



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Wetherby Kensington

August 2023

School's details

School	Wetherby Kensington			
DfE number	207/6013			
Address	Wetherby Kensington 4 Wetherby Gardens London SW5 0JN			
Telephone number	0203 910 9760			
Email address	learn@wetherbykensington.co.uk			
Head	Ms Liz McLaughlin			
Chair of governors	Sir John Ritblat			
Proprietor	Alpha Plus Group Ltd			
Age range	4 to 8 years			
Number of pupils on roll	177			
	EYFS at Edge Street	38	Wetherby Gardens	139
Date of inspection	1 August 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Wetherby Kensington is an independent school for male pupils from Reception to Year 3, located in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It was established in 2017 by the Alpha Plus Group, which is responsible for its governance. The school has 55 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), one of whom has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 32 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in January 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 open a new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting. This consists of a co-educational nursery, Little Wetherby, on a new site at Edge Street, which will educate children from the ages of 2 to 4 years. To accommodate this, the school has requested a change in its age range to 2 to 8 years and an increase in its registered overall capacity from 176 to 321. The original part of the school, located at 4 Wetherby Gardens will continue to function with no changes. 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. This visit focused on the new premises at Edge Street.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2 – 4 (curriculum, teaching and 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)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 – 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 – 29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum, teaching and framework for pupils' performance [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4]

- 2.1 The school is likely to meet the standards.
- 2.2 The curriculum in the new nursery has been planned to provide children in the EYFS with appropriately broad experiences which cover the seven areas of learning through play and exploration. The leadership has designed planning to be based around children's individual needs, interests and developmental stages. The curriculum intention is to have a strong focus on communication and language, with a particular focus on the three prime areas of learning for the youngest children. It is designed to include, appropriately, some specialist teaching, such as for physical development and expressive arts. The school recognises the importance of building strong links with parents of nursery children as being essential to each child's wellbeing and development.
- 2.3 The staff appointed are all experienced early years practitioners already working within the Alpha Plus group. The setting recognises the characteristics of effective learning as central to the planning of children's learning. Teaching is intended to focus on active learning through play and exploration, creativity and critical thinking. Staff will extend the system of recording and communicating children's progress currently used in Reception classes in Wetherby Kensington to cover children in Nursery. The school is committed to early identification of any children who require additional support, for instance if they manifest a delay in any aspect of their development or any with SEND. They have suitable experience to do this successfully and will be able to draw on support from learning support staff on the existing site as well as links with external professional services. Staff are confident in developing spoken language for those children with EAL, as well as their understanding of English. The school is alert to the need to provide additional challenge to children who are progressing at a faster rate and staff have sufficient training to do this successfully. The school either already has, or is purchasing, suitable resources and equipment to support the early years curriculum. The site has limited space for children to engage in outdoor learning. The school is addressing this through arranging weekly sessions at the local ecology centre and other regular excursions to local parks or playgrounds.
- 2.4 As part of the school's assessment arrangements the setting has effective plans to carry out the two-year-old progress check in the first year of Nursery and to discuss this with each child's parents. Staff intend to continue with observational assessment throughout each child's time in the nursery, sharing this with parents and using it to plan next steps. Staff recognise that careful transition arrangements for children moving to Reception classes in other schools or Wetherby Kensington is an important factor in ensuring seamless progression in the children's development. They have sufficient experience to ensure such arrangements operate effectively.

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

- 2.5 The school is likely to meet the standard.
- 2.6 Scrutiny of the school's documentation and information from the recent inspection of Wetherby Kensington confirms that values which promote children's personal and social development and wellbeing are an intrinsic part of the school's ethos. These values underpin planning for children's development in the new nursery. Staff have effective plans to support children's personal and social development through modelling, routines and clear expectations. In addition, they intend to provide varied opportunities for each child to develop confidence and self-regulation supported by their key

person. Staff also plan to provide activities which promote children's growing awareness of the skills needed to work and play together successfully such as being kind, sharing and taking turns.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.7 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.8 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

- 2.9 The school meets the standard.
- 2.10 The school implements safeguarding arrangements for its existing pupils effectively. These follow its policy, which is reviewed and amended annually in line with statutory guidance. Senior leaders are aware of the particular vulnerabilities of nursery-age children and have added additional guidance, such as for intimate care, to existing policies specific to the EYFS. These include suitable procedures for missing or uncollected children and the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting. All staff and governors receive annual safeguarding training which takes into account effectively any changes to statutory guidance. They also receive regular safeguarding updates. The school has appointed a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for the new setting, with sufficient authority to carry out this role, together with a deputy, both trained in safeguarding at a higher level. The new setting will use the same electronic system to record safeguarding concerns as the main school and DSLs from both sites will maintain weekly contact. The DSL has a clear understanding of consultation and referral arrangements with local safeguarding partners.
- 2.11 Staff interviewed, already working in Reception at Wetherby Kensington or transferring from Nurseries within the group, show a clear willingness to refer any concerns promptly to the DSL. They are aware of the particular skills necessary in observing and listening to young children whose limited verbal communication may prevent them from being able to clearly articulate their fears or unhappiness. Staff are aware of clear internal pathways to report any concerns they may have about any adults working with the children to the head, including any low-level concerns. The school's records confirm that any safeguarding concerns are handled correctly, including referral to an external agency when necessary. Whilst the young age of Nursery children precludes much independent use of devices, the DSL is aware of the need to monitor all use of technology on the site and to ensure safe working practices. The governing body operates robust oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements through its annual review, which includes visits by governors to the school and conversations with staff and pupils. Governors also support the work of DSLs through organising regular safeguarding forums within the group to share lessons learned.

