

Material change inspection report

13 June 2025

Esland Bedford School

Unit 54

Wrest Park

Silsoe

Bedfordshire

MK45 4HS

Inspection outcome

The school has requested a material change request to increase its capacity from 50 to 70 pupils.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved subject to the planned works to the newly acquired building being completed as described.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR Paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 11, 12, 14, 16

1. Leaders give safeguarding a high priority. They understand very well the particular safeguarding risks for pupils who attend the school. Leaders put an individual risk assessment in place for every pupil, with suitable measures to mitigate the risks identified.
2. Staff receive comprehensive and ongoing safeguarding training. New staff are given in-depth safeguarding training as part of a five-day induction programme provided by the proprietor. Once they start working at the school, staff receive regular ongoing training to ensure they remain up to date and well informed.
3. Staff report any concerns about pupils promptly when they arise. The safeguarding team takes prompt and appropriate action in response. They make timely referrals to children's social care and other agencies, when necessary. Members of the safeguarding team act as advocates for pupils and are tenacious in ensuring that pupils receive the support they need.
4. The school's health and safety policy is appropriate, up to date and available on its website. The policy is implemented well. Leaders have put suitable health and safety measures in place which are followed rigorously.
5. Fire safety arrangements are robust. The fire alarm, fire extinguishers and emergency lighting are all checked regularly. Pupils take part in regular fire drills to ensure that they know what to do if an emergency were to occur.
6. Pupils are closely supervised at all times, both to ensure their safety and so that they feel well supported. Leaders' plans for increasing staffing, if the material change is implemented, mean that the same level of supervision would be provided for new pupils that join the school. All staff undertake first aid training as part of their induction.
7. The school has a suitable risk assessment policy which is implemented effectively. Leaders consider risks thoroughly and put effective measures in place to reduce them. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.
8. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

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

ISSR Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

9. Robust arrangements are in place for the safer recruitment of staff. Leaders go above and beyond what is required to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work with pupils. The school's single central record of pre-appointment checks is well maintained and meets requirements.
10. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

ISSR paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31

11. The school's existing building provides all the required accommodation, including a medical room, shower room and sufficient toilet facilities. It is bright and well lit, with suitable emergency and external lighting. The building is clean and well maintained.
12. The school has recently acquired an additional building in order to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers. The building is approximately 200 metres from the school's main entrance. Minor works are needed for the building to meet the school's needs and to meet all relevant Standards. This work has already begun. It is anticipated that works will be completed by the middle of August. The school's plans for this work are well advanced and the timescale appears to be realistic. Plans include creating an additional shower room, medical room and therapy room in the new building, as well as classrooms and a sensory room. If the works are completed as planned, the new building will provide sufficient space and appropriate accommodation for the proposed increase in the number of pupils attending the school.
13. The school is set in open parkland within the expansive grounds of a stately home. This provides extensive outdoor space for play and for physical education (PE). The existing building also has a fenced outdoor area where pupils can play and socialise. Plans are in place for a similar fenced area to be provided for the new building.
14. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraphs 32(1)(c)

15. The school's safeguarding policy is detailed and up to date. It reflects current statutory guidance. The policy is published on the school's website.
16. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c), 34(2)

17. Leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles. They put pupils' wellbeing at the heart of the school's work.
18. Leaders and the proprietor have a clear rationale for requesting this material change. They have thought very carefully about the possible impact on existing pupils of increasing the school's roll. They have put suitable measures in place to mitigate this, such as introducing new pupils slowly over an extended period of time.
19. Leaders have put suitable plans in place to ensure that the Standards continue to be met if the material change is implemented. The proprietor is fully involved in overseeing these plans and ensuring they are carried out effectively and in a timely manner.
20. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	Esland Bedford School
Department for Education number	823/6002
Address	Esland Bedford School Unit 54 Wrest Park Silsoe Bedfordshire MK45 4HS
Phone number	01525 863805
Email address	bedfordschool@esland.co.uk
Website	www.eslandbedfordschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Esland North Limited
Chair	Mrs Jill Palmer
Headteacher	Mr Rhett Cameron
Age range	8 to 18
Number of pupils	39
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2024

Information about the school

21. Esland Bedford School is a co-educational day school in Silsoe, Bedfordshire. It is a special school for pupils who have autism spectrum condition, speech, language and communication needs, and social, emotional and mental health needs. The school is owned by a limited company with two directors. One of the directors is the chair of the proprietorial governing board. The school is on a single site.
22. The school has identified all pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
23. The school has not identified any pupils as speaking English as an additional language.
24. The school states that its aims are to support pupils with a range of special needs to re-engage with learning, in many instances following significant periods of time not attending school. The school aims to employ a range of approaches within its curriculum to ensure each pupil's needs are appropriately met, with a long-term goal of ensuring independence and quality of life as pupils leave school and move into adulthood.

Purpose of the material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the DfE to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection date

13 June 2025

25. One reporting inspector visited the school for one day.

26. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- a check of the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks
- a learning walk, jointly with the headteacher
- tour of the school site to view the newly acquired additional building and see the condition of the existing buildings
- discussion with the chair of the proprietorial body
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils.

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Independent Schools Inspectorate

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