

St Edward's School

Melchet Court, Sherfield English, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 6ZR

Unique reference number (URN): 116584

Material change inspection report:

4 March 2026

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision 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 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.

Leadership and management are highly effective. Trustees provide robust governance for the school. Using an eyes-on, hands-off approach, they provide detailed oversight and appropriate challenge for school leaders. Furthermore, they demonstrate a secure understanding of the independent school standards (the standards), statutory duties and equality legislation. They carry out regular audits to review the school's work. Trustees use this information to evaluate accurately all aspects of the school's work.

Leaders' proposed change demonstrates a firm commitment to meeting local need and ensuring pupils' best interests remain central to decision-making. They ensure that staff know pupils well and provide the support they need within a nurturing setting.

The school has already managed an expansion in pupil numbers successfully prior to its previous standard inspection. Leaders have extensive knowledge about teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are highly ambitious for pupils and have a deep understanding of their needs. Developments for this new proposal have been carefully planned and fully resourced.

The proprietor has ensured that the standard in this part is likely to continue to be met if the material change application is approved by the DfE.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Safeguarding

The school's safeguarding policy aligns with current government guidance issued by the Secretary of State. It set out the actions staff must take if they have concerns about a pupil. The policy is published on the school's website.

Leaders have established a secure safeguarding culture. The school's clear systems, established good practice and effective oversight underpin this. Leaders have undertaken the additional training required for their roles. They work effectively with external agencies, so that pupils and their families receive appropriate and timely support. Staff receive ongoing safeguarding training throughout the year, so they remain alert to risks and are confident in their responsibilities. Governors and school leaders regularly review safeguarding practices and procedures.

Health, safety and fire

The school has an appropriate health and safety policy that supports the welfare of pupils and staff. The site manager and his team maintain highly effective oversight of property management across the school's large site. The policy is implemented consistently and effectively across the school. Leaders complete rigorous health and safety checks, including commissioning external audits and tests, alongside regular internal ongoing monitoring. They address all recommended actions promptly to assure themselves of pupil safety.

The school has robust fire safety policies and systems of checks carried out by staff and external specialists. An external fire risk assessment has been completed. Leaders have acted swiftly to address and resolve any recommended actions from this audit. Fire safety risks are monitored through weekly tests of alarms, call

points and emergency lighting to ensure ongoing compliance with fire safety regulations.

Staffing levels are appropriate. Well-trained staff support and engage pupils effectively throughout the day. The school is recruiting additional teachers and therapeutic staff to meet the needs of the proposed increased capacity.

Risk assessment

Leaders have established suitable risk assessment processes that cover the wide range of school activities. This includes assessments for work experience, traffic access to the site and specialist classrooms. Pupils' individual risk assessments are reviewed regularly. They clearly identify pupils' vulnerabilities and associated risks, alongside proactive strategies to reduce potential harm. These assessments are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain responsive to pupils' needs.

The proprietor has ensured that the standards checked in these parts are likely to continue to be met if the material change application is approved by the DfE.

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

The recruitment checks made on staff, supply staff and the proprietor

The school's recruitment process is well structured and fully reflects safer recruitment expectations. The school compliance team provides effective support. They have ensured that all appointments are checked prior to commencement. Leaders involved in recruitment are trained in safer recruitment procedures. This enables them to apply safeguarding expectations confidently and consistently throughout the process.

The single central record of these recruitment checks

The single central record (SCR) is accurately maintained, kept up to date and includes all staff. All necessary checks for supply staff are completed and verified to ensure their suitability to work with pupils. The governors and school leaders check the SCR regularly to ensure that it reflects the most recent statutory guidance. All required checks, including those for individuals in leadership and management roles, are completed and recorded appropriately.

The school does not use supply staff. However, leaders are aware of the checks they need to make should they use supply staff in the future.

The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to continue to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

The school is organised into 5 teaching hubs: Eden, Lower, Middle, Upper and Upper 'Alternative Curriculum' schools. There are adequate changing accommodation and lockers for storage in all hubs, some of which have shower facilities. The Bridge, the therapeutic centre, also has adequate facilities.

