

The Outdoors School

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

Inspection dates

30 April 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

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(2), 3 and 4

- Leaders have designed a curriculum by carefully considering pupils' social and emotional needs and the need to ensure progress in their academic studies. Leaders intend to assess each pupil to establish where they are not working at the age-related expectations in English and mathematics. From this, they have designed six pathways to ensure that pupils can catch up.
- Leaders recognise that some pupils may have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, an agreed approach to the teaching of early reading and phonics has been developed.
- The curriculum statement sets out how the curriculum is designed and is assessed. The school will use a project-based approach incorporating the teaching of English, mathematics, science, technology, humanities, physical education and creative arts. Schemes of work have clear desired outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Planning documentation shows how pupils' aptitudes and individual needs will be taken into account when designing their learning. This includes references to the pupil's individual learning plan which is based on the desired outcomes set out in their education, health and care plan.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5

- Leaders have integrated pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development into the projects. These will be supplemented by visits to places of worship and historical sites. Leaders also expect to invite visitors, such as the police, to help pupils develop an understanding of public institutions.
- Leaders expect each site to have a school council. Pupils will be able to stand for election and mount their campaigns. Leaders intend to invite local councillors to help

pupils improve their understanding of democratic processes and support them.

- 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 amended the safeguarding policy and has published this on the school's website. The proprietor has ensured that it meets the requirements set out in the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The proprietor intends to appoint a deputy designated safeguarding leader at each of the school sites.

Paragraphs 9 and 10

- The school's anti-bullying and behaviour and exclusions policies outline how good behaviour will be promoted to establish a positive, mutually respectful community. The rewards and sanctions that are to be used are explained clearly.

Paragraphs 11–14 and 16–16(b)

- The proprietor has drafted a health and safety policy that demonstrates how the health, safety and welfare of pupils, staff and third parties will be promoted. Risk assessments are in place for each site and for most activities. The proprietor intends to have high staff to pupil ratios as part of the controls to minimise the likelihood of risks.
- Fire risk assessments have been carried out and remedial actions are being taken.
- The proprietor has drafted a first aid policy. Due to the nature of the provision, almost all staff will have received appropriate first aid training when they start work.

Paragraph 15

- The proprietor intends to maintain registers electronically. The online system records all the information required by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 18(1)–21(6)

- Leaders show a good awareness of the recruitment arrangements detailed in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2018'. They have arrangements in place to ensure that all the necessary checks are carried out before staff, volunteers or members of the proprietorial board are appointed.
- The proprietor does not intend to use supply staff.
- A single central register is in place to record the details of all the necessary checks.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–29(1)(b)

- The school is located across five sites. At Exmouth, Okehampton and Shillingford St George, the schools are located in areas of woodland with shelters. The site at Ide is located in the buildings of a community farm and in nearby woodland. At Tiverton, the site is formed of a hall with some small adjoining rooms and an outdoor woodland area.
- At each site there are individual toilet facilities which are lockable from the inside. Hot water for hand washing is provided in insulated flasks. Drinking water is available from clearly marked points. These are away from the toilets and are available to pupils throughout the school day.
- Showers are only available at the site in Ide. Consequently, pupils aged 11–14 will only be accommodated at this site.
- The proprietor expects the woodland sites to operate during the hours of daylight. Plans are in place for the provision of lighting in the winter months.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(a)–32(3)(f)

- The proprietor has ensured that all the required policies have been drawn up and meet requirements. This includes policies regarding the curriculum, pupils' welfare and health and safety.
- All information is available on request to parents. Much is already on the school's website and the proprietor intends to publish all the required documentation in time.
- The proprietor explained how the school will report pupils' progress to their parents and how they will provide information to local authorities relating to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The complaints procedure was updated during the inspection. The procedure establishes that complaints should be resolved informally at an early opportunity. It states that if the complainant remains dissatisfied then the matter should be reported in writing and will be investigated by a member of staff or a director of the company.
- If the matter remains unresolved, the procedure sets out how a panel will be drawn to hear the complaint. The procedure allows for the complainant to be accompanied and for one of the panel members to be independent of the running and management of the school.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–(c)

- The proprietor has many years of experience in leading forest schools. Increasingly, local authorities are seeking to commission places for pupils who have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from mainstream schools. Consequently, the proprietor is seeking registration as a school.
- Since the previous pre-registration inspection, the proprietor has ensured that actions have been taken to strengthen the quality of the curriculum, attend to health and safety shortcomings, and improve policies and procedures. As a result, the standards are now likely to be met.
- The proprietor is committed to ensuring that the independent school standards continue to be met. An independent consultant has been engaged to provide the directors with an objective view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has given due thought to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act when drafting policies and curriculum plans. The proprietor has drafted an accessibility strategy that increases the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' activities and improves the physical environment.
- The proprietor is committed to making reasonable adjustments to meet pupils' specific needs.
- The requirements of part 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act are likely to be met.

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	146200
DfE registration number	878/6075
Inspection number	10098822

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	Day school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	The Outdoors Group Limited
Director	Shevek Pring
Principal	Calvin Thain
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,000–£70,000
Telephone number	01392 811907
Website	www.outdoorsgroup.co.uk/outdoorsschool
Email address	hello@outdoorsgroup.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	N/A	7–14	7–14
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	150	90

Reason for inspector's recommendations

- Poor vehicular access to the site at West Town Farm, Ide, the safety of pupils on the site and the limited covered accommodation will not support the number of pupils envisaged by the provider.

Pupils

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

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	N/A	15
Number of part-time teaching staff	N/A	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	N/A	20

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 the summer of 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 plan and it is anticipated that they will have a range of mental health and behavioural needs. Most pupils are expected to be referred to the school by local authorities.
- 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 will be The Outdoors Group Limited. There will not be a separate governing body.
- The proprietor's application is to cater for 150 pupils between the ages of seven and 14. However, the site at West Town Farm in Ide, near Exeter, cannot accommodate as many pupils as the proprietor had envisaged. Consequently, in agreement with the proprietor, the maximum number of pupils across the five sites was reduced to 90.
- Key stage 3 pupils will only be accommodated at the West Town Farm site.

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.
- This was the school's second pre-registration inspection. The school's first pre-registration inspection, in July 2018, identified that several the independent school standards were not likely to be met if the Department for Education had decided to register it.
- The school is not currently operating. However, some electively home-educated pupils do attend on a part-time basis. An early years setting operates on the site in Shilingford St George.
- The inspectors held meetings with the proprietors, principal and administrator. They undertook a check to confirm the suitability of the premises at each site and evaluated the required policies, schemes of work and documents regarding safeguarding, including the single central register.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Bragg

Ofsted Inspector

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