

Material change inspection report

5 June 2026

The Wenlock School

Fossil View

Wren's Hill Road

Dudley

DY1 3SS

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

Inspection outcome

The school has submitted a material change request to increase its capacity by an additional 15 pupils, to provide a total capacity of 115 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.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

1. Leaders implement a safeguarding policy that promotes pupils' welfare effectively and fosters a robust safeguarding culture. Staff consistently address any concerns, ensuring they are dealt with promptly and appropriate actions are taken in response.
2. Governors play an active role in overseeing safeguarding practices, receiving detailed reports and conducting school visits. They ask pertinent questions to enhance their understanding of the safeguarding procedures in place. Leaders have given due consideration to how they will safeguard the wellbeing of an increased number of pupils, for example through reviewing the deployment of staff.
3. Staff members, including leaders responsible for safeguarding, receive suitable training. Staff are well informed and have a high level of knowledge of safeguarding issues. They consistently use, 'see it, hear it, report it' to guide their consideration of any concerns. They are aware of the particular vulnerabilities of pupils who have experienced trauma.
4. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding maintain meticulous, secure records through an electronic system. These include follow-up actions and the rationale behind the decisions they make. Leaders regularly review these and use them to plan and support individual pupils, for example, identifying trends of non-attendance. Staff use the school's reporting system effectively, including a 'nagging doubt' tab on the electronic system, which is designed to capture any concerns, however minor, at the earliest opportunity. Staff know and follow the correct procedures for reporting any allegations or low-level concerns about adults working with pupils.
5. Leaders liaise effectively with multiple local agencies to support and protect pupils. They make referrals to children's services when appropriate and utilise support from external agencies, such as the police. The school also works closely with professionals who support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), for example, educational psychologists and speech and language therapists. This collaboration enhances decision-making and ensures a co-ordinated approach to pupils' wellbeing.
6. Leaders have arranged pupils into pastoral groups which ensure pupils have trusted adults with whom they can share any worries they may have. Pupils are clear that mobile phones are not permitted in school. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. The school employs effective internet filtering and monitoring systems. Leaders regularly review their effectiveness and promptly address any alerts which they receive.
7. Leaders implement a suitable health and safety policy which complies with relevant laws. Robust health and safety procedures and the effective maintenance of the premises ensure that all areas suitably support pupils' education. Staff receive clear guidance on how to report health and safety

concerns, enabling any issues to be promptly addressed and resolved. Leaders conduct maintenance and health and safety checks systematically, including for electrical safety and water temperature. Records are meticulous. Hazardous materials, including cleaning products, are stored securely.

8. The school's fire safety policy is implemented effectively. Staff and pupils understand fire procedures as a result of regular practice drills and suitable training. Comprehensive records are maintained. Leaders have addressed the recommendations from the most recent fire risk assessment conducted by an appropriately qualified professional. Fire safety equipment is suitably maintained.
9. Staff supervise pupils appropriately throughout the day. Caring staff who understand pupils' needs provide reassurance. The suitable deployment of staff enables them to manage any incidents that arise effectively. Leaders securely manage pupils' arrival and departure times. During breaktimes and lunchtimes, they offer supervised quiet spaces that create a calm environment and emotional support for any pupils who need it.
10. The school has established and effectively implemented a comprehensive risk assessment policy. Leaders diligently evaluate potential risks by conducting thorough assessments of the premises, on-site activities and educational trips and visits, and by implementing appropriate mitigation strategies. They carefully evaluate the needs of each pupil, ensuring that every pupil has a personalised support plan that includes an individualised risk assessment. Leaders consistently review and modify these assessments, making necessary updates to maintain their relevance and effectiveness. They have considered the potential risks associated with the proposed increase in pupil numbers effectively.
11. 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 18, 19, 20 and 21

12. Leaders follow suitable safer recruitment procedures. They complete all required pre-employment checks before adults work with pupils. Leaders accurately record the necessary checks on a single central record of appointments (SCR). Staff files contain the required information and are systematically maintained.
13. Leaders have a secure understanding of the safer recruitment guidance. In addition, they receive support from the wider organisation to which the school belongs. Governors regularly monitor different aspects of recruitment including the SCR.
14. 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 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29

15. The school's facilities are well equipped to accommodate the anticipated increase in pupil numbers. These facilities include therapy rooms, shower rooms and adequate toilet amenities. The premises and accommodation are appropriately resourced and maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety requirements.
16. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the delivery of first aid in suitable accommodation, which includes a sink and is near to a toilet. First aid is managed by well-trained staff.

17. There is appropriate space for play and physical education (PE). Additionally, the premises feature a secure, fenced outdoor area where pupils can engage in play and socialise safely.
18. All indoor and outdoor areas have sufficient lighting. Sound insulation between teaching spaces is effective. Sufficient drinking water is readily accessible and clearly marked. Regular inspections of the hot water systems are conducted to ensure that they do not present a scalding hazard.
19. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

20. Leaders publish particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding, which meet current statutory requirements, on the school's website.
21. 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 paragraph 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

22. The proprietor ensures that leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate for their roles. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively, ensuring the Standards are met and the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted.
23. Governors play an active role in many aspects of school life. They conduct regular visits to the school, engage with staff and pupils and observe daily routines. They maintain professional dialogue with leaders and hold them to account through well-focused questions and constructive feedback.
24. Leaders set high expectations and maintain an educational environment that supports pupils' development. They demonstrate a clear understanding of pupils' needs. Leaders have proactively planned for the school's expansion by identifying and reducing specific risks and put in place procedures which prioritise pupils' wellbeing. They have evaluated a wide range of factors, including traffic flow at the start and end of the day, the required staffing levels and therapy needs of pupils.
25. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	The Wenlock School
Department for Education number	332/6009
Address	The Wenlock School Fossil View Wren's Hill Road Dudley DY1 3SS
Phone number	01384 884883
Email address	info@wenlockschoo.co.uk
Website	www.wenlockschoo.co.uk
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Mr Richard Power
Headteacher	Mrs Raelene Austin
Age range	7 to 18
Number of pupils	112
Date of previous inspection	26 to 28 November 2024

Information about the school

26. The Wenlock School is an independent, co-educational specialist day school. It provides for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and autism. The school is owned and operated by Acorn Care and Education Ltd, with oversight provided by a regional director. The headteacher took up her position in October 2025.
27. The previous inspection of the school was by Ofsted in November 2024. This is the first inspection of the school conducted by ISI.
28. All pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities and an education, health and care plan.
29. The school has identified a very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
30. The school states that its aims are to equip every child with the skills, knowledge and confidence that they need to be successful in their future.

Purpose of the material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the Department for Education 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 dates

5 June 2026

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

32. 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 tour of the school site to visit the classrooms, assess the suitability of the premises and accommodation, and to observe the implementation of procedures for health and safety, fire safety, supervision and risk assessment
- discussions with the regional chair of governors and member of the proprietorial body
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- scrutiny of the school's pre-appointment checks.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant Standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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