The on-site sports facilities, which include a swimming pool, indoor play area and a well-equipped gym, also have their own dedicated changing areas with shower facilities.

Pupils have access to drinking water throughout the school day and all drinking water points are clearly labelled. There are sufficient toilets for pupils and staff for the proposed increase. These toilets are suitably located and all have separate handwashing facilities. All taps accessed by pupils are fitted with temperature control valves to prevent scalding.

Medical room and accommodation for pupils' therapy needs

The school has 2 suitable medical rooms for pupils. Each room contains a sink, is located next to a toilet, includes a bed and suitable first-aid provisions. The main medical room is specifically stocked to meet the needs of the whole school. In this room, pupils' medication is stored and securely locked away. Across the school, including in the specialised learning spaces, a range of first-aid kits, including specialist kits, are readily available.

The school provides a range of spaces to support its therapeutic services. Each learning hub, including the school's therapeutic building, has designated rooms. These include sensory rooms, speech and language areas and quiet breakout rooms. Outside, pupils can access sensory play equipment, such as swings and climbing frames, to support their needs.

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils

The school premises provide a safe, well-resourced environment for pupils. A single fire alarm system operates across all the buildings. Call points, fire doors and safety signs are appropriately located in line with fire regulations. Emergency lighting is in place across the school and tested regularly. The school also has adequate external lighting.

The site is secure. Leaders have designed drop off and collection arrangements that prioritise pupil safety and support the smooth running of the school day.

Lighting and acoustic conditions

The site is organised in 21 class bases, all of which are appropriately furnished and resourced. There are 7 breakout rooms and 10 therapy rooms. These are all split across the hubs so pupils can access these directly. All classrooms provide suitable lighting and acoustic conditions, designed to be low arousal to meet the sensory needs of the pupils.

The school has a range of specialist classrooms available for pupils across the hubs to access. These include science labs, a dedicated art room and a design and technology workshop. In addition, older pupils can access a working garage and plumbing classrooms. All learning spaces are light, spacious and comfortable. Furniture and class layouts are appropriate to their intended purpose and careful consideration has been given to cater for pupils' individual behaviour, emotional and sensory needs.

Outdoor space

The school's extensive grounds offer a wide range of opportunities for outdoor physical education. Facilities include tennis courts, an artificial grass play area, a mountain bike trail and a motorbike track. The grounds also feature a large fishing lake. This is ample play space with large climbing and swinging equipment to support sensory play.

The grounds are used to support the school's specialist life skills curriculum and include large playing fields, an apple orchard, an animal care space and horticultural areas.

Overall, the premises are suitable for accommodating a proposed total of 150 pupils.

The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to continue to be met.

The school's accessibility plan

The proprietor has in place an accessibility policy and plan that covers accessibility in relation to the required areas of curriculum, physical environment and written information for the proposed age range.

The proprietor has ensured that Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 is likely to continue to be met.

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

The proprietor body has requested a material change to increase the maximum number of pupils on roll to 150.

The Department for Education commissioned the inspectors to inspect the suitability of the school's provision in relation to the welfare, health and safety of pupils the suitability of staff; the suitability of premises and accommodation; and the quality of leadership and management.

The inspector checked the suitability of the new premises during their site check. They met with the headteacher and a range of other staff. The inspector also met with the representatives of the proprietor body.

The inspector visited lessons and spoke with pupils and staff. They also reviewed documents in relation to health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment.

The inspector also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers. These requirements of the independent school standards are met.

The inspector confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently operates from Melchet Court, Sherfield English, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 6ZR.

The school is currently operating with 101 pupils, which exceeds its registered capacity of 100 as set out in the school's registration agreement.

The school is section 41 approved. This means parents have the right to request that it is named on their child's education, health and care (EHC) plan.

The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The school currently uses 2 unregistered alternative provisions.

Lead inspector

Laura James

His Majesty's Inspector

About this school

Proprietor	St. Edward's School
Headteacher	Mr Graham Maher
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
Capacity	100
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	101
Number of part-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	0
Age range of pupils	9 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Annual fees for day pupils	£85,896
Email address	admin@melchetcourt.com

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