

# The Outdoors School

West Town Farm, Lower Barton Road, Ide, Exeter, Devon EX2 9TG

**Inspection dates**

30 July 2018

**Overall outcome**

**The school is unlikely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraph 2(1)–2(1)(b)(i), 2(2)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)*

- The proposed school's curriculum is rooted firmly in developing pupils as life-long learners through outdoor education and experiences. Each pupil will have an individual learning plan that addresses gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding and builds on prior learning. Additionally, pupils will receive support in overcoming any barriers to their learning, for example through a programme of interventions to promote pupils' social, emotional and mental health.
- Leaders have a very clear vision for the school's curriculum and the impact that this is to have on pupils. However, they have not drawn up effective plans and schemes of work to support them in delivering this vision. Leaders' plans lack specific detail and do not clearly establish how pupils will make progress in their linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. The plans and schemes of work do not take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils who the school is likely to cater for, most of whom will have very specific needs.

*Paragraph 2(2)(e)–2(2)(e)(iii)*

- The proprietor intends to develop its links with three local colleges to ensure that pupils receive impartial and up-to-date careers guidance. Pupils leaving the school will have individual transition plans and be supported by school staff in making informed choices about their future.

*Paragraph 3, 3(a)–3(f)*

- Due to weaknesses in the school's curriculum plans and schemes of work, teaching at the school is unlikely to meet the requirements set out in these paragraphs of the independent school standards. Planning does not identify clearly how teaching will meet pupils' needs and enable them to make good progress.

*Paragraph 2(1)(b)(ii), 3(g)–3(j), 4*

- The school's behaviour policy is comprehensive and outlines how teachers will manage pupils' behaviour and encourage them to act responsibly.
- The school's plans and schemes of work do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- School leaders have drawn up a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and for pupils' performance to be evaluated.
- Overall, the standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)*

- Leaders communicate a clear vision of how the school will promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Developing pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence will form a key part of its work. Pupils will be encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their actions and the impact that these have on other pupils and adults. Through group discussion, leaders will also develop pupils' ability to listen to the views of others and to treat these views with respect.
- Leaders plan to develop strong relationships with the local community and public institutions. For example, there are plans in place to work alongside local volunteer groups, as well as for positive liaison with police community support officers.
- Cultural understanding will be developed through project-based learning, for example by studying different religious festivals and comparing the similarities and differences of the communities that make up multicultural Britain.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraph 7–7(b)*

- The proprietor has an existing safeguarding policy. However, this is not compliant with the statutory guidance issued to schools by the Secretary of State.

*Paragraph 9–9(c), 10, 14*

- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies outline clearly the expectations for pupils and staff. Assuming that these are implemented effectively, they are likely to promote good behaviour and, as far as is possible, minimise incidents of bullying.
- Due to the vulnerabilities faced by pupils at the school, planned staffing levels will provide high staff to pupil ratios.

*Paragraph 11*

- The school has a written health and safety policy. However, it has not yet been adapted to reflect all of the school's settings. Additionally, it does not provide detailed information about the procedures which the proprietor has put in place to manage risk.

*Paragraph 12*

- Fire risk assessments are in place for each of the sites. Where risk has been identified, effective control measures have been put in place.

*Paragraph 13, 15*

- The school does not yet have a written first aid policy.
- The school does not yet have a system for maintaining attendance and admission registers.

*Paragraph 16–16(b)*

- Risk assessments are detailed. They are in place for specific activities and each of the existing sites. Plans are in place to draw up risk assessments for the West Town Farm site, which the proprietor acquired at the beginning of July 2018. Risk assessments will be drawn up for individual pupils as they join the school.
- Overall, the standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

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

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(e), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(iii), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b)*

- Leaders do not have a secure knowledge of the safeguarding guidance issued by the Secretary of State. They are aware of the pre-employment checks that are required for adults working with children. However, at the time of the pre-registration inspection they were not fully aware of the additional checks required for staff working in a school. For example, they were unaware that teachers should declare whether they have previously lived overseas. Similarly, they were not aware that school leaders, including those responsible for the governance of the school, require a check to see if they are subject to a direction made under section 128 of the Education Act 2008.

*Paragraph 18(2)(a), 18(2)(c)–18(2)(d), 18(3), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(c), 21(2), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iv)–21(3)(a)(vii), 21(4), 21(6)–21(7)(b)*

- Leaders have established a system to make all the other necessary pre-employment checks and to record them on a single central register.

*Paragraph 19(1)–19(3), 21(5)–21(5)(c)*

- The school will not use any supply staff.
- The standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraph 23(1)–23(1)(c), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(d)*

- At each of the proposed sites, there are either separate toilet facilities for boys and girls or individual toilets which are lockable from the inside. However, the proprietor has not yet drawn up procedures to ensure that, at all five sites, these are for the sole use of pupils. In keeping with the school's ethos and commitment to outdoor education, pupils will use composting toilets. Although washing facilities are available,

the proprietor has not yet considered how hot running water will be provided at each of the sites. Where hot water is available, it is set at safe temperatures.

*Paragraph 26, 27–27(b), 29(1)–29(1)(b)*

- The school will make use of extensive woodland space at each of its settings and the majority of teaching will take place outdoors. Where indoor accommodation is provided, lighting and acoustics are suitable for the intended purpose.

