

Inspection of Luxborough Court School

Luxborough Lane, Chigwell, Essex IG7 5AA

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

**Insufficient evidence – amnesty
granted**

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Luxborough Court School is a calm and caring community. This small school has a warm family feel where everyone knows one another. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with the adults in the school. They know that staff have their best interests at heart. Pupils also learn how to socialise across the year groups, sitting chatting over lunch or climbing on the extensive outdoor equipment. For some, this is the first time they have a school friend.

Pupils feel safe, as there are strong routines at the school. The orderly, autism-friendly environment helps pupils to make a good start to their education. Pupils make great use of the attractive grounds, for both their learning and for recreation. Most pupils attend school on a regular basis. They enjoy their lessons and the experiences that the school provides such as their weekly swimming sessions.

Pupils are proud to show off their achievements. They want you to know they have learned resilience. This may be hitting a tennis ball over a net after a lengthy time of missing. Or, as another pupil explained, cracking open eggs to cook even though you do not like the feel of runny yolk.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

This school is thriving in its first year of operation. This is because it is exceptionally well led. The proprietor body has slowly grown the entry to the school so that the staff get to know the pupils very well. This means staff tailor provision precisely to pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school has an ambitious curriculum. Pupils study the full range of subjects, as well as receive lessons in employability and life skills. They have the opportunity to take vocational qualifications and GCSEs. The proprietor body has ensured that the school is staffed with highly qualified clinicians, subject specialists, primary specialists and experienced teachers of pupils with SEND. Together, they consider the best possible ways to adapt the curriculum so that pupils enjoy their learning and achieve. This includes how best to achieve the pupils' targets in their education, health and care plans (EHC plan), as well as provide support for pupils' emotional well-being.

Staff support pupils' communication needs very well. Staff are well trained in using a range of communication aids and strategies, for example helping younger pupils voice a choice or older ones using subject-specialist vocabulary in their explanations. Staff routinely review pupils' evolving speech, language and communication needs to ensure they get the right help at the right time.

Reading is a priority at the school. Staff deliver the chosen phonics programme effectively. Younger pupils enjoy listening to rhymes and stories. Staff work patiently with pupils who view reading with anxiety. This helps pupils to engage well with

reading. As a result, some pupils who have not been able to read before attending the school now can.

As with reading, additional adults are adept at helping pupils remain focused on trying to be successful at tasks in other lessons and not give up. However, they are not as well versed with supporting the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding in certain subjects, such as science and mathematics.

Pupils behave superbly well. Learning is rarely interrupted. This is because staff act on the information that the clinical team provide. Subsequently, staff have a deep understanding of pupils' emotional, physical, sensory and behavioural needs. The use of sensory rooms, movement breaks and clearly defined routines help pupils to regulate their behaviour. Those that have been longer at the setting are learning to identify and express how they are feeling, for instance when they are not coping, and how to manage this when they are not at school. Parents are highly appreciative of the school's work as they see positive change at home.

The wider development of pupils is finely tuned to their EHC plans, making sure that they have learning experiences they would not ordinarily have. For example, pupils' learning how to cook as part of a food academy. This provision is growing as staffing is increasing. This is also the case with careers education. Pupils have access to a structured programme which includes workshops with businesses and support with gaining a future job. They receive high-quality, impartial careers advice.

The proprietor body has strong quality assurance processes which helps fulfil its role of monitoring the school and driving forward school improvement. Systems for monitoring and evaluation, as well as communication, are strong. They have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards, as well as fulfils its statutory functions. For example, the accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor body has a range of expert staff who provide effective support and precise challenge to school leaders. They visit often, and their views are informed by first-hand experience of the school. Staff feel valued and supported with managing their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school is currently operating at a fifth of its total capacity. As the school grows in pupil numbers and staffing, the challenge is to sustain the 'family feel' of the school and the bespoke approach to the curriculum. The proprietor body should continue to review and refine its plans for growth, including further training for additional adults so they improve their subject knowledge in order to support pupils in their learning.

- Activities that enrich the curriculum are in the early stages of development as the school builds upon the delivery of its curriculum. This means that pupils currently have limited exposure to activities in the community. There are plans to develop further provision for outdoor education. The school should press ahead with strengthening its wider development offer so that pupils benefit from a rich range of experiences that prepare them well for adulthood.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	149212
DfE registration number	881/6090
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10286490
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Proprietor	Witherslack Group Ltd
Chair	Richard Wilkins
Headteacher	Chris Williams
Annual fees (day pupils)	£80,200 to £118,414
Telephone number	02038390640
Website	www.witherslackgroup.co.uk/our-locations/our-schools/luxborough-court-school/
Email address	Luxborough-court@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school was first registered on 12 September 2022. This is the first standard inspection of the school.
- The school caters for up to 150 pupils aged five to 19 years of age. Pupils are referred by local authorities. At the time of the inspection, places at the school were commissioned by seven local authorities.
- The school caters for pupils with autism, along with additional complex needs and neurodiversity. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- Although the school is registered to have students post-16, no students are on roll in this phase. Therefore, due to insufficient evidence, amnesty has been granted for the judgement of the sixth-form provision.
- The current regional director, along with the head of school improvement, has been managing the school since September 2023. Both are experienced headteachers of special schools. The proprietor body is advertising for a new headteacher.
- The school uses one provider of alternative provision which is unregistered.
- The school does not currently use supply staff.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the proprietor body, the regional director, the head of school improvement and other leaders from the company who have oversight of behaviour and careers. They also met with senior leaders, the clinical team and staff.
- Inspectors spoke with commissioning officers from two local authorities.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, such as personal, social, health and economic education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- Inspectors toured the school premises, checked the school's website and scrutinised the admissions and attendance registers and a range of other documentation to check that the school complies with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey and Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Rather than complete the pupil survey, pupils spoke to inspectors formally and informally throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nathan Lowe

His Majesty's Inspector

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