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

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 The school's arrangements for health and safety are supported by thorough policy and procedures which the proprietor implements throughout all schools in the group. These are designed effectively to ensure suitable oversight of arrangements on the new site. Equipment and facilities on the new site are currently being tested and serviced in readiness for the nursery's opening. Suitable amendments to the existing accommodation have been made, such as the installation of lower handrails on the staircases and new toilet cubicles. Health and safety are audited regularly, and records of servicing

and maintenance kept efficiently to promote the safety of children, staff and visitors. New staff are provided with health and safety information as part of their induction.

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

2.14 The school meets the standard.

2.15 The school has undertaken appropriate measures to ensure the new site complies with fire safety requirements. The site has undergone a fire risk assessment by an external specialist and required actions have been taken. For example, new fire extinguishers have been installed throughout. Procedures to ensure that fire detection and fighting equipment are maintained at appropriate intervals, are well established in the school. Leaders have established an appropriate fire muster point for the site and are planning regular evacuation drills. Staff will all undertake fire safety awareness training.

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

2.16 The school meets the standard.

2.17 The school has appropriate procedures to supervise children throughout the school day and these are intended to be applied to its new site. Staffing arrangements are in line with recent government guidance on suitable ratios of children to adults in the EYFS and reflect the particular needs of the youngest children. For example, sleeping children will be supervised in a quiet area and information relating to their welfare communicated to parents.

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

2.18 The school meets the standard.

2.19 The school has prepared an appropriate raft of risk assessments for the site. These reflect appropriately the young age of the children. They cover activities in the setting, its facilities and occasions when children will be off site. Risk assessments identify potential hazards and the actions needed to reduce the likelihood of their arising. Elements that require a daily check have also been identified. The school is aware that these risk assessments will need rigorous review as new staff begin to use them, to ensure they take sufficient account the additional risks posed by the young age of the children.

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

2.20 The school meets the standards.

2.21 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors and a register is kept as required. Evidence of checks carried out on staff newly appointed to work in the nursery confirms that the standards have been met.

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

2.22 The school meets the standards.

2.23 The school premises are being well prepared to a suitable standard for the admission of EYFS children. There are suitable toilet and washing facilities for the numbers of children currently being admitted and effective plans for further provision as numbers grow. Accommodation for any child who becomes

unwell or requires first aid is suitable. It is adjacent to the office in order to facilitate adult support and supervision and the effective administration of any medication. There are sufficient numbers of paediatric-qualified first aiders for the new setting. Pupils will have access to drinking water which the school plans to label as suitable for this purpose. The premises have been re-decorated and rooms to be used initially renovated, such as with new radiators and lighting. The school has efficient procedures to address any maintenance requirements. Whilst there is limited outdoor play space, there is a large hall for physical recreation in addition to planned excursions.

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

- 2.24 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.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33]

- 2.25 The school meets the standard.
- 2.26 The school's complaints procedure meets statutory requirements and will apply to the new setting. Effective records show that invariably any parental concern is resolved quickly and informally but that should a parent make a formal complaint it is handled in accordance with the school's policy.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.27 The school meets the standard.
- 2.28 The school's leadership is effectively supported by governors who monitor compliance with statutory requirements appropriately and offer guidance and support. Leaders, including those identified for the new site, have the requisite skills and knowledge to make it likely that the standards will continue to be met with the addition of a new site. Leadership and management have either implemented, or are in the course of implementing, appropriate measures to promote the wellbeing of Nursery children. They demonstrate a suitable understanding of specific considerations pertinent to a co-educational setting. Evidence indicates that the independent school standards and early years requirements are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to increase its age range to 2 to 8 years by starting a co-educational nursery at Edge Street for children from 2 to 4 years be approved. This will result in the school gradually increasing its capacity. The maximum total number of pupils envisaged in the material change application is reasonable in this context and likely to be supported effectively by the school's provision.
- 3.2 The proprietor has made suitable staff appointments and arranged for an appropriate EYFS learning programme to be devised. The accommodation has been renovated to be suitable for Nursery-age children. Appropriate measures are in place for the new site, covering health and safety, fire safety, supervision and risk assessment. Arrangements for supervision and safeguarding are appropriate for the needs of children from the age of two.

4. Summary of evidence

4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of the school's governing body and the director with responsibility for the EYFS. They visited different areas of the school and scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece

Reporting inspector

Mr Justin Spanswick

Assistant reporting inspector