

Meadow View Learning Centre

Inspection dates

20–22 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, with the full support of the proprietor (the Witherslack Group), and various specialists, has ensured that the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is tailored to suit their particular educational needs. This helps them to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills well, and enables them to pursue their interests.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good. Pupils understand their rights and responsibilities and enjoy helping others.
- Excellent opportunities are available for pupils to engage and excel in outdoor activities such as orienteering, mountain climbing and white water rafting.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together to form a strong team. They are caring, know pupils well, and successfully cater for pupils' academic, social and emotional needs.
- Systems for assessing pupils' skills and abilities when they start school are good. Close tracking of pupils' performance shows that they make good progress in a wide range of subjects, usually from very low starting points.
- Staff are highly skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. They help pupils to understand the consequences of their actions and encourage them to reflect on their attitudes to learning. Highly organised records show that pupils' behaviour improves overtime.
- Local authorities are happy with the school's work, particularly in relation to ensuring pupils' progress and enhancing their personal and social development.
- The proprietor has a good understanding of the school's strengths and regularly checks the headteacher's performance.
- Senior leaders ensure that the all regulatory requirements are met. Outstanding safeguarding procedures are in place. As a result, pupils are safe and secure.
- Provision for pupils over the age of 16 is good. Appropriate courses are available to pupils through local colleges and the Witherslack Group
- Teachers' work to ensure that pupils' know how to take the next steps in their learning is not well developed. As a result, pupils' understanding of how to improve their English and mathematics is limited.
- Senior leaders are still in the process of ensuring that the school's homework policy is fully implemented.
- Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching are not as sharp as they could. Feedback to teachers sometimes lacks precision.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - developing pupils' understanding of how they can improve their learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that feedback to teachers clearly identifies how they can improve their practice
 - making sure that the school's homework policy is fully implemented.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is dedicated to ensuring that the school maintains its commitment to 'providing a safe, positive, nurturing, learning and home environment, where high aspirations lead to achievement and positive futures.'
- The headteacher's strong leadership and drive, coupled with the support he receives from the proprietor, have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Effective systems are in place for the performance management of staff. Typically, staff are set targets linked to improving pupils' progress and to developing their skills and knowledge. This ensures that the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils are continually improving.
- The headteacher's performance is monitored by the proprietor. The support the headteacher receives from various specialists from the Witherslack Group, including the regional director for schools, his direct line manager and the head of school improvement, ensures that he reaches his targets and is fully aware of developments in education.
- Staff know what the school is trying to achieve. Almost all have been at the school since the previous inspection. They demonstrate excellent patience and resilience, working exceptionally well together to cater for, and respond to, pupils' individual needs.
- Staff enjoy working at the school and are fully prepared to 'take on' the challenges that pupils sometimes present. All staff are of the view that 'the team' is strong. They say that they work well together for the benefit of the child and indicate that their different areas of expertise complement each other. This enables staff to support, advise and coach each other.
- Pupils benefit from good teaching that develops their reading, writing and mathematics skills well. They also benefit from a well-structured curriculum which includes subjects such as science, geography, art and personal, social and health education.
- Senior leaders have excellent partnerships with a number of colleges, enabling older pupils to develop their employability skills and 'sample' motor vehicle engineering, construction and social and healthcare courses. In addition, vocational courses are offered through schools within the Witherslack Group.
- Excellent opportunities are available for pupils to engage in a range of outdoor activities. This allows them to acquire and master their social skills and develop into independent young adults. Pupils enjoy mountain climbing, orienteering and white water rafting.
- Leaders' work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is very effective. Pupils have a good understanding of British values, study the major world faiths and celebrate cultural diversity. Pupils collect money for good causes and regularly meet visitors from various charities.
- All pupils are in the care of various local authorities. Their reports and views given during stakeholders' meetings indicate that they are happy with pupils' progress. Representatives who spoke to the inspector indicate that the school is effective in promoting pupils' personal development and welfare. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- The headteacher regularly observes teaching, providing feedback to teachers on their

performance. This is in line with school policies. However, advice on how teachers can improve is not always clear and does not focus consistently on the impact of teaching on improving pupils' progress.

