

Hartwell School

Yarm Road, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham TS18 3TN

Inspection dates

27 March 2019

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- Standards in part 1 are likely to be met.
- A curriculum policy is in place. It outlines leaders' intended approaches to teaching and learning within the primary and secondary phases. It lists the subjects that pupils will study, which is reflective of a broad and balanced curriculum. The policy also indicates the level of flexibility needed to accommodate pupils' needs.
- The inspector was able to review several schemes of work that will supplement the curriculum policy. Of those sampled, there was much detailed information of the subject-specific progression of knowledge and skills that will be taught.
- Leaders have developed a well-considered approach to assessment which aims to carefully track pupils' attainment and progress across a range of subjects.
- Leaders shared their proposals for reporting assessment information to parents and shared the proposed report proforma with the inspector. It is intended that the report will be shared with parents each term and will reflect their child's work effort, attitudes to learning, personal development as well as academic attainment in a range of subjects.
- A review of the school's proposed careers education and guidance was reviewed. It is intended that a structured approach will begin in Year 7 and lead to work experience. Links with local colleges are already agreed to support the school's career offer. Reference to national benchmarks for the quality of careers guidance are implicit within the school's approach.

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

- The school is likely to meet all of the standards in this part.
- School policies are thoughtfully constructed and consider how best to cater for pupils' personal and social development. The programme for personal development is detailed and focuses upon three core themes of: being a responsible citizen, maintaining and developing healthy relationships, and maintaining mental, emotional and physical health and well-being. It will provide pupils with many opportunities to

make informed choices and learn from experiences. Importantly, it will underpin pupils' preparation for life beyond school. Leaders intend to have a strong focus upon developing pupils' social and communication skills and to deepen pupils' understanding of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- Standards in Part 3 are likely to be met.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding and health and safety are comprehensive. They include details on how leaders will ensure that the premises will be maintained to a high standard and how pupils will be kept safe.
- The behaviour policy is well thought through. It is suitably adjusted for pupils of primary and secondary ages. Although it identifies the sanctions that will be imposed if required, it is firmly rooted in unconditional pastoral support. Rewards are identified that are age-appropriate. It is intended that the sanctions and rewards identified will serve as a starting point, and that once there are pupils on roll, leaders will adjust these in discussion with pupils.
- The anti-bullying policy sets out a suitable approach to managing and preventing incidents of bullying. It is linked closely to the behaviour policy.
- The safety, health and environment policy is comprehensive and is underpinned by a detailed risk assessment policy. The policy outlines procedures for managing contractors on site, staff induction procedures and fire evacuation procedures. It will provide a useful aide memoir of protocols for staff. Members of the trust intend to complete an annual audit of policy and practice to ensure best practice.
- A detailed staff induction process is in place. It gives appropriate provision for all appointed staff to receive safeguarding and first aid at work training.
- There are no pupil admissions currently. However, the admissions register will be electronic and, in keeping with other trust schools, will meet the requirements of this aspect of the independent school standards. Leaders are currently gathering information and are in discussions with several pupils and their families who are likely to join the school.

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

- Standards in part 4 are likely to be met.
- The school has appointed 14 staff in readiness for opening in April 2019. This includes, the headteacher, two assistant headteachers, four teachers and teaching assistants, senior administrators and maintenance staff.
- All appropriate employment checks have been completed on those staff already employed. They are recorded on a single central record. A paper copy of this record was seen by the inspector. There is a centrally held electronic copy. However, at the time of this inspection, internet connection was incomplete. Section 128 checks were in place for trust staff and governors. The record meets statutory requirements.
- The personnel files of two members of staff were checked during the inspection. The files contain a detailed safer recruitment checklist to ensure that all appropriate checks are made and references sought.

