

Luxborough Court School

Luxborough Lane, Chigwell IG7 5AB

Inspection dates

26 July 2022

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 will provide education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and have a primary need of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Pupils are likely to have experienced difficulties in their previous schools. They are likely to have had periods where they have missed education or experienced significant disruption to their education. Pupils may join at different points throughout the school year.
- A curriculum policy is in place. Pupils will study a broad range of subjects that meet the requirements of the independent school standards. Leaders recognise the importance of reading. The teaching of reading and opportunities for pupils to read a variety of texts are included in the curriculum for each key stage.
- Leaders have written schemes of work for each subject in all key stages. These will be adapted for individual pupils' needs. Leaders intend to assess individual pupils' starting points when they join the school.
- Pupils in key stage 4 will study a variety of academic and vocational courses. Students in key stage 5 will focus on developing the skills and knowledge for independent living and successful transition to adulthood. They will also have opportunities to achieve higher level academic or vocational qualifications.
- If the curriculum is implemented effectively, the standards in this part 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), 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(c), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2), 2A(3)

- Leaders have written a suitable curriculum plan for personal, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). They have ensured that this plan includes the required elements of relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education for pupils in the primary and secondary school age groups. These will be taught in a way that accounts for the age and stage of development of each pupil.

- The PSHCE curriculum includes careers education for secondary-age pupils. Leaders plan to provide independent, impartial careers advice and guidance to pupils.
- Leaders place particular emphasis on pupils' personal development and developing the knowledge and skills required for independent living in British society. This includes learning about how to use money, healthy relationships and learning to stay safe and recognise risks. Pupils will be taught about the protected characteristics as appropriate for their age. For example, pupils in Year 8 will learn about discrimination due to race or religion. Younger pupils will learn about different family structures.
- Leaders have written an RSE policy that reflects the latest statutory guidance. They have procedures in place to consult with parents on this policy when the school opens and at any time when the policy is amended in the future.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is 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 appointed qualified teachers who are specialists in primary or secondary education. There is a considered programme in place to recruit further staff as the school grows. Leaders have firm plans to provide additional training for staff to ensure that they develop further expertise in meeting the needs of the pupils that the proposed school will serve.
- Leaders have processes in place to check on the quality of education provided and that the planned curriculum is taught effectively so that it meets pupils' needs, is adapted well, and supports them to make good progress.
- The systems and policies for managing behaviour are designed to support teachers in promoting positive behaviour and attitudes to learning in their lessons.
- There are appropriately detailed plans in place across subjects. The plans outline the knowledge that pupils are expected to learn at different times. These plans, along with initial assessments, will support teachers in planning and adapting learning for individual pupils that builds upon what they know and can do.
- An assessment system is in place that will enable teachers and leaders to identify what pupils have learned and the progress that they have made. This will be used to inform teachers' and curriculum leaders' planning. Arrangements are in place to provide regular reports to parents and carers about their child's attainment and progress.
- Leaders have ensured that 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)

- The school's ethos and curriculum place a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' social and moral development. Pupils will be given many opportunities to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions and the impact they have on others. Pupils will be encouraged to make the right choices about their behaviour and be rewarded for these.

- Pupils will be supported to develop social skills and build positive relationships through activities that are designed to capture their interest and engagement.
- The proposed PSHCE curriculum, life skills curriculum and planned programme of assemblies are likely to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils will learn about being different and why it is important to respect the cultures, views and beliefs of others. They will also learn about the rule of law and the democratic process in different contexts.
- Pupils will have opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as being members of the school council. Leaders aim to prepare pupils so that they successfully transition to adulthood and are active members of society.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met if their plans are implemented well.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- A detailed child protection and safeguarding policy has been written. It reflects the most recent statutory guidance. This is underpinned by several other policies and procedures that are designed to keep pupils safe from harm. The child protection and safeguarding policy will be available to parents on request when the school opens. It will also be published on the school's website.
- A suitable programme of safeguarding training for staff is in place. This is likely to ensure that staff can recognise signs that a pupil is at risk of harm. Procedures and processes for reporting and acting on concerns are also in place. There are systems in place for referring concerns to external agencies in a timely fashion.
- The proprietor body will check on the proposed school's safeguarding systems and processes to be assured that they are consistent and effective.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