Governance

- The proprietor fully understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school and takes an active role in the performance management of the headteacher. Recently the proprietor worked with the headteacher to extend provision and build a new classroom.
- A broad range of support is available to the school through the Witherslack Group. For example, the headteacher and senior leaders are regularly advised by the group's school improvement advisor, who has supported the school to further refine its systems for tracking pupils' progress.
- Therapeutic support is also provided. This is highly effective in helping pupils to manage their own behaviour and improve their attitudes to learning. The proprietor works closely with senior leaders to make sure that the school's website meets the independent school standards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Outstanding systems are in place to ensure that pupils are safe and secure and that all staff are fully qualified and fit to work at the school. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of safeguarding matters and are fully conversant with the relevant legislation and guidance on keeping pupils safe in education. They know exactly what they should do if they are concerned about a pupil's safety or welfare. Risk assessments are thorough and take account of any danger that could happen at the school, in the residential home, on work experience or in a placement at a partner organisation such as a college.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers accurately assess pupils' skills and abilities in reading, writing and mathematics when they start school. Thereafter, pupils' progress is closely tracked in all subjects. This enables teachers to identify any weak areas of learning and provide pupils with tailored support.
- Most pupils are taught on a one-to-one or one-to-two basis. Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers to ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning and fully challenged to push themselves and try their best.
- In English classes, teachers focus on improving pupils' comprehension, grammar, punctuation and spelling. Teachers take every opportunity to get pupils to read. They help to build pupils' confidence by praising them for their hard work and encouraging them to share their ideas.
- Good teaching and coaching, both in the classroom and during outdoor learning activities, support pupils exceptionally well in gaining leadership and teamworking skills. This improves pupils' ability to communicate and enhances their problem-solving skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is highly effective. Evidence from work in pupils' books, and assessment information, indicate that pupils make good progress in this subject. Less-able pupils take small steps in their learning and make steady progress. The most able pupils are challenged with difficult work. During the inspection, pupils were observed tackling difficult algebraic equations. The most confident were encouraged to demonstrate their methods for working out different problems.

- Teachers know how to identify talent and nurture pupils' interests. They challenge pupils in reading, writing, mathematics, science and geography, and strongly encourage them so that they achieve highly in swimming, judo, football and rafting.
- Teachers make sure that all pupils' work is marked and up to date. However, they do not always adhere to the school's marking and assessment policy, for example in advising pupils on how they can improve their work. As a result, pupils do not have a good enough understanding of how to advance their learning.
- The school's homework policy is not implemented fully. Senior leaders are exploring different strategies to balance the valuable time that pupils spend at youth centres after school, and in leisure activities, with the need to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well in their studies at school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Most pupils at some time find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. However, staff are expert at identifying 'triggers' and potential 'flash points'. They know how to diffuse potentially disruptive situations.
- Pupils enjoy raising money for various charities. During the inspection, pupils were busy making biscuits and producing hand-made invitations for a forthcoming coffee morning. They thoroughly enjoyed the experience and demonstrated that they can be good, kind citizens who care about people less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils have access to professional therapeutic services that encourage them to 'open up' and share their concerns, thoughts and feelings with a sympathetic listener. Such therapy allows pupils to work through their fears and anxieties and is a major strength of the school.
- Pupils' welfare is promoted well through the personal, social, emotional and health aspects of their curriculum, which focus on subjects such as healthy eating, mental health and the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, knowing that any concerns they have will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly. This is because staff are highly responsive to any such concerns that pupils raise.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils are safe when attending off-site provision. Some pupils require one-to-one support, which is provided by skilled and experienced teaching assistants. In addition, detailed risk assessments are carried out, covering any dangers or risks to the pupil, or members of the public.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. When pupils settle into their learning, they invariably enjoy it. They like answering questions and finding out new things with their peers.
- Pupils are given excellent coping strategies to help them manage their own behaviour. The recently introduced 'quiet room' gives pupils 'time out' to reflect on their actions, after which they are prepared to come back into class and participate productively in their learning.
- Throughout their time at the school pupils grow and develop their confidence to become proud of their achievements. Staff praise pupils for their good work and considerate behaviour; this encourages them to want to achieve to the best of their

ability. Pupils are eager to come into school and their attendance and punctuality are consistently good.

