

Inspection of Woodside Lodge Outdoor Learning Centre

One Ash House, Loughborough Road, Quorn, Leicestershire LE12 8UE

Inspection dates: 8–9 June and 21 June 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
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Personal development	Outstanding
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They appreciate that staff care about them, listen to them and provide them with a lot of support. Pupils get on very well together and with staff. They enjoy each other's company. Pupils told us that there is no bullying in school. They know staff will help them if they have a concern. Most pupils behave extremely well in this nurturing and inclusive atmosphere.

The natural environment around each school site helps pupils' learning and development. They feel safe outdoors, where they can take time out to reflect and be calm. Pupils enjoy being responsible for an array of animals, including Gerty and Greta, the pygmy goats. Taking care of these, and local farm animals, supports pupils' therapy and aids their social and emotional development.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. A typical comment was, 'This school truly understands my child's difficulties and adapts their approach accordingly.' Staff help pupils to understand and accept their diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Carefully planned learning gives pupils the resilience to overcome barriers to learning. They leave school with qualifications that prepare them well for the next stage.

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

Pupils receive a broad and ambitious curriculum. Rich educational experiences encourage them to be successful. Pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to look forward to the future with confidence.

The curriculum is bespoke to each pupil. Leaders assess pupils' needs carefully when they join the school. They pay particular attention to pupils' interests. Leaders work effectively with parents and professionals. They plan learning that links closely to pupils' educational, health and care plans (EHC plan). Pupils' curriculums support their academic, therapeutic and personal development needs. Leaders review these curriculums regularly to check that they remain suitable and ambitious. However, some curriculum plans, such as English, do not identify the specific knowledge that pupils need to learn.

Staff are knowledgeable about the subjects they deliver. They make sure that curriculum plans follow a logical sequence. Most curriculum plans focus precisely on what pupils need to know before they move on to the next stage. Staff know pupils extremely well and use appropriate ways to engage them during lessons. They use skilful question-and-answer sessions to help pupils discuss complex issues, such as the role of gender in advertising during an English lesson. Staff refocus pupils' attention when it wanders. They encourage pupils to persist with activities so that they can continue to learn.

Staff continually check what pupils can remember. At the end of each lesson, pupils assess whether they are confident about what they have learned or practised. Staff

use this information to inform their future planning. If necessary, teachers revisit knowledge many times until pupils can recall it with ease. Pupils achieve well. They gain recognised qualifications in a range of subjects and are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders check how well pupils can read when they start school. Younger pupils practise their phonics regularly. Trained teachers help pupils to work out new words when reading and writing. However, not all staff support pupils who struggle to read well enough. Reading books are not always matched well to pupils' phonics knowledge.

Relationships between pupils and adults are strong and built on trust. Clear structures and routines mean that pupils know what is expected of them. Leaders work closely with pupils and their families to help them overcome their anxieties about school. Most pupils attend school well.

Pupils benefit from the school's wide-ranging therapy offer. They enjoy being outdoors, for instance planning an outdoor café to develop their understanding of money. Pupils are encouraged to think about themselves and their place in the wider world. They learn how to care for others when looking after the animals. They take part in work experience and voluntary placements. The way the school develops each pupil's character is exemplary.

Staff enjoy working at the school and feel very well supported by leaders. Training enhances staff's understanding of pupils' needs. However, there are too few opportunities for subject-specific training.

The proprietor is very well informed about all aspects of the school. He has ensured that the independent school standards are met. Regular health and safety checks help maintain the premises at each base to a good standard. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders have consulted with parents about the school's policy on relationships and sex education and health education. Other school policies are up to date and reflect the latest statutory guidance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders routinely check that the safeguarding arrangements at the school's five bases are secure. Staff benefit from regular safeguarding training and value the weekly safeguarding 'snippets', for example about county lines drug transportation and the 'Prevent' duty.

Pupils feel safe in school. Leaders teach pupils about the risks they may face. Pupils' safeguarding records are detailed. They show how staff work closely with external agencies to support and look after pupils. The proprietor ensures that all necessary checks on adults are completed before they start work at the school. The school has published an appropriate safeguarding policy on its website.

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

- Some staff do not use phonics routinely to help pupils decode words. Books are not always well matched to pupils' phonics skills. Leaders must ensure that all staff know how to provide effective support to a pupil who struggles to read well.
- In some subjects, such as English, the curriculum plans do not outline well enough the knowledge that pupils need to learn. These plans put too great an emphasis on the skills that pupils should develop. They do not identify precisely enough the component knowledge that underpins these skills. Leaders must ensure that curriculum plans pay close attention to the knowledge that teachers want pupils to learn.
- Staff benefit from training related to ASD. However, there are too few opportunities for staff to improve their subject and educational knowledge. Leaders must ensure that staff have access to subject-specific training, so that their practice and subject knowledge improves over time.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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

Unique reference number	139734
DfE registration number	855/6032
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10194787
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jonathan Lakin
Headteacher	Jonathan Lakin
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,000–£54,000
Telephone number	01509 415474
Website	http://www.woodside-group.co.uk/
Email address	info@woodside-lodge.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 to 14 September 2017

Information about this school

- Woodside Lodge Outdoor Learning Centre is an independent day school.
- The school is situated on three sites, with five separate bases across these sites. One Ash House is the site where the school is registered. It provides education for secondary-age pupils. Stonehurst Lodge and Number 14 are bases located at Stonehurst Farm, Wood Lane, Quorn, LE12 7AA. Stonehurst Lodge provides education for primary-age pupils. Number 14 provides education mainly for secondary-age pupils. Vale Farm and The Forge are bases located at Upper Vale Farm, Charley Road, Charley, Loughborough, LE12 9YB. They provide education for predominantly secondary-age pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, a new director of education and a new head of school have been appointed.
- There are currently 32 pupils on roll. This exceeds the number for which the school is registered. The school is registered to admit 30 pupils between the ages of five and 19 years.
- The school caters for pupils with ASD. All pupils have an EHC plan. Leicester City, Leicestershire County and Warwickshire County Councils currently have pupils placed at the school.
- Pupils who are above the compulsory school age receive their education in the main school. They pursue a curriculum that is appropriate to their stage of education, including preparing them for adulthood.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers.
- The inspection took place on 8 and 9 June 2021 and was completed on 21 June 2021. The delay in completing the inspection was due to circumstances relating to COVID-19.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- We met with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher, the director of education and the head of school.
- We did deep dives in four subjects: reading, personal, social, health and economic education, aesthetics and creative studies, and English. We met with leaders to discuss these subjects, visited lessons, listened to pupils reading, looked at pupils'

work, met with teachers and spoke with pupils. We also spoke with pupils during social times.

- We met with the leader responsible for safeguarding and spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. We reviewed the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central register. We looked at documentation relating to safeguarding.
- We took into account the six responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including five free-text responses. There were no responses to the staff questionnaire or the pupil questionnaire.
- We scrutinised a range of documentation, including curriculum plans, examples of pupils' EHC plans, information concerning pupils' attendance and behaviour, and documents relating to school improvement.
- We considered relevant documentation and reviewed the facilities at each school base in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephanie Innes-Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

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