

Material change inspection report

3 July 2026

Hazel Cottage School

Longmoor Lane

Fazakerley

Liverpool

L10 1LD

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 change the age range from 4 to 11 to 4 to 18 years and increase the capacity by 66 pupils, making the overall capacity 104.

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 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR paragraphs 2, 2A, 3, 4

1. Leaders have developed a suitable curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 13. They have planned to provide appropriate programmes and schemes of work to meet the needs of pupils of secondary age who have a range of abilities and aptitudes associated with having autism and additional special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have planned to ensure that pupils can follow accredited coursework which matches their needs and assists them in making successful next steps in their education and when they leave school for other placements. Provision of specialist careers education and guidance is in place.
2. Leaders have planned effectively regarding secondary age pupils' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), including appropriate relationships and sex education designed to take account of and meet the needs of pupils who have autism and other SEND. Additional therapy provision supports pupils' physical, social and emotional development. Leaders have planned to put due emphasis on preparing pupils for adult life. The plans for post-16 provision are likely to ensure that older pupils will benefit from activities suitable for their age.
3. Suitable assessment procedures are in place to track and promote pupils' individual progress and support their achievement, academically and personally. Appropriate reference is made to each pupil's education, health and care plan (EHC plan) in teachers' planning and leaders' review of pupils' progress and next steps over time. Parents receive suitable, frequent reports regarding pupils' performance. Plans are in place for pupils to study towards, and be assessed against, for example and where appropriate, ASDAN, BTEC and A-level qualifications and functional skills awards.
4. Leaders have prepared suitable teaching resources and created an appropriate learning environment for pupils of secondary age in the new premises, in readiness for the proposed material change.
5. Teaching for those pupils currently attending the school meets the relevant Standards. Leaders have ensured that staff who planned to teach pupils of secondary age have the appropriate expertise to work effectively with this age group. They have planned to ensure that any increase in the number of pupils of secondary age is matched by a suitable increase in the number of teaching staff.
6. There is a suitable policy for teaching to promote positive behaviour and attitudes which is implemented effectively. Leaders have ensured that the behaviour policy and procedures are likely to be appropriate for pupils of secondary age.
7. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

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

ISSR paragraph 5

8. Leaders ensure that they promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils currently attending the school. Plans for the provision of SMSC development for secondary pupils anticipated to be admitted to the school take relevant account of their age.
9. Suitable programmes and schemes of work are in place to ensure that pupils of secondary age are likely to develop appreciation, tolerance and respect for people of different faiths, cultures and traditions, and to be prepared for life in British society. Appropriate emphasis is placed on ensuring balanced views are presented during any discussions that contain sensitive or political themes or content.
10. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

11. Leaders ensure that the suitable safeguarding policy is implemented effectively and understood by staff. Suitable measures are taken to reduce the risk to pupils of potential safeguarding risks such as radicalisation. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding ensure that safeguarding concerns are reported, recorded and monitored effectively and that appropriate actions are taken to help and support pupils. Safeguarding records contain suitable content and are securely stored. The safeguarding team maintain effective relationships with local agencies and make appropriate referrals without delay when appropriate. The safeguarding arrangements are reviewed annually by the proprietor with suitable diligence.
12. Pupils are encouraged to share concerns with staff, who take prompt and appropriate steps to support them should they do so. Staff understand the importance of early help provision and have a suitable awareness of child-on-child abuse and how to report any concerns about this. There is due regard for pupils' mental health. Pupils feel safe at school.
13. Leaders ensure that safeguarding training for staff, including all members of the safeguarding team and members of the governing board, is comprehensive and appropriate. Leaders emphasise the importance of the continuing and frequent provision of safeguarding training. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) by pupils is suitably controlled, including through an effective internet filtering and monitoring system. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online.
14. Leaders understand their responsibility to respond appropriately and, when required, make prompt referral to external agencies, including the local authority, should allegations be made about the behaviour of staff or other adults working with pupils. Leaders also understand their responsibility to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) if necessary. Leaders ensure that staff are confident to report any concerns about the behaviour of adults, including low-level concerns, and to self-refer if they feel it is necessary.
15. There are sufficient leaders with responsibility for safeguarding to maintain the school's effective safeguarding arrangements and procedures, including across the present and new sites, should the proposed increase in pupil numbers be approved.
16. The school meets health and safety requirements. The proprietor and senior leaders oversee and monitor health and safety effectively. Staff have an effective understanding of health and safety matters and receive suitable training in these. Leaders have reviewed health and safety

procedures, including with regard to the new additional premises on a separate site that have been acquired in order to facilitate the proposed material change and the planned increase in the maximum number of pupils. The school's health and safety arrangements are likely to remain suitable once the proposed material change takes place.