- Pupils are of the view that behaviour is good most of the time. They understand what bullying is and say that this does not happen at school.
- Pupils have an in-depth understanding of cyber bullying and have an extensive knowledge of how to stay safe while using the internet. Pupils are fully aware that personal information, including pictures and passwords, should not be shared with anyone while online.
- Pupils say that sometimes they have 'fall-outs' and that 'bad names' are used. However, they insist that any such fall-outs are brief and that most of the time everyone is friendly.
- Pupils understand why racist name calling and homophobic bullying is wrong. They learn about such issues as part of their British values work.
- The school logs in detail any poor behaviour. These logs show that there are sometimes variances in pupils' behaviour overtime. However, the longer pupils stay at the school the better their behaviour is. This is because highly effective systems, applied consistently by all staff, are in place.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Due to the small number of pupils at the school, it is not possible to compare their progress and attainment with that of other pupils' nationally.
- From their often very low starting points, all pupils make good progress. By the time pupils leave school, most have a good grounding in reading, writing and mathematics. This furnishes them well with the necessary skills for the next stage in their learning.
- Post-16 provision is good. At the age of 16, some pupils are still developing their basic skills. It is here that the school's good partnerships with colleges, and effective support from within the Witherslack Group of schools, are particularly effective.
- Since the school was established in 2012 it has continually developed positive relationships with a number of colleges. Pupils have been helped to gain employability skills and have enrolled on various vocational courses in areas such as hair and beauty and construction. In addition, pupils have been helped to further build on their basic reading, writing, mathematics and information and computer technology skills.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because teachers make learning interesting. For example, most English lessons start off with a daily news round where pupils read the headlines from various newspapers. This not only develops pupils' reading skills and knowledge of current events, but also introduces them to different writing styles.
- From their low starting points in mathematics, pupils quickly develop an understanding and appreciation of the importance of calculation and problem-solving skills in managing money, planning activities such as fundraising, and measuring ingredients for cooking.
- Specialist science teaching is highly effective in stimulating pupils' interest. For example, pupils enjoy carrying out various experiments, using Bunsen burners and recording the results of their investigations. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils start the school with little, or no scientific knowledge or understanding. However, school tracking data shows that pupils make rapid progress in science from their very low starting points.
- The school is highly ambitious for its pupils and has established 'flight paths' for each. These show that all pupils are moving on an upward trajectory.
- Accurate records of pupils' progress help senior leaders and teachers to identify gaps in

pupils' learning and direct additional support to where it is needed. The challenging work and encouragement that the most able pupils receive from teachers is preparing them well for their higher-level GCSE work in English and mathematics.

- Pupils' progress in developing their writing skills is good. An outstanding range of visits to places such as cinemas, theatres, museums, sea-life centres and zoos provides good stimulus for pupils' writing and fully engages them in learning.

School details

Unique reference number	138868
DfE registration number	888/6045
Inspection number	10020811

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Proprietor	The Witherslack Group
Chair	Craig Baxter
Headteacher	Chris Ormiston
Annual fees (day pupils)	£63,435
Telephone number	01254 833579
Website	www.witherslackgroup.co.uk/meadow-view
Email address	cormiston@mvlc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–26 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school provides specialist support for a very small number of pupils. Each pupil has either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. All are in the care of local authorities.
- Since the previous inspection, a new classroom has been added to the school and an additional teaching assistant has been appointed.
- Meadow View Learning Centre opened in 2012. It is owned by the Witherslack Group. The school provides education for pupils aged between eight and 18.
- Almost all pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan in respect of their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Most have a range of complex learning difficulties and various barriers to their learning.
- Pupils are placed at the school often having missed long periods of education. Each is provided with a personalised curriculum that aims to meet their specific educational needs.

- Pupils participate in a range of vocational courses in areas such as health and social care, construction and motor vehicle engineering. During the inspection, a number of pupils were being educated off-site at two colleges.
- Residential accommodation for pupils is provided on-site. All are in the care of their placing authorities.
- Meadow View Learning Centre is described as a 'co-educational, specialist 52 week fully integrated, therapeutic, education and care provision...committed to providing a safe, positive, nurturing, learning and home environment, where high aspirations lead to achievement and positive futures.'
- The school works with Myerscough College and Wigan and Leigh College.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning and looked at pupils' work books and assessment information on their progress and attainment.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and the senior leader responsible for pastoral support.
- The inspector held meetings with an executive director, the headteacher's line manager, regional director for schools, head of school improvement and a therapist, all from the Witherslack Group of schools.
- The inspector met with teachers and teaching assistants. Short interviews took place with all pupils at the school and one of two pupils attending off-site provision.
- Questionnaires submitted by nine members of staff were scrutinised. There were no responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View)
- Telephone discussions took place with social workers from two placing authorities.
- The inspector examined a range of documents. These included the school's reviews of its own performance, development plans, checks on the quality of teaching, safeguarding documentation, including risk assessments, and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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