

Wings School

Whassett, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7DN

Inspection date

27 June 2024

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 32, 32(c)

- Leaders do not ensure that staff report and record concerns about pupils' safety and welfare as intended. Moreover, leaders do not take the appropriate actions required to keep pupils safe. Notably, staff have been directed not to follow the school's safeguarding and whistle-blowing procedures when they have serious concerns. This is despite the school carrying out all of the required checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. This puts pupils at risk of considerable harm.
- Some pupils told the inspectors that they feel safe and cared for. This is despite being subjected to, or being at risk of, the inappropriate use of restrictive physical intervention and, at times, sustaining injuries inflicted by staff. The majority of pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they did not have an adult in school who they trust to confide in with any worries or concerns.
- New staff undertake an induction programme, which includes safeguarding training and the school's safeguarding policy, and which takes into account the current statutory guidance. However, staff do not put this training into action.

Paragraph 9 to 9(c)

- Some leaders and staff use restrictive physical intervention on pupils as a strategy for discipline and compliance, not solely when pupils or staff are at risk of harm. The school's physical intervention practice is unsafe with pupils subject to excessive force and unsafe holds.
- The school is not following its own policy and procedures for reporting and recording the use of restrictive physical intervention. These interventions are not systematically reported, recorded or monitored. Some staff do not recognise that some of their actions are restrictive physical intervention. Moreover, staff do not routinely check with pupils whether they have sustained any injuries and require first aid.

Paragraph 11

- The school's health and safety arrangements are lax. For instance, an above-ground swimming pool in the grounds was left uncovered during the inspection. There was nothing in place to keep pupils away from this deep water.
- The administration of medication in the school is unsafe. The arrangements for the storage of medicines are not understood by staff. Record-keeping is weak. For instance, staff signatures on records are illegible. Moreover, there is no reliable evidence of the times that medicines are administered to pupils.
- Staff do not routinely ensure that pupils receive appropriate first-aid treatment when they are injured. The injuries that pupils sustain, and the first-aid treatment provided, are not systematically reported and recorded.
- The communication with parents and carers about incidents, injuries and the administration of medication is poor. Staff do not ensure that key information is routinely shared at handovers. This means that parents are sometimes unaware that their child has been injured.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils are not adequately supervised. Despite sufficient numbers of staff, pupils are injured by their peers and by staff. Leaders and staff fail to take appropriate actions to keep pupils safe from harm when they are responsible for their safety.
- Leaders have not given sufficient thought to the challenges of the large, open school site and how best to manage these. Some pupils have left the school site and put themselves and others at risk. For instance, pupils have trespassed on the nearby main railway line.

Paragraph 15

- The proprietor does not maintain the school's admissions register in accordance with Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. When a pupil leaves the school other than at the end of Year 12, the proprietor does not always record the name of the new school that the pupil will attend and the date on which the pupil began or will begin attending that school.
- Recently, leaders have strengthened the recording of pupils' attendance. The attendance register is completed at the start of each morning and afternoon session. However, the evidence gathered by inspectors for pupils' rates of attendance and punctuality does not match the school's own records. Punctuality is poor. Many pupils struggle to get in school and on time each day. Some pupils are persistently absent from school.
- The school's systems for following up on pupils' absence are weak. While the school does make telephone calls when pupils are absent, it can be up to seven days before staff carry out face-to-face checks to ensure that these pupils are safe and well.

Paragraph 16 to 16(b)

- The proprietor does not ensure that risks are identified, assessed and managed appropriately so that pupils are kept safe. For instance, when pupils are at a heightened risk of harm to themselves and others, the school does not identify and implement suitable control measures that are required to prevent this from

reoccurring. As a result, there have been subsequent incidents that have resulted in pupils being hurt.

- Risk assessments, established as part of the school's allegation management procedures, are not routinely monitored or adhered to.
- Leaders and staff do not intervene to prevent or challenge the inappropriate or harmful behaviour of their colleagues towards pupils.
- Poor or absent risk assessment means that measures to mitigate the risks towards pupils are not in place to keep pupils safe when engaging in trips, visits and activities. Leaders' and staff's decision-making is poor. This has led to serious incidents resulting in harm to pupils that could have been avoided.
- The requirements and the independent school standards ('the standards') checked in these parts are not met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34 to 34(c)

- The proprietor has failed to protect the pupils in its care. The proprietor, leaders and staff have failed to challenge or report the mistreatment of pupils by their colleagues. The proprietor has not taken the urgent actions needed to ensure pupils' well-being.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the standards are met consistently. It has not made sure that leaders and staff implement policies and procedures as intended, including those for safeguarding, the administration of medication and the management of pupils' behaviour. This has led to pupils being subjected to serious harm. Furthermore, the proprietor has allowed some leaders to put themselves and pupils at further risk by not following agreed risk assessments.
- The standard in this part is not met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	134191
DfE registration number	943/6053
Inspection number	10354593

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

Type of school	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	10 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Kedleston Group Ltd
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Donagh McKillop
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,060
Telephone number	01539562006
Website	www.kedlestongroup.com/wings-cumbria
Email address	wingscumbria@kedlestongroup.com
Dates of previous standard inspection	16 to 18 November 2021

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection was 16 to 18 November 2021.
- The school is located at Whassett, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7DN.
- At the previous inspection, the school used three alternative providers.
- There were no sixth-form students in the school at the time of the inspection.
- The school is registered to admit up to 50 pupils.
- All the pupils have education, health and care plans. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because of concerns raised about pupils' welfare, health and safety and the school's leadership and management.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- A monitoring visit by Ofsted social care inspectors of the linked children's home took place on the same day as this emergency inspection.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the headteacher and head of school.
- Inspectors met with a member of the proprietor body and other leaders employed by the proprietor.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils and staff during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation to check the school's compliance with the standards, including attendance registers, behaviour logs and safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Hardman	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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