

# Oversands School

Witherslack, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 6SD

**Inspection date**

29 September 2023

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b)–2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(f)–2(2)(i)*

- The proprietor body has put in place an appropriate curriculum policy which sets out a sufficiently broad range of subjects for pupils to study from key stage 1 to key stage 5. The policy clearly explains leaders' aims for the curriculum. For example, it describes how the curriculum will enable pupils of all ages to develop strong communication and language skills. Leaders also intend that the curriculum will contribute appropriately to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education.
- The curriculum policy is supported by suitable plans and schemes of work for each subject. These plans and schemes of work reflect leaders' ambitious intent for what pupils should learn during their time in the school. Leaders have developed their plans and schemes of work so that they meet the needs of pupils and students aged from five to 19. This means that the curriculum is likely to meet the needs of pupils in key stage 1 should the proposed material change be granted.
- Due consideration has been given to the order in which pupils in key stage 1 will learn essential knowledge should the material change be granted. Leaders will ensure that pupils' knowledge builds up securely in this key stage. Leaders have also ensured that the curriculum takes into account the specific and individual needs of pupils in the school, all of whom will have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils will be taught subjects, including English, mathematics, science, music, computing, art and design, history and geography, and physical education.
- Appropriate importance has been placed on the teaching of reading. Pupils at the early stage of reading will receive regular phonics teaching to enable them to learn to read well. The proprietor body has ensured that there is a wide range of suitable books for pupils of all ages to read.
- There is a scheme of work for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. There is an appropriate emphasis on ensuring that pupils are ready for life beyond school. The topics covered in PSHE are extensive. These include topics which

encourage pupils to recognise and respect difference and diversity. The PSHE scheme has been suitably adapted for key stage 1 pupils should the material change be approved. Older pupils at the school receive impartial careers information, advice and guidance.

*Paragraphs 2A(1), 2A(1)(a)–(b), 2A(1)(d)–2A(3)*

- The PSHE curriculum provides pupils of primary age with appropriate relationships education, which has been suitably adapted for the addition of key stage 1 pupils. Pupils of secondary age receive suitable relationships and sex education. Leaders' policy complies with the relevant statutory guidance and has been developed in consultation with parents and carers.

*Paragraphs 3, 3(a)–3(g)*

- Staff receive advice and guidance to help them to deliver the curriculum well. Leaders have ensured that the staff who will be required to teach the curriculum in key stage 1 have the necessary knowledge and skills to do so should the material change be granted.
- The school carries out suitable assessments to establish pupils' starting points when pupils join the school. Leaders have ensured that these assessments will also be appropriate for pupils joining the school in key stage 1. There are regular checks on pupils' progress and attainment. The findings from these assessments are used to inform the teaching that pupils receive. Leaders have given consideration to how teachers will use assessment information to deliver learning in key stage 1.
- Pupils benefit from an appropriate quantity and range of resources, such as stationery and textbooks. These resources are of good quality. Suitable resources have been purchased to support the learning of pupils in key stage 1. For example, the range of reading and storybooks has been widened to include those suitable for younger pupils. New furniture, suitable for smaller pupils, has been purchased.

*Paragraphs 3, 3(h)–3(j)*

- There is an appropriate policy in place setting out leaders' expectations for pupils' behaviour. There is a focus on supporting pupils to manage their own behaviour in readiness for future life. The policy provides information about how responsible behaviour is promoted in the school. It sets out the school's strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour, including bullying. The policy is likely to remain suitable should the material change be granted to admit key stage 1 pupils.

*Paragraph 4*

- There is a suitable assessment policy in place. Pupils' progress is shared regularly with parents and carers, with senior leaders and with the proprietor body. This is likely to remain appropriate should key stage 1 pupils be admitted to the school.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the proposed material change is granted.

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

*Paragraphs 5, 5(a)–5(d)(iii)*

- The proprietor body has ensured that appropriate consideration has been given to pupils' SMSC development, including for those in key stage 1. Through the

curriculums for religious studies and PSHE, pupils learn about a range of different faiths and cultures. This learning will begin in Year 1 should the material change be approved.

- Pupils learn about fundamental British values, such as the rule of law and individual liberty. The school's policies and curriculum include positive references to all of the protected characteristics as set out in legislation.
- The school provides plentiful opportunities for pupils' wider development. For example, pupils experience trips and visits to museums and places of worship. There is a range of clubs and activities to develop pupils' talents and interests. Pupils learn to take care of their environment through their outdoor woodland activities. Such activities will be tailored to the needs of pupils in key stage 1 should the proposed material change be approved.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met if the proposed material change is granted.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)*

- The proprietor body has followed current statutory guidance in the development of its arrangements to keep pupils safe. There is a suitable and up-to-date safeguarding policy in place. This policy is published on the school's website and is likely to remain suitable should the proposed material change be granted.
- The proprietor body has ensured that all staff receive regular safeguarding training. Those with responsibilities for leading safeguarding have been trained to the required level.
- All new staff receive an appropriate induction programme, safeguarding training and regular updates on areas such as radicalisation and extremism and online safety.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met should the material change be granted.

### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor body has an appropriate knowledge of the standards. Members of the proprietor body hold leaders fully to account for their work. This helps to ensure that the standards are met consistently well. The proprietor body, and senior leaders, have planned carefully for the proposed change to the age range of the pupils that the school will admit.
- The proprietor body has ensured that all standards checked during this inspection are likely to be met if the proposed increase to add a key stage 1 provision is granted.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the proposed material change is granted.

### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have an appropriate accessibility policy in place which ensures that schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 is 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 that are relevant to the material change.

## School details

Unique reference number	112452
DfE registration number	943/6027
Inspection number	10303205

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent boarding school
Proprietor	Witherslack Group Ltd
Chair	Richard Wilkins
Headteacher	Edward Sherratt
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,186
Telephone number	01539 552397
Website	<a href="http://www.witherslackgroup.co.uk">www.witherslackgroup.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:oversands@witherslackgroup.co.uk">oversands@witherslackgroup.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	29 November to 1 December 2022

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	8 to 19	5 to 19	5 to 19
Number of pupils on the school roll	60	80	80

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	60	67
Number of part-time pupils	None	None
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	60	67
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	60	67
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	60	67

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	19	19
Number of part-time teaching staff	None	None
Number of staff in the welfare provision	45	45

## Information about this school

- The last standard inspection took place on 29 November to 1 December 2022.
- The school operates from premises at Witherslack, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria, LA11 6SD.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of SEND, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school provides boarding provision.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

- This material change inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the proprietor body requested a change to the age range of pupils that the school admits. This material change will not affect the boarding provision.
- This was the first material change since the last full standard inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the regional director and other leaders to discuss the curriculum for pupils. The inspector scrutinised a range of policies and documents relating to the curriculum.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone with the chair of the proprietor body. She spoke on the telephone with representatives of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector carried out a tour of the school.

## Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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