

# Inspection of The Eaves Learning Centre

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Inspection dates: 22 to 24 March 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Most pupils join the school following long periods out of education or with previously negative school experiences. Pupils and staff forge positive relationships quickly. It can take time for some pupils to adhere to the school's routines. However, pupils come to respect and understand the high ambitions that staff have. Consequently, pupils demonstrate positive learning attitudes in most lessons and feel a strong sense of belonging.

Pupils receive a bespoke curriculum combining academic and therapeutic support. This coordinated approach ensures that the curriculum meets pupils' individual needs effectively. Pupils learn how to regulate their emotions and feelings over time. Pupils work hard in their learning and want to do well. Reading sessions provide a calm start to every day.

Pupils have a strong voice here. They feel that adults listen and help when pupils have concerns. When bullying happens, staff take this seriously and sort it out. Pupils speak with confidence and have a strong sense of justice.

Adults help pupils to develop their social interactions. Pupils enjoy learning outdoors. They learn how to cooperate and work in a team. For example, they do this through sharing lunchtime with staff in 'The Nest', and in activities such as kayaking, gardening or sport.

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

The proprietor board has set a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Leaders ensure that the curriculum combines academic and therapeutic provision. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The on-site clinical and education teams work together through an internal 'team-around-the-child' approach. This identifies pupils' social, emotional and academic needs quickly. Leaders and staff put a tailored curriculum in place to develop pupils' personal skills as soon as they arrive. This gets pupils ready to access the academic curriculum with success over time.

Developing pupils' communication, language and reading sits at the heart of the school's curriculum. This ensures that pupils have secure foundations for future study. Pupils at the early stages of reading receive a systematic synthetic phonics programme. Pupils' reading books match the sounds that they know. This is helping these pupils to read accurately. For pupils who are more accomplished readers, staff have clear expectations that they read for a sustained period and understand what they read.

Leaders have made some significant changes to the curriculum in recent months. As a result, the curriculum is increasingly well sequenced in most subjects. Staff are keen to support pupils' development in every way they can. However, leaders' recent decision to increase the ambition in the curriculum has temporarily added to staff

workload. Leaders have not always communicated the need for these changes consistently well. Despite this, staff implement any changes thoroughly so that pupils receive the curriculum they need.

In key stage 4, pupils cement key knowledge that has been missed in the past due to long periods of school absence. There is a strong focus on English, mathematics, science, physical education (PE) and preparing pupils for employment or further studies. This work is proving effective.

Pupils in key stage 3 have a broad curriculum. Increasingly, pupils are producing high-quality work and learning more. In many subjects, teaching has a specific focus on the core content that pupils need to learn and in what order. For example, in science, staff give careful consideration to teaching about atoms, elements and compounds. In history, pupils learn about the events leading up to the Battle of Stamford Bridge and this helps them understand the Battle of Hastings. However, in a few subjects, the knowledge that leaders expect pupils to know is less well refined.

On occasions, staff expect pupils to do complex tasks without the building blocks of knowledge that should come before. Some teaching is not securely based on an accurate assessment of what pupils can do already. This holds some pupils back.

Leaders provide pupils with suitable work experience and careers guidance. The school's extra-curricular offer is considerable. Pupils enjoy museum and farm trips, cookery and visits in the local community. The curriculum is building most pupils' resilience and independence well. The personal, social and health education curriculum includes everything it should, including teaching pupils about money and finances.

Central staff from the Witherslack Group ensure that the independent school standards and the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are met. They conduct quality assurance visits and hold leaders to account stringently in many aspects. For example, they keep the building in good order and assure themselves that pupils and the site are safe.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make certain that the safeguarding policies and procedures are in line with government guidance and published on the school's website. They follow safer recruitment processes accurately.

Leaders ensure that regular and pertinent safeguarding training keeps staff up to date, including in relation to contextual safeguarding issues, such as county lines. Staff apply their training well and act on any concerns swiftly.

Pupils talk with confidence about the risks of using social media and their learning about peer-on-peer abuse.

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

- In a few subjects, the content of the curriculum is not as refined as in others. When this occurs, pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum enables all pupils to gain the key knowledge they should in every subject.
- Staff do not always use their assessments of what pupils already know to plan teaching. On occasions, lesson sequences miss out important steps of knowledge. Leaders must ensure that all staff use assessment precisely to ensure that sequences of work build firmly on what pupils already know.

## **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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148176
<b>DfE registration number</b>	865/6053
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212964
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	10
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Witherslack Group Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Fabia Cipolat
<b>Headteacher</b>	Colin Cattanach
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£94,531
<b>Telephone number</b>	01373 824466
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.witherslackgroup.co.uk">www.witherslackgroup.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:victoria.jackson@witherslackgroup.co.uk">victoria.jackson@witherslackgroup.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school opened in January 2021.
- The Eaves Learning Centre is an independent special school that caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is registered for male and female pupils aged eight to 19 years. There are currently no pupils over the age of 16.
- The school is owned by the Witherslack Group, a national organisation that owns and runs 25 schools.
- The school is governed by a school board that reports to directors of the Witherslack Group.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- Some PE activities take place off site, including swimming.

## 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.

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 had 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.

- The headteacher was absent during the inspection. A regional director for the Witherslack Group acted as the proprietor's representative in the absence of the headteacher. Inspectors met with the regional director, the deputy headteacher and other staff members. An inspector also met with other central staff from the Witherslack Group to discuss quality assurance arrangements for the school and governance arrangements.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including history and personal, social, health and economic education.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 6, 8 and 10 read.

- Inspectors reviewed the school’s safeguarding documentation. They met with the school’s designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and scrutinised safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school and the single central record. They considered how well the DSL acts on concerns about pupils’ welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils and staff about safe working practices.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and considered the responses to the respective pupil and staff surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Claire Mirams

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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