

Hope Tree School

Nursery House, Manor Farm, Impington, Cambridgeshire CB24 9NG

Unique reference number (URN): 148733

Material change inspection report:

7 May 2026

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change is implemented

This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), which is the registration authority for independent schools. The school has applied to the DfE to make a material change to its registration. The school proposes to change the age range of pupils and change the maximum number of pupils attending.

The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

When we carry out material change inspections of independent schools, we report on the school's likely compliance with part 8 of the independent school standards first. Under part 8, the proprietor is required to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards consistently. The standard in part 8 is intended to ensure that the quality of leadership and management at the school is sufficient for that purpose.

The chairs of the proprietor body are both active in the school. One is the current headteacher and the other the head of pastoral care. Both have an in depth understanding of the needs of the pupils who attend here.

The proprietors understand the independent school standards well (the standards). They effectively apply this knowledge to ensure that the standards are consistently met.

Pupils' wellbeing is prioritised by the proprietor. Pupils' best interests are considered in all decisions made by school leaders. While the school has the staff, space and curriculum to support the proposed changes, they are committed to a steady and effective school expansion, as to not impact negatively the quality of the provision in place for existing pupils.

There are clear layers of accountability and oversight within the school leadership team. An advisory board made up of professionals, also provides quality assurance support and additional oversight for safeguarding processes.

These standards are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Curriculum

The school has an ambitious and well sequenced curriculum. There is a clear overview of what pupils will learn and when. This includes clearly identified end points in all subject areas, supported by detailed schemes of work.

The school has mapped out the curriculum for the proposed post 16 provision. The programme for proposed students will include academic study, resits for those who did not achieve grade 4 in English and Mathematics and a wider development offer. This will include a careers and work experience programme. The school has responded to requests from stakeholders to provide a post-16 offer that will prevent pupils who can not access mainstream college, from becoming not in education, employment or training.

The curriculum is suitably broad. There is appropriate adaptation to breadth. The proprietors have prioritised pupils being taught English and Mathematics. This includes any pupil who may be at the earlier stages of foundational knowledge.

The personal, social, health and economics education (PSHE) curriculum is detailed. It includes teaching about careers and relationships and sex education (RSE). The content that will be taught to students within post-16 is planned.

Teaching

Teachers understand the needs of pupils well. Lesson times are calm and purposeful. Pupils are taught ambitious curriculum content that aligns with the school's plans.

Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. The number and skill of teachers already in place is suitable for the requested change. The school is recruiting further teaching and support staff. The proprietors will ensure these staff are rapidly trained to support the needs of pupils.

Assessment

There is a bespoke assessment process in place for when pupils arrive. This includes assessment both on pupils' academic knowledge as well as their wider personal skills.

Information from assessments is well used to inform lesson content and support for pupils. Assessment information is also used effectively to build pupil's support plans. These also align with the content of pupils' education, health and care plans.

These standards are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school promotes fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their PSHE and Stepping Stones curriculums. Pupils explore various cultures and traditions. They learn about diversity and protected characteristics.

Pupils learn about a range of public services and British institutions. They regularly engage in form-time discussion about key global and political events in a balanced way. During which, pupils learn to consider and share their views as well as listen and respect those of others.

Weekly off-site visits are an important opportunity for pupils to develop their independence and life skills. Teachers use any offsite activities to help pupils develop important skills, including how to use public transport.

Post-16 students will participate in the school's existing careers and enrichment programme through Stepping Stones. They will have the same independent careers advisors that will be working with key stage 4 pupils this academic year. A

mixture of work experience and work-based experiences will be used in a bespoke way, to develop pupils' readiness for life beyond this school.

These standards are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Safeguarding

There is a suitable safeguarding policy in place. It outlines the school process for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns. While there are few safeguarding concerns that emerge with the current cohort, when a concern has been raised it has been dealt with rapidly and appropriately. Safeguarding records are detailed and robust.

