

The Eaves Learning Centre

The Laurels, 4 Hawkeridge Road, Heywood, Wiltshire BA13 4LF

Inspection date

16 December 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

Paragraphs 2, 3, 4

- Leaders have ensured that a curriculum policy is in place. The planned curriculum aligns with the national curriculum and takes into account the anticipated needs of the pupils attending the school.
- The curriculum will provide pupils with opportunities to build on what they already know and to study to achieve accredited qualifications. Schemes of work show how pupils' knowledge will typically build over time.
- Leaders have devised an appropriate programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Threaded through the scheme of work is the promotion of fundamental British values. Planning for PSHE also pays due regard to respect for the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- The policy for careers education is likely to be suitable. It sets out support for pupils to make informed choices about their future education and employment. Secondary-age pupils will receive advice from an independent careers officer.
- Appropriate, high-quality resources are in place to help teachers to deliver the curriculum. Classrooms are well equipped. Dedicated teaching spaces are available for science, art, food technology and digital media.
- The proprietor plans to maintain a staff to pupil ratio which reflects the needs of the pupils likely to be referred to the school. The proprietor's staffing plan includes the recruitment of subject specialists. Teachers will also have access to a network of support from across the other schools in the proprietor group.
- The school's written assessment policy promotes the use of assessment to identify pupils' needs and inform teaching. When implemented, the use of assessment is likely to be purposeful and effective. The proprietor's regional and national staff will hold leaders and teachers to account for this aspect of the school's work.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraph 5

- The headteacher has produced a rationale for covering the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils. This rationale is clear about the school's commitment to developing pupils' understanding of themselves and their world. The rationale also sets out how fundamental British values will be taught.
- Schemes of work are in place for personal, social, health and economic education that encompass SMSC education. These include schemes of work to promote pupils' understanding of different world views, as well as relationships and sex education appropriate to pupils' ages and experiences. Carefully chosen modules of work will promote pupils' social skills and cultural understanding and, if applicable, enable them to gain accredited awards.
- Timetabled morning and afternoon tutor sessions provide further opportunities to support pupils' personal development. Off-site visits are to be provided to give pupils experiences of the wider world.
- The headteacher also intends to invite representatives of the local community into the school. He has thought carefully about how to ensure visiting speakers are aware of school expectations so that their contributions are balanced and appropriate for pupils.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

- Leaders have set up appropriate systems to manage concerns relating to pupils' welfare. They have suitable training in place that will enable staff to take the right actions when they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders have written a safeguarding policy that meets current requirements.
- Leaders have appropriate systems in place to ensure that potential safeguarding concerns are identified and managed effectively based on the proprietor's well-established systems.
- Staff will receive suitable safeguarding training. The training will include information on the signs and symptoms of different types of abuse. Staff will also be given clear guidance on how to report any concerns about pupils' welfare. The designated safeguarding leaders have undertaken additional training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.
- There are several appropriate policies in place to ensure pupils' health and safety, including first aid, risk assessment, anti-bullying and behaviour. These all follow statutory guidance. Risk assessments are suitable.
- The site complies with fire safety regulations. A cycle of regular checks will be implemented to help maintain all aspects of safety.
- The admissions and attendance registers contain all of the required information. Plans for the effective supervision of pupils are in place.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

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

Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

- The proprietor has ensured that systems are in place for the necessary checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Appropriate checks have been completed on the members of the company board, the headteacher and staff already appointed to work in the proposed school.
- The proprietor has a safer recruitment policy in place. School leaders have attended training in safer recruitment and are clear about their responsibilities when recruiting staff.
- Leaders and recruitment staff are aware of the need to complete pre-employment checks, including the additional checks for those who have worked or lived abroad, before any newly appointed staff begin working at the proposed school.
- The headteacher does not anticipate using supply staff. However, he knows how to carry out all the necessary checks on supply staff, if he does use staff from an employment agency.
- The proposed school's single central register of the required checks on members of staff contains all the necessary information. It is held centrally by the proprietor company. School leaders have access to it.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31

