

School Prospectus 2026 / 2027

Education

Therapy

Futures



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Proprietor details

Witherslack Group

Lupton Tower

Lupton

Cumbria

LA6 2PR

Tel: 015395 66081

Email: admin@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Head Teacher's name and contact details

Mr. Alister Sidgwick

alister.sidgwick@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Holiday contact details

Learning Centre Senior Administrator - Ms Lynne Nixon

Lynne.Nixon@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Governance Details

Regional Director-Mark Jarvill

Mark.jarvill@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Chair of Governors-Liam Sutcliffe

Liam.Sutcliffe@witherslackgroup.co.uk

School ethos/mission statement

Oakwood Learning Centre is a truly unique Integrated Therapeutic Provision that provides a safe, caring and learning environment within which personal growth and development is promoted. We place learning at the centre of everything we do offering an individualised structured curriculum that is differentiated and relevant to every individual student needs.

Our recent Ofsted Inspection rated Oakwood Learning Centre:

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Ofsted comments include;

- This school provides a voice, an education and a future to vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils who have experienced the most challenging start to their lives.
- The school is unashamedly led by its pupils. It is about what pupils need and what will help them to thrive.
- Leaders have created a highly inclusive school community in which pupils flourish, both academically and personally.
- Therapeutic support significantly enhances pupils' educational experience.
- The school operates like an extended family, one that is safe, nurturing and highly adaptable to pupils' changing needs and interests.
- The education and pastoral care pupils experience at this school shape the rest of their lives.
- This school gives them a fresh start, every day if needed. Staff understand pupils' needs precisely and enable them to grow into successful young adults.
- High-quality relationships, built on trust and mutual respect, encourage exceptional levels of attendance. This, in turn, enables pupils to achieve highly and feel that they are valued.
- The sense of belonging, of community and of shared purpose leads to pupils enjoying their learning. Pupils gain a sense of real achievement, often for the first time in their lives.

- Leaders' determined efforts have led to exceptional rates of attendance among pupils.
- Pupils conduct themselves in an incredibly positive manner. They respect staff and their peers.
- Progress in pupils' attitudes to their learning is remarkable.
- Some pupils who had previously been excluded from school on multiple occasions now thrive.
- Pupils appreciate the lengths to which staff go to understand them. This personalised approach has a transformational impact on pupils' attitudes to school and their future ambitions.
- Leaders understand the school, its staff and its pupils incredibly well. Leaders' actions have led to rapid, ongoing improvement over many years. Much of this change is transformational for pupils who attend the school. Leaders remain incredibly reflective. They know how to take the school to the next stage of its development
- Through a combination of high-quality academic and pastoral support, pupils are increasingly well prepared for adulthood.
- Pupils overcome significant gaps in knowledge and understanding. They make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. Pupils go on to ambitious destinations despite starting this school with many gaps in their education
- Leaders have created a curriculum that is precisely matched to pupils' needs. It takes account of gaps in knowledge and skills, which can be significant.
- High-quality inclusive practice is embedded throughout the school.
- Plans that identify pupils' specific needs are precise. They contain useful strategies that help staff to shape the curriculum on an individual basis.

Our Integrated Therapeutic Provision provides a highly personalised curriculum with structured learning programmes tailored to individual needs.

Within Oakwood Learning Centre we raise the standard of achievement for all, enabling students to develop into socially and emotionally responsible citizens by providing outstanding high-quality education, care and therapy.

At Oakwood Learning Centre we endeavour to develop creative and responsible students who are able to deal with diverse situations and to direct their lives with purpose.

We therefore gradually, and through a carefully planned development, create an innovative, exciting and creative outstanding learning environment.

Aims of Oakwood Learning Centre

Our collective aim within Oakwood Learning Centre is to equip all our students with the skills they need to access education where they will continue to develop and leave full time education as well rounded individuals who are resourceful, creative, responsible and curious with the skills necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st century and with the problem solving skills required for a sustainable future.

Oakwood Learning Centre is an exceptional provision, built on many years of outstanding research and design. From our inception in 2015 Oakwood Learning Centre has been viewed by external stakeholders as nothing but Outstanding or Exceptional.

Oakwood Learning Centre offers a broad and truly bespoke curriculum allowing pupils to pursue both academic and vocational pathways allowing individuals to strive in their areas of strength. Oakwood learning centre offers over 50 nationally accredited courses from individual unit awards, specialised outdoor activity accreditation through to GCSE and beyond. Oakwood learning centre has close links with local colleges and offers students further educational experiences and training where applicable.

Oakwood Integrated Provision is committed to the following principles:

- To respect the value of all individual pupils and staff
- To provide the highest standards of care and education
- To ensure safety, security