The school's single central record shows that the appropriate checks have been made, at the right time, for adults who work with pupils at the school. This includes contractors.

The school has implemented a well-structured PSHE and RSE programme. Within which, it provides bespoke learning to pupils to meet the identified contextual safeguarding risks they face. This includes online and community safety.

Health and safety, fire and risk assessments

The proprietors are highly knowledgeable about the independent school standards. They are aware of the range of premises checks that are required. They complete these diligently and frequently. They make sure that the school premises is safe for pupils and those who work there.

There is an effective health and safety and risk assessment policy in place. These are well implemented in daily practice. This is evident in the well written risk assessments already in place. The school has had an external fire risk assessment carried out. It understands the findings of this well and has taken rapid action on minor recommendations made by the contractor. Ongoing checks on fire doors, alarm systems and safety equipment ensure compliance with fire safety regulation.

The school has an appropriate ratio of pupils to staff. The staff already in place are suitable for a steady increase and more staff are planned to be recruited over the coming months. The school is committed to consistent therapeutic aligned practice to support pupils' needs. It has trained staff well to implement this approach. Staff are consistently skilled and expert in the support they provide to pupils.

Consequently, pupils are often regulated and show consistently positive attitudes to learning.

These standards are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Robust pre-employment checks are conducted to ensure the suitability of adults recruited to the school.

The single central record complies with statutory guidance. It includes all required information on staff, including proprietors and those in leadership roles. The proprietor regularly reviews the single central record to verify that all checks have been made.

The school does not currently use supply staff. However, it is aware of the checks it would need to make if it did.

These standards are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Toilet and washing facilities, water supply, changing accommodation and showers

There are a suitable number of toilets and washing facilities in the school for the current and proposed number of pupils. Pupils access physical education at local venues. All of these venues have shower and changing facilities that pupils can use.

There are suitable sources of drinking water for pupils. This includes taps or bottled water in classrooms.

Medical room and accommodation for pupils' therapy needs

The school has suitable medical facilities for pupils. This includes a well-stocked first aid room. The first aid room includes a sink and is placed closely to a toilet.

There are multiple spaces through the school where pupils' therapeutic needs are met. This includes spaces for therapy and pastoral support. It also includes

outdoor spaces with equipment purposefully in place to support pupils' sensory regulation.

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils

The school prioritises the well-being and safety of pupils. The school site is well maintained and safe for pupils to access.

There is suitable access to all onsite facilities. This includes disability access. All of which is well detailed within the school's accessibility plan.

There are a suitable number of learning spaces in the school to meet the needs of the proposed cohort increase.

Lighting and acoustic conditions

All areas of the school are well lit. Mostly by ample sources of natural light. The proprietor has ensured that the outside space is safe by installing a suitable number of exterior lights.

Inside the building, emergency lights are placed throughout the school. These are regularly checked by the proprietor to ensure they are in full working order.

Outdoor space

There is a vast and well organised outdoor space for pupils to use. The school has installed equipment for pupils to use outside, that supports their regulation through the day.

There is adequate space outside for the proposed increase of pupils. Pupils' physical education activities all take place offsite at local venues.

These standards are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

The school's accessibility plan

The school has a suitably written accessibility plan in place. This is published on the school's website.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. Inspectors checked the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our updated inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The Inspector spoke with the proprietors during the inspection.

The school is part of Hope Tree School Ltd. The proprietor body has two chairs: Rebecca Sands and Fiona D'arcy. This school is the only one run by the proprietor body. The school operates from the following address: Nursery House, Manor Farm, Impington, Cambridgeshire CB24 9NG.

The school provides full time education to Autistic girls. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. All places are commissioned by a number of local authorities in the region.

Lead inspector

Nina Marabese

His Majesty's Inspector

About this school

Proprietor	Hope Tree School Ltd
Headteacher	Mrs Rebecca Sands
Type of school	Other independent special school
Capacity	36
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	35
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Annual fees for day pupils	£45,000
Email address	admin@hopetreeschool.co.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026