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

- Leaders' expectations of behaviour are clearly set out in the proposed school's behaviour policy. It details the consistent approach that staff will be expected to use to manage pupils' behaviour. A system of rewards and sanctions will be used to support teachers in positively managing pupils' behaviour.
- There are systems in place to record both positive and negative behaviours. Leaders will use to evaluate the effectiveness of their behaviour policy and identify pupils or staff who need additional support.
- Leaders have in place a policy for the use of suspensions and exclusions. This sets out when these sanctions may be used, the appeals process and arrangements for re-integrating a pupil following a suspension. There is also a detailed policy for the use of physical intervention. This clearly states that physical intervention is a last resort and the circumstances in which it may be used. All staff will receive appropriate training annually.

- The anti-bullying policy states the school's approach to responding to any bullying incidents. It identifies the different forms that bullying may take, including bullying of pupils with protected characteristics.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

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

- There are detailed health and safety and fire risk assessments in place. These state the responsibilities of leaders and employees to keep pupils, staff, visitors and the premises safe.
- The policies detail the different checks that are required and the frequency of these checks to ensure that health and safety requirements are fulfilled, and equipment and premises are maintained in good working order. The proprietor body has centrally employed staff who regularly check that these procedures are being followed correctly.
- The fire risk assessment is thorough. There is an evacuation procedure in place for the proposed school. Fire exits are clearly marked and there are fire extinguishers at various locations around the school. There are procedures in place for the regular servicing and checks to ensure that fire detection systems, fire doors, alarms and firefighting equipment are working correctly.
- Leaders have ensured that an appropriate policy for the administration of first aid is in place. There are first-aid kits at various locations in the school, including science laboratories, the food technology room and the design and technology workshop. Leaders intend to carry out the necessary checks to ensure that the content of first-aid kits are relaced and replenished as required.
- Leaders have clear procedures to ensure that pupils are suitably supervised by staff both in lessons and during break and lunchtimes. Leaders' recruitment policy is intended to ensure that staff are appointed to allow teaching in smaller groups and adequate supervision outside of lessons as pupil numbers increase over time.
- There are appropriate systems for recording admissions to the school and pupils' attendance.
- Leaders know what information must be recorded on the admissions register when pupils join the school. They know what information must be recorded when pupils leave the school.
- There are procedures and systems in place for recording pupils' attendance. There are clear actions that will be taken if a pupil is absent, and parents have not notified the school of the reasons for this.
- A risk assessment policy is in place that identifies how risk should be identified and the responsibility of staff to identify actions to mitigate this risk. Leaders have identified risks specific to the site and actions required to mitigate for these. Templates provided by the proprietor body support the risk assessment process. Leaders intend for risk assessments for individual pupils to be in place.
- Leaders have ensured that the school is likely to meet all requirements of this part of the independent school standards.

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

Paragraph 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), 19(3), 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(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(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c), 21(6)

- The proprietor body and leaders have ensured that all the required checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work in schools have been carried out prior to appointing staff. This includes checks on medical fitness and qualifications. All checks are completed prior to appointment of staff. The required checks have been carried out on members of the proprietor body and senior leaders.
- Leaders do not intend to use agency staff. However, they are aware of the checks that they need to carry out should they need to do so.
- The single central record of pre-employment checks is in place. It meets requirements.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

- The proposed school will be in purpose-built accommodation that was built approximately five years ago. The site was previously occupied by an independent school that closed in 2020. The building and site have been well maintained. Corridors are wide enough so that they are likely to avoid congestion. The school site is secure. There is a perimeter fence and electronic gates to the site. There are identified areas for pupils and visitors to enter the building.
- There are numerous toilets available for pupils. These are intended for use by a single pupil and lockable from the inside. There is also a disabled toilet that includes a shower facility. Pupils' toilet facilities have supplies of hot and cold water that are at appropriate temperatures.
- There are boys' and girls' PE changing rooms with shower facilities. These have non-slip flooring and are adjacent to the sports hall.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- There are two rooms specifically for the medical treatment and examination of pupils. Both are suitably equipped have washing facilities and are located close to toilets that are for pupils' use.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

