

Millcourt School

Wade House Road, Shelf, Halifax HX3 7PA

Inspection dates

27 August 2020

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

- *Paragraph 1, 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(c), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)*
- The proposed school has a curriculum policy in place. Leaders intend that pupils will follow the national curriculum. Pupils will study the range of subjects required by the independent school standards. In key stages 4 and 5, pupils will study a range of accredited academic and vocational courses. The key stage 5 curriculum will include a life skills programme and enrichment.
- It is intended that the curriculum will be bespoke to the needs of pupils. All pupils will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Schemes of work will be adapted to take into account the needs of pupils.
- Leaders have written long-term and medium-term plans for all subjects and all key stages.
- If the curriculum is implemented effectively, the standards in Part 1 are likely to be met.

Paragraph 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)

- Plans are in place for a suitable personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) curriculum.
- Leaders have plans in place to ensure that secondary-aged pupils have access to impartial careers advice. Leaders intend to benchmark their careers programme against the Gatsby benchmarks. Careers education will be incorporated into the PSHCE curriculum.
- Leaders place high importance on ensuring that the young people in their care are prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. Pupils in key stages 4 and 5 will be able to participate in work experience, if appropriate. Leaders understand the safeguarding and welfare checks that will need to take place before a pupil embarks on any form of work experience.
- If leaders implement their plans effectively, these standards are likely to be met.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- Leaders have employed teachers who are qualified teachers and specialists in the subjects they will teach. As the school grows, further staff will be recruited, for example a specialist hair and beauty teacher.
- Leaders understand the importance of actively promoting British values. Leaders intend to ensure that British values are taught throughout the curriculum.
- The headteacher has a clear understanding of how leaders will quality assure the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.
- The proposed school will follow the Witherslack Group's assessment system. Regular 'team around the child' meetings will include a review of pupils' learning and progress as well as focusing on their wider needs.
- There have been delays to the orders made for teaching resources as a result of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic of 2020, for example information technology and computing equipment. As a result, not all teaching resources for all subjects were available during the inspection.
- If the policies and procedures seen during the inspection are implemented effectively by leaders, these standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders place high importance on pupils understanding the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. The documentation seen during the inspection and conversations with leaders indicate that pupils will learn about respect for other people.
- The PSHCE policy makes it clear that staff must not promote any particular political views but instead offer a balanced presentation of views in their teaching.
- All pupils will study religious education. It is intended that pupils will learn about a range of religions and cultures. There will be trips and visits to places of worship. It is intended that pupils will contribute to their local community.
- Leaders have plans in place to implement the statutory relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education curriculum from September 2020.
- If leaders' plans and policies are implemented successfully, these standards are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The proposed school has a comprehensive safeguarding policy in place. The policy has regard to the most recent guidance issued by the secretary of state. This policy will be available on the proposed school's website.
- Leaders place high importance on safeguarding and promoting pupils' well-being. All staff will be trained in the school's safeguarding policies and procedures before the school opens to pupils. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputy DSL

will have training, during the first week in September 2020, to enable them to carry out their rolls.

- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10

- The proposed school will follow the Witherslack Group's positive behaviour policy. Leaders have in place a system for recording any behaviour and bullying related incidents. At weekly senior leadership team meetings, leaders intend to analyse the records of sanctions for any trends or patterns.
- The headteacher has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. All staff will be trained in the proposed school's positive behaviour policy and procedures when they commence employment at the school on 1 September 2020.
- If the positive behaviour policy and the proposed school's anti-bullying strategy are implemented effectively, these standards are likely to be met.

Paragraph 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The proposed school has a health and safety policy in place. There are systems in place to check the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy.
- All staff will be trained in fire safety. It is intended that some staff will also be trained fire marshals. A fire risk assessment has been completed for the building. Fire exits are clearly shown, and emergency lighting is in place. There will be at least one fire drill per half-term for staff and pupils. Systems are in place to ensure regular checks on the fire equipment and the fire alarm systems.
- A first aid and administration of medication policy is in place. First aid kits will be available on each floor of the building, in the science lab, design and technology, art and food technology rooms. All staff will receive first aid at work training. Appropriate staff will be trained in the administration of medication.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils on the proposed school's roll. The proposed school's admissions and attendance register templates meet requirements. Leaders understand their responsibility to notify the local authority if a pupil is taken off the school's roll or if a pupil is missing in education.
- The proposed school has a risk assessment policy and associated risk assessment templates. This would indicate that leaders are likely to take appropriate actions to reduce any risks identified.
- If the proposed school's policies and procedures are implemented effectively, these standards are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- The proposed school will follow the Witherslack Group's safer recruitment policy.

