 7 to 13.
- 1.2 The school has 46 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and two have an education, health and care plan. There are 17 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and education quality inspection in December 2019.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.3 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to extend the lower age range from 4 to 3 years in April 2023. 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 1, paragraphs 2 (curriculum) and 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 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 and relationships and sex education (RSE) [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2 and 2A]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 The school has a suitable curriculum policy which is implemented effectively. This policy has been appropriately adapted to provide additionally for children aged 3 to 4 years of age. The school has detailed schemes of work for children in the EYFS and new schemes have been adapted for the younger children. The daily schedule has been planned to give pupils sufficient experience in a wide range of learning programmes including literacy, numeracy, understanding of the world, story time, 'show and tell', library time and child-initiated play. Teachers will visit younger children in their classroom for French, music, art and drama. The timetable includes suitable periods of time for physical education and outdoor learning. Provision is planned effectively for targeted interventions for children with SEND, depending on individual need. Pupils currently receive relationships education in the school, and this will be extended for the younger pupils as appropriate. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 receive sex education as is required. The curriculum is designed to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to make good progress.

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

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 Teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced and have good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the EYFS schemes of work to be taught. Lessons are well planned, and pupils were observed to be learning in calm and well-organised classroom environments. Teaching methods include effective behaviour management and suitable use of teaching resources. Teachers encourage child-centred play planned around personal stages of development. This allows pupils to progress appropriately at their own pace and level of ability. A suitably qualified teacher experienced in EYFS, and a teaching assistant, are soon to be appointed. The year groups throughout the school are small and it is intended that the 3 to 4-year-old class, to be called 'Little Acorns', will not exceed 16 in number. A suitable classroom is being adapted which includes toilets and a dedicated outdoor learning and play area. Suitable resources are in the process of being purchased.

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

- 2.5 The school meets the standard.
- 2.6 A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place throughout the school, including in the EYFS. The framework currently used in Reception has been adapted to suit the proposed younger age range and it uses ongoing qualitative assessments to evaluate pupils' progress. The use of journals to record and report attainment and progress to parents is already well established in the Reception class and will be adapted for use with the younger age group.

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 an education that has the personal development of the pupils at its heart. Understanding of the world, story time, circle time, assembly and child-initiated play are suitably designed to provide children with the opportunity to learn about themselves and others; develop social skills; and gradually gain an understanding of the world around them. The school promotes fundamental British values effectively. Pupils were observed to be responsible and socially integrated across all ages, playing well together and helping each other learn.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.9 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.10 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

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.
- 2.12 The school implements its safeguarding arrangements effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, including children in the EYFS. The safeguarding policy and procedures are based on the most up-to-date statutory guidance: *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022* (KCSIE) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018). The policy is further supported by appropriate guidance including for whistleblowing, e-safety and preventing extremism and radicalisation, together with a staff code of conduct. These documents are understood by staff, who are confident to use them as required.
- 2.13 The safeguarding team includes a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and five deputies including one responsible for managing safeguarding in the EYFS. All designated staff have appropriate levels of safeguarding training, including with the local safeguarding partnership. Teaching and support staff are trained annually, and additional updates are provided each term as required. New staff undergo suitable face-to-face induction training. The lead governor for safeguarding conducts a thorough annual audit of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, maintains close contact with the DSL and offers appropriate support. The governors are trained in safeguarding and conduct a thorough annual review of the policy and its implementation.
- 2.14 There is prompt and effective liaison between the DSL and the relevant local authorities, including children's services, when advice is required. The school has appropriate measures to deal with an allegation against any adult if needed. Means of listening to children are suitable and pupils report that they can take concerns to any member of staff. They are confident they will be listened to and that any concerns will be handled quickly. Detailed child protection records are held securely and with suitable confidentiality. It is likely that these arrangements will continue to meet the requirements with the addition of 3 to 4 year-olds to the school.

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

- 2.15 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]

- 2.16 The school meets the standard.

- 2.17 There is a clear vision for the future development of the school, and leaders and managers have planned accordingly to educate children between 3 and 4 years of age. Governors maintain suitable oversight of policies and their implementation, and they and senior leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate for their roles so that the other standards are met consistently and they actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that Solefield School's application for material change should be approved. The governance and management have made suitable plans and arrangements to educate pupils between the ages of 3 to 4 years. The school has sufficient space and facilities to accommodate the extension to the EYFS setting and numbers are expected to be small, between 8 and 16 pupils in the future. The setting has suitable security in place.
- 3.2 The school has budgeted effectively to increase the range of resources required and arrangements are in place to appoint a suitably qualified teacher and teacher assistant for the setting. The safeguarding in the school is secure and well managed. Governance and leadership and management have the knowledge, skills and understanding required for maintaining the required standards and understand their responsibilities to promote the welfare of the pupils.

4. Summary of evidence

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

Inspectors

Mrs Maureen Bradley

Reporting inspector