



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Forest School

January 2023

School's details

School	Forest School			
DfE number	320/6000			
Registered charity number	312677			
Address	Forest School College Place London E17 3PY			
Telephone number	020 8520 1744			
Email address	office@forest.org.uk			
Head	Mr Marcus Cliff Hodges			
Chair of governors	Mr David Wilson			
Proprietor	Forest School			
Age range	4 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1522			
	EYFS	48	Prep	288
	Seniors	910	Sixth Form	276
Date of inspection	20 January 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Forest School is a co-educational day school. It consists of an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting; a prep school for pupils in Years 1 to 6; a senior school for those in Years 7 to 11; and a sixth form. It is administered by a board of governors known as the governing council. The school has 171 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has an education, health and care plan. There are 210 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in May 2021.

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 its capacity from 1233 to 1530 pupils. 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 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 proprietors)	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

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 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils, are implemented effectively, including those relating to the Prevent duty. The school ensures a culture of listening to pupils and of respect for others, including those with protected characteristics. Pupils confirm that they have a variety of people to whom they can turn for support if they have a concern. Senior pupils may also access several partner organisations external to the school. Pupils receive a response when they express concerns in school, and appropriate action is taken where necessary. This was confirmed during interviews with pupils and staff and by records of safeguarding. Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe, including when online.
- 2.5 All staff, including those in positions of responsibility for safeguarding, are suitably trained in line with locally agreed procedures. Interviews with leaders and staff from all parts of the school, confirm they fully understand their respective roles in safeguarding. In particular, all staff understand different types of abuse including child-on-child abuse and sexual harassment, including the particular vulnerability of those with SEND. They also understand the need to report concerns expressed at a low level. Staff are ready to identify, report and investigate potential abuse. The safeguarding policy contains suitable guidance about reporting low-level concerns about adults working in the school and self-referral 'neutral reporting'. This guidance is understood by staff. Records show that staff report any safeguarding concerns to the appropriate person in a timely fashion. Senior leaders communicate concerns to relevant outside agencies effectively. They take prompt action where concerns are raised, or incidents occur.
- 2.6 Suitable arrangements to handle allegations against adults working with pupils are implemented effectively. Safeguarding is effectively managed. There is an appropriate staff code of conduct and suitable arrangements for whistleblowing. Interviews with staff confirmed suitable understanding of these and willingness to act appropriately should the need arise. Staff recruitment procedures meet all relevant requirements.
- 2.7 The governors maintain appropriate oversight of safeguarding procedures, completing sufficiently regular reviews of safeguarding policy and practice effectively. Governors are appropriately trained in safeguarding. The safeguarding team represent all parts of the school and are sufficient in number and expertise to support effective safeguarding for pupils within the school community, and for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.
- 2.9 The governors and senior leaders ensure that a suitable written health and safety policy is implemented effectively. This enables compliance with the relevant health and safety laws in all parts

of the senior and prep school, including areas of the school newly converted to classrooms and offices. The policy and related materials provide staff with suitable guidance on health and safety matters. Appropriate records are kept of relevant health and safety checks. Matters of health and safety are regularly reviewed and reported to the governors for further review. The school has maintained the 'one way' system of movement, initiated during Covid-19, in order to effectively manage the movement of pupils on site. Arrangements are appropriate for the proposed increase in the number of pupils and make it likely that regulations will continue to be met.

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

2.10 The school meets the standard.

2.11 The governors ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, for all parts of the school. Appropriate fire risk assessments have been undertaken by a suitably qualified person. The school has implemented the required actions suitably and keeps the assessments under review. There are appropriately trained competent persons on site responsible for fire safety. A suitable number of staff are trained effectively to support fire evacuation procedures for the current pupils and for the predicted increase in numbers of pupils. Records show fire evacuations take place regularly, pupils confirm they understand the correct procedures. Records show appropriate installation and maintenance of fire detection and firefighting equipment. The school has appropriately altered its procedures for evacuation and use of, some communal spaces due to the increase in numbers. Arrangements are appropriate for the proposed increase in the number of pupils and make it likely that regulations will continue to be met.

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

2.12 The school meets the standard.

2.13 Discussions with pupils and staff, together with observations around the school, confirm that appropriate numbers of staff are suitably deployed to ensure adequate supervision of pupils, including in the EYFS. Arrangements are appropriate for the proposed increase in the number of pupils and make it likely that regulations will continue to be met.

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

2.14 The school meets the standard.

2.15 The welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy. Senior leaders and staff demonstrate an effective understanding of risk assessment. Effective assessments exist for all relevant aspects of the school premises and activities, including for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

2.16 The school meets the standards.

2.17 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Arrangements are appropriate for the proposed increase in the number of pupils and make it likely that regulations will continue to be met.

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

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 The school provides suitable toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils. It provides appropriate accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils and for the short-term care of sick pupils. The school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured. This includes for the re-developed, additional accommodation adapted to meet the proposed increase in numbers, and for the re-developed prep school which was completed prior to the previous inspection. In discussions, staff and pupils confirmed that, in their experience, all matters of maintenance are dealt with satisfactorily and swiftly. The acoustic conditions of the school facilities and internal and external lighting are suitable. Suitable drinking water facilities, clearly marked as such, are provided. The school provides suitable outdoor space for pupils' physical education and for their recreation, including outdoor education areas in the EYFS. It is likely that the standards will continue to be met with the increased number of pupils.

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

- 2.20 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]

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 The governors ensure that senior leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all the other standards are consistently met. They actively promote the educational wellbeing of the pupils. Suitable planning for the increase in school capacity has been executed effectively. This makes it likely that the standards will continue to be met with the increase in pupil numbers.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to increase its total pupil numbers to 1530 is granted. The governors have made suitable arrangements to ensure that suitable health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment procedures are implemented. Detailed plans to develop the school's accommodation and facilities have been part of a long-term strategic plan to meet the needs of the projected increase in numbers. These and other associated facilities are now in place to cater for the capacity increase. The premises, accommodation and staffing are suitably resourced and maintained to meet the needs of the proposed number of pupils.

4. Summary of evidence

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

Inspectors

Mrs Vivien Sergeant

Reporting inspector