- Leaders have carried out section 128 checks on the appropriate staff and the board of proprietors. Although the school has not employed any staff as heads of departments, they understand the need to carry out a section 128 check on any future appointments.
- Leaders could explain the systems they will have in place to ensure the safeguarding of pupils who will be transported to school in taxis.
- Leaders understand the checks that need to be made should they use alternative education provision or work experience placements for key stage 4 and 5 pupils.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Paragraph 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c)

- The proposed school has a single central record (SCR) to record all statutory checks on staff to ensure they are safe to work with children and young people. All staff currently employed are on the SCR. At the time of the inspection, leaders were awaiting confirmation of a few checks. Staff do not take up their posts until all checks are completed.
- A member of staff had just been interviewed. Checks will be made and added to the SCR once the appointment is confirmed.
- Some administrative amendments were made to the SCR during the inspection in relation to checks made on the central team of staff who work for the Witherslack Group.
- The headteacher does not intend to use supply staff. However, she understands the necessary checks that will be required if supply staff are used.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 22, 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 23(2), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- There are separate toilet facilities on each floor for boys and girls. There are separate toilets for primary pupils on the ground floor. There are staff toilets on each floor. There are two accessible toilets.
- There are separate changing rooms and showers for boys and girls.
- There is a well-equipped medical room with a bed for the short-term treatment of pupils. The medical room will not be used for any other purposes. The medical room is close to a toilet and includes a sink.
- The proposed school has a defibrillator on site. Staff will be trained in how to use this.
- During the inspection, the soap dispensers were fitted. Paper towel holders are available in each toilet. Some further works to the toilets were completed by the end of the inspection, for example a leaking tap was fixed, and remaining panels were refitted where they had been removed in order to complete some of the renovation work.

Paragraph 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- The proposed school is bright and well decorated. The systems that leaders have in place for checking the accommodation would indicate that the building is likely to be well maintained if these systems are implemented effectively.
- The lighting is suitable. External lighting is available and in working order.
- Drinking water is labelled, it is available to pupils at all times, and it is in separate areas from the toilet facilities.
- The water in some of the toilets was slightly too hot during the inspection. This was due to some building works. This was rectified. Leaders have systems in place to regularly check the water temperature.

Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- There is an outdoor grassed area for pupils to play outside and for physical education (PE). The dining room will also be used for indoor PE. Leaders understand that if they use any off-site sports facilities in the future, they will need to ensure that appropriate risk assessments and safeguarding checks are in place.
- There has been some delay to the building and renovation work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some final work was being completed during the inspection. Photographic evidence of this work being completed was seen by the end of the inspection. There has also been delays to the furniture and signage arriving due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The inspector took into consideration these delays when making the judgement that the proposed school is likely to meet the standards in Part 5.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g)

- The proposed school's website is currently under development. Many of the policies required by the independent school standards are already available on the school's website. The website will be fully completed by the time the proposed school opens. There is a website plan in place. This will be checked regularly to ensure that the standards in part 6 are consistently met.
- There is an annual report template in place. This was amended during the inspection to include a column to report pupils' subject attainment. All other information required was contained within the report template.
- There is already a section on the proposed school's website for Ofsted reports.
- Contact details for the board of proprietors, the headteacher and the school are already available on the proposed school's website.
- These standards are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)

- The proposed school has a comprehensive complaints policy in place. This sets out clear timescales for the management of any complaints. There are proformas in place to record any complaints made. The policy makes it clear how the outcome of any complaints will be recorded.
- If the complaints policy and procedures are implemented successfully, these standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c), 34(2)

- Leaders understand the need to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met. They have systems in place to check the implementation of these standards. Leaders have experience of running schools for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The newly appointed headteacher has a background in working with pupils with SEND and the deputy headteacher is a qualified special educational needs coordinator.
- Leaders are clear about the important role they will play in promoting the well-being of pupils. They have health and safety and welfare policies in place. Leaders could articulate how the effectiveness of these policies and procedures will be monitored and evaluated.
- These standards are likely to be met if the proposed school's policies, procedures and systems are implemented effectively.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school has an accessibility plan. This covers the curriculum, improving information and improving the physical environment.
- This indicates that the proposed school is likely to comply with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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	147983
DfE registration number	381/6024
Inspection number	10154465

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 day school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Witherslack Group Ltd
Chair	Richard Wilkins
Headteacher	Paula Harris
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,354–£83,449
Telephone number	01539 566 081
Website	witherslackgroup.co.uk/millcourt-school
Email address	millcourt@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	Not applicable	9–18	9–18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	56	56

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	56

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	56
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	56
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	56

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	6	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Welfare staff	1	2

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is situated in a former office building in Shelf, Halifax. Building work has taken place to adapt the building for school use. The building has also been renovated.
- The proposed school is part of Witherslack Group Ltd. This group currently runs a number of other schools.
- The proposed school will cater for up to 56 pupils in Years 5 to 13 (nine to 18 years old). There will be low pupil numbers to begin with. The proposed school will gradually grow to up to 24 pupils by the end of the first year.
- There will be no key stage 4 or 5 pupils in the first year of opening. There will be a ratio of one teacher, and up to two teaching assistants, for every six to eight pupils. There will be no more than eight pupils in a class.
- The proposed school will cater for pupils with a wide range of SEND. These will include, for example, pupils with cognitive learning needs, communication and interaction

needs, autism spectrum disorder and pupils with behavioural, emotional and social development needs.

- All pupils will be placed by the local authority and have an EHC plan.
- The proposed school does not intend to use any alternative education provision initially, but it may do so in the future.
- The proposed school will not open to pupils until the week commencing Monday 28 September 2020.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Some of the inspection was conducted remotely. This was due to restrictions placed on non-essential travel during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The inspector visited the school site and toured the school premises both inside and out. Video meetings were held with a representative of the board of proprietors, the regional director, the headteacher, the associate director for safety, health and environment and risk management, the health and safety officer and the associate director for school improvement. A wide range of documentation was also reviewed relevant to the independent school standards.
- This was the proposed school's first pre-registration inspection.

Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020