- All staff have completed their induction at the school, which contains information relating to safeguarding and makes clear safeguarding responsibilities and expectations.
- Leaders do not intend to use supply staff.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- Standards in Part 5 are likely to be met.
- At the time of this inspection, floors one and two of the building were completed according to building plans and specifications and could be operational. Classroom spaces are light and airy and well appointed. Great attention has been paid at the planning stage. It is clear that leaders have a good understanding of the learning needs of the pupils who will attend. Acoustically hygienic ceiling tiles ensure that rooms are not overstimulating. Lighting and corridors spaces have been equally well-designed. Atriums punctuate the long corridor spaces and allow for break-out spaces. Senior leader and pastoral leaders are centrally located to enable staff to respond swiftly to any emerging needs. All washing and welfare facilities are compliant with the independent school standards and are replicated on each floor.
- There is no lift to floors one or two. Nevertheless, stairwells are located suitably at either end of the corridor and an additional stairwell positioned centrally. These are designated fire escapes routes. These will also act as separate entrances and exits for secondary and primary pupils.
- The ground floor and external area remain incomplete, and construction on the site is still ongoing. Discussion with the site manager during this inspection confirmed that remaining works will be completed on time for the proposed opening of the school. Confirmation emails from contractors supported this assertion. Regular meetings between Witherslack representatives and contractors are ongoing to ensure that completion dates are met.
- It is the professional judgement of the inspector that the school is highly likely to meet this standard before their proposed opening date.

Part 6. Provision of information

- Standards in Part 6 are likely to be met.
- The trust website contains all required policy documents and information for parents. The link to Hartwell school site is constructed and will go live should the school's registration be successful and it opens in April 2019. During the inspection the headteacher produced paper copies of all required policies and information documents that will be available on the school's website following the registration process.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- Standards in Part 7 are likely to be met.
- The school will follow the trust's complaints policy, with appropriate reference and contact information for Hartwell staff. This is a comprehensive policy which details the process to be followed and includes appropriate timescales. The policy allows for complaints to be heard both informally and formally. This will be available on the school's website, following successful registration.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- Standards in Part 8 are likely to be met.
- During this pre-registration inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and representatives of the Witherslack Group. Leaders were very well prepared for the inspection and produced detailed documentation for review and sample proformas intended for use when the school opens. The trust is well organised and has clear accountability measures in place. They have an excellent understanding of the independent school standards and ensure that they are reviewed regularly for compliancy.
- The trust currently runs 14 schools and 21 children's homes. They have considerable experience in managing school building conversions, in providing good-quality education and care, and in meeting the needs and interests of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Therefore, the independent school standards, Parts 1 to 8 are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school makes suitable reference to the Equality Act 2010 within their policies and curriculum plans. They have an accessibility plan in place. There is disabled access to the ground floor only. There is no lift in this two-storey building.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

- The school is not applying to take pupils in the early years foundation stage.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	146733
DfE registration number	808/6005
Inspection number	10085604

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	Witherslack Group Limited
Chair	Howard Tennant
Headteacher	Peter Ewart
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,480 to £79,475
Telephone number	01539 566081
Website	https://witherslackgroup.co.uk
Email address	peter.ewart@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils		5–18	5–18
Number of pupils on the school roll		80	80

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	0	80
Number of part-time pupils	0	
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	80
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	0	80
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	80

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	7	14
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	4.4	

Information about this proposed school

- The school will open as an all through special school, from Years 1 to 13, within the Witherslack Group. The school will provide education for pupils with complex SEND primarily linked to a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and social emotional and behavioural needs.
- The school is due to open on the 23 April 2019. The premises are currently being refurbished to a high standard to cater specifically for pupils' needs. The school intends to admit pupils up to Year 9 and then expand incrementally until it reaches its capacity of 80 pupils. It is anticipated that approximately one third of all pupils will be taught within the primary phase, with two thirds taught within the secondary phase.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the Secretary of State for Education. It was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- In carrying out this type of inspection, inspectors assess the extent to which the school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, when it opens.
- The inspector visited the school and reviewed a range of policies and documentation relating to safeguarding, pupils' welfare and health and safety and proposed curriculum plans. The inspector conducted a tour of the premises and discussed with leaders how they intend to make sure the requirements for the relevant standards are likely to be met.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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