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

- Classrooms have large windows for natural light and appropriate artificial lighting, and the materials used in their construction ensure acoustics are suitable. There are two science laboratories, a food technology room, a design and technology workshop and sports hall/gymnasium. All are suitably equipped and appropriate for their intended purpose.
- Sources of drinking water are clearly labelled and will be accessible to pupils.
- The hot water supply to washing facilities is at a temperature that does not pose a scalding risk.
- There is a large outdoor space to the rear of the school. This includes a play area, an area with outdoor gym equipment and an area that will be developed into a nature trail and forest school. There is also a multi-use games area.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 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)(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 proprietor body and leaders are aware of their requirement to ensure that certain information is available to parents and carers and other agencies. A website for the proposed school is under construction.
- The school website that is under construction includes all the required information, such as policies, contact details and information about the school's education provision, including policies regarding child protection, behaviour and anti-bullying. Leaders have ensured that this information will be available to parents of prospective pupils, for example through the proposed school's prospectus.
- Leaders have ensured that arrangements are in place so that the required information will be available on request to parents, carers and other stakeholders.
- The proposed arrangements for checks on pupils' attainment and progress will be used to provide an annual report to parents and carers.
- Leaders are fully aware of their responsibility to provide local authorities with a breakdown of income and expenditure related to the funding they receive. They know their responsibilities to contribute effectively to the annual review of pupils' EHC plans.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is 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)

- A suitable complaints policy is available to parents on request from the proposed school. It will be published on the school website when this is constructed. The policy gives the procedures and timescales for dealing with informal and formal complaints. It includes an explanation of arrangements for a panel hearing should this be required.
- Procedures are in place to record complaints and the actions taken in response to them.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is 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)

- The Witherslack Group is the proprietor body for several other independent special schools across the country. The chair and representatives of the proprietor body show a good understanding of the requirements of the independent school standards. Many of the policies and procedures that will be used at the proposed school are based on those used at the proprietor body's other schools.
- Representatives of the proprietor body are aware of their responsibilities to actively promote the well-being of pupils and safeguard pupils. They are committed to establishing a high-quality provision for pupils with ASD. There are structures in place to ensure that the proprietor body can oversee all aspects of the work of leaders of the proposed school, provide support and hold leaders to account.
- The proprietor body has a firm plan in place to recruit suitably qualified staff and to ensure that staff have the necessary expertise to support the academic and personal development of the pupils that the proposed school will serve.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have written an accessibility plan for the proposed school. This covers the curriculum, improving the physical environment and making information more accessible.
- The proposed school is likely to comply with paragraph 3 of 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	149212
DfE registration number	881/6090
Inspection number	10243281

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	Julie Taylor
Headteacher	Not Known
Annual fees (day pupils)	£80200 to £118414
Telephone number	01539566081
Website	No website
Email address	julie.taylor@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	N/A	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	N/A	150	150

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	150
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	N/A	150
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	N/A	150
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	N/A	150

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	6	120
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	0	7

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school will be located in a purpose-built school building in Luxborough Lane, Chigwell, Essex IG7 5AB. The premises were previously occupied by The Anderson School, an independent special school that closed in August 2020. The proposed school has a different proprietor body to the closed school.
- The proposed school will be part of the Witherslack Group Ltd. The proprietor body runs several other independent special schools.
- The proprietor body seeks registration with the DfE as an independent special school to admit up to 150 pupils with SEND between the ages of five and 19.
- The proposed school will cater for pupils with ASD. All pupils will have an EHC plan and be placed at the school by local authorities. It is likely that pupils will have experienced disrupted education and may have missed periods of education at their previous schools.
- Pupil numbers will be low to begin with. The school will cater for key stage 2 and key stage 3 pupils during the first year of opening. It is anticipated that there will be a maximum number of 20 pupils on roll during the first year of opening. The proprietor intends that the school will grow steadily and reach capacity over the first two to three years.
- The proposed school does not anticipate using alternative provision but may do so in the future.
- The proposed school will not open to pupils before the week commencing 31 October 2022.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first pre-registration inspection of the proposed school.
- The purpose of the inspection was to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Schools must comply with the independent school standards to be registered.
- The inspector conducted a tour of the school premises and grounds. The inspector met with the executive headteacher (who is also the forehead of school development for the proprietor body) and other representatives of the proprietor body, including the regional director and health and safety officer. The inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to the independent standards, including documents related to curriculum planning and policies and records of checks relating to health and safety. The inspector reviewed the single central record and discussed arrangements and procedures for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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