- Since purchasing the site, the proprietor has carried out a full, high-quality refurbishment of the school buildings in readiness for the school opening. There have been some delays due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions. However, all work is due for completion by the end of December 2020.
- The school is adjacent to a busy main road. Leaders have erected suitable fencing to ensure the safety of pupils.
- There are toilets for the sole use of pupils. Each toilet is in a separate room with a washbasin and full-length door. The toilets are newly refurbished and well presented. There are separate toilets for adults and visitors. The hot water in these facilities does not pose a scalding risk. Drinking water is available at various points in the school.
- Pupils will have access to suitable changing facilities.
- A dedicated medical room, which contains a washing facility, is ready for use. The room will be always available so that staff can attend to the medical needs of pupils, including those who injure themselves or fall ill.
- Classrooms are finished to a high standard, and provide ample space to accommodate the proposed number of pupils. Science, food technology, art and digital media have well-equipped specialist rooms. Heating, lighting and acoustics in rooms and internal spaces are all suitable. Pupils have access to appropriate outdoor space for recreation and physical education.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32

- The school does not yet have a website. A draft website is in place, which will go live when the school opens. This website will contain all information required for parents, carers and local authorities who place pupils in the school. Currently, all the necessary information is available from the school's office.
- Leaders have appropriate plans in place to report pupils' academic and social progress to parents and local authorities. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of their obligations to provide relevant information to support the annual reviews of pupils' education, health and care plans.
- Leaders are aware of their duty to report on the income and expenditure of funds relating to the pupils placed by a local authority and have prepared templates for this purpose.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- The proposed school's complaints procedure fully complies with all the requirements set out in the independent school standards (ISS). The procedure is available for parents or others on request. It includes the steps and timescales for each stage of leaders' actions following a complaint. The procedure outlines a complainant's rights of appeal. It also makes clear that the panel which hears a complaint will include someone independent of the management and leadership of the school.
- The effective implementation of this procedure will ensure that any complaint is dealt with promptly, and the outcome communicated appropriately.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The proprietor's regional director and the proposed school's headteacher demonstrate a secure understanding of the ISS. They have acted to ensure all the ISS are likely to be met.
- The proposed school's leadership team will be supported by systems and structures that are already well established within the Witherslack Group, the school's proprietor. Planned methods for checking standards in the school appear comprehensive and helpful.
- The headteacher is an experienced school leader. He has worked in mainstream and special schools. He has a strong understanding of the needs of the pupils who are likely to attend the school.
- Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils attending the school. The proprietor has refurbished the school building to a high standard. Established systems for ongoing health and safety checks are in place.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The school's accessibility equality plan makes provision for meeting its duties around provision for disabled pupils.

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	148176
DfE registration number	865/6053
Inspection number	10162746

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 Witherslack Group Ltd
Chair	Julie Taylor
Headteacher	Mr Colin Cattanach
Annual fees (day pupils)	£94,531
Telephone number	01373 824466
Website	witherslackgroup.co.uk
Email address	colin.cattanach@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	8 to 19	8 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	21	21

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	21

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	None
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	Up to 21
Of which, number of pupils an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 21
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 21

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	4
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	9

Information about this proposed school

- The Eaves Learning Centre proposes to provide education for up to 21 pupils aged between eight and 19. The school site sits approximately two miles outside of the town of Westbury in Wiltshire. The proposed premises were formerly used by Tumblewood School which closed in July 2020.
- The school is owned by the Witherslack Group, a national organisation which owns and runs 18 schools.
- The proposed school intends to provide education for pupils with an education, health and care plan, specifically for those with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The proposed school does not have any religious character.

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 inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.
- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the Eaves Learning Centre.
- The inspector reviewed documentation related to the curriculum, safeguarding, health and safety of the premises and the suitability of staff.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the proprietor's regional director, and the school's pastoral care manager.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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