*Paragraph 24(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c), 28(2)–28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(b)*

- The proprietor has not ensured that all of the proposed sites have suitable accommodation to cater for pupils' medical needs, including the short-term care of sick and injured pupils.
- Drinking water is available at each of the sites. However, it is not always labelled as such.

*Paragraph 25*

- The proprietor has gone to great lengths to ensure that pupils' health, safety and welfare are considered. However, the school's health and safety policy does not yet consider all of the proposed sites, and how risk will continue to be managed.
- The standards in this part are unlikely to be met.

## Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraph 32(1)(c), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(3)(f)*

- The proprietor has a website. This provides contact details and information about its registered office, as well as copies of its safeguarding and complaints policies.

*Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(b), 32, 32(2)(a), 32(2)(d), 32(3)–32(3)(d)*

- The proprietor's aim is to provide information through the school's website. However, this is not yet in place.
- The standard in this part is unlikely to be met.

## Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraph 33(a)–33(e)*

- The proprietor has a written complaints policy, which is available to parents on its website. The policy outlines clearly the procedures that parents should follow if they have a complaint. The policy provides details of the process complainants can follow if they remain dissatisfied, along with the timescales for each stage.

*Paragraph 33, 33(f)–33(k)*

- The school's complaints procedure does not make provision for a hearing before a panel consisting of at least three people not involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, with one of these people being independent of the school. The policy does not make it clear that the complainant may attend any such hearing and be accompanied if they wish.

- The procedure does not stipulate that a copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be made available to complainants and, where appropriate, the subject of the complaint. Similarly, there is nothing to state that copies of these findings will be made available for the proprietor and principal. Nor does the procedure state that written records will be kept of any action taken by the school as a result of a complaint.
- Procedures do not make provision for written records to be kept of all complaints, or state that these will include details of the stage at which any complaint was resolved.
- The policy does not make clear that the details of complaints will remain confidential, except where information is requested by the Secretary of State or an inspection body.
- The standard in this part is unlikely to be met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor does not have sufficient knowledge of the independent school standards and the implications that these have for those wishing to operate a school. Consequently, leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards and other related requirements are likely to be met when the school opens. Some of the standards that are unlikely to be met will have an impact on the health, safety and welfare of pupils.
- The proprietor has not yet ensured that all of its proposed sites are fully compliant with the independent school standards. This will need to be addressed before the school opens.
- The standard in this part is unlikely to be met.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has not drawn up an accessibility plan. Therefore, the school is unlikely to meet the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

## Proposed school details

Unique reference number	146200
DfE registration number	878/6075
Inspection number	10056498

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	The Outdoors Group Ltd
Director	Shevek Pring
Principal	Calvin Thain
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000 to £60,000
Telephone number	01392 832399
Website	<a href="http://www.outdoorsgroup.co.uk">www.outdoorsgroup.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:shevek.pring@swoutdoorsgroup.co.uk">shevek.pring@swoutdoorsgroup.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>	<b>Inspector's recommendation</b>
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	5–16	5–16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	150	150

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	150
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	To be confirmed
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	To be confirmed
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	To be confirmed



## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	20
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0

## Information about this proposed school

- The Outdoors School is based in Devon and will operate on five sites, located around the county. The school will have a clear ethos of outdoor education and each site is situated in extensive woodlands. The school intends to open in January 2019.
- The school will cater for pupils who have found traditional, formal education difficult. Many, if not all, of the pupils will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is anticipated that they will have a range of mental health and behavioural needs. Pupils will be referred to the school either by the local authority, parents or pupils' existing schools.
- During their time in the school, pupils will follow a programme of individualised, project-based learning. This will be a mixture of academic subjects and interventions to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs and, where required, improve pupils' behaviour.
- The proprietor's application is to cater for 150 pupils between the ages of 5 and 16. Initially, the school plans to open with a very small number of pupils in key stages 2 and 3.

## Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in order to assess the school's readiness to open. This was done by checking whether it is likely to meet the independent school standards should it be registered.
- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspectors held discussions with the proprietor, company secretary and principal. They examined the school's application and looked at other documentation provided by the proprietor. The inspectors visited the five sites which the school proposes to use as its premises.

## Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Lee	Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if –
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work –
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are –
  - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
  - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
  - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress;
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school –
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
  - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
  - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
  - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range.

### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that First Aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written First Aid policy.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if –
  - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
  - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if –
  - 20(6)(a) MB –
  - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
  - 20(6)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the Chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB –
  - 20(6)(b)(iii) where, by reason of MB's living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to

establish MB's suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Chair of the school considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State;

- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is –
  - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether –
    - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
    - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
  - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

## **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
  - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils;
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including –
  - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
  - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility; and
- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
  - 28(1)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water;
  - 28(1)(c) cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such.

## Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that –
  - 32(1)(a) the information specified in sub-paragraph (2) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector[14], the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate[15];
  - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;
- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is –
  - 32(2)(a) the school's address and telephone number and the name of the head teacher;
  - 32(2)(d) a statement of the school's ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is –
  - 32(3)(a) particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions;
  - 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language;
  - 32(3)(c) particulars of the policy referred to in paragraph 2;
  - 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13.

## Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which
  - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
  - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
  - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
  - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is –
    - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
    - 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
  - 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and
    - 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
    - 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
  - 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

## **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

## **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010**

- Arrangements to meet the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act.



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