17. The school's fire risk policy is implemented effectively. Recommended actions from the fire risk assessment for the new premises have been appropriately prioritised and carried out in a timely manner. Staff receive appropriate fire safety training and demonstrate suitable awareness of risks, prevention and the procedures to follow in a fire emergency. Appropriate fire safety equipment is in place and maintenance of alarms and other equipment is carried out and recorded carefully and effectively. Regular fire drills take place so that pupils know the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire. Those requiring reassurance or specific support during these procedures receive appropriate help. Leaders have ensured that fire safety procedures are suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
18. Suitable guidance and procedures are in place to ensure pupils are supervised effectively throughout the school day, including when pupils are off site or engaged in outdoor activities. Leaders have ensured that the proposed increase in pupil numbers is being matched by appropriate staffing levels, so that effective supervision is likely to be maintained once the proposed material change takes place.
19. Leaders and staff implement an appropriate risk assessment policy which provides for systematic risk assessment and pays attention to key areas of risk and pupils' welfare. These include pupils' activities on and off the school site. Staff receive relevant training in the management of risk and completed risk assessments are checked, monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness. Leaders have carefully risk assessed the school's provision regarding the new premises and accommodation and the proposed increase in number of pupils.
20. 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, 21

21. Leaders ensure that all pre-employment checks are carried out in line with statutory guidance and are recorded correctly on the single central record of appointments (SCR).
22. Leaders' effective safer recruitment procedures are applied consistently in the appointment of any additional staff related to the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
23. 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, 29

24. The current and additional new premises provide sufficient and suitable accommodation to meet the needs of the proposed maximum number of pupils across all age groups.
25. Toilet, washing and changing facilities at both sites are sufficient in number and suitable, particularly with regard to pupils' hygiene, personal privacy and dignity requirements.
26. Suitable accommodation is provided for the medical examination and treatment of pupils.
27. The present and new school premises are maintained to a suitable standard. Routine and

emergency maintenance tasks are carried out efficiently. There are effective means whereby staff can report any maintenance or health and safety concerns regarding the premises.

28. Leaders ensure that acoustics, internal and external lighting, drinking water, water supply and outdoor space are each of a suitable standard.
29. 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)

30. The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
31. 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)

32. The proprietor ensures that the leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. As a result, the Standards are met consistently, and leaders actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.
33. The proprietor, leaders and managers have prepared comprehensively regarding the proposed material change with a well-documented, carefully considered and clearly expressed plan to extend the school's curricular and physical provision to cater for the proposed increases in age range and pupil numbers. Leaders have systematically reviewed the school's provision to identify potential risks associated with the proposed material change and have taken appropriate steps to mitigate these risks.
34. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	Hazel Cottage School
Department for Education number	341/6029
Address	Hazel Cottage School 2 New Hall Cottages Longmoor Lane Fazakerley Liverpool Merseyside L10 1LD
Phone number	0151 280 5704
Email address	info@hazeltcottage-school.co.uk
Website	www.hazeltcottage-school.co.uk
Proprietor	P Bloom Limited
Chair	Mr Richard Power
Headteacher	Miss Laura Dickinson
Age range	4 to 11
Number of pupils	37
Date of previous inspection	21 to 22 January 2025

Information about the school

35. Hazel Cottage School is an independent co-educational day special school for pupils who have a diagnosis of autism, and who have a range of complex learning needs, communication and sensory difficulties. Pupils are placed from a wide range of local authorities. The school is situated in Fazakerley, Liverpool. The school is overseen by a board of governors.
36. There is one Reception class. However, no children of this age were attending the school at the time of the inspection.
37. 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.
38. The school has identified a very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
39. The school states that its aim is that pupils make the maximum progress possible in the areas of difficulty typically associated with their diagnosis of autism, including their social communication, emotional regulation, and sensory processing.

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

3 July 2026

40. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for one day.

41. 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 and recently acquired additional new premises to check their suitability and observe teaching and other activities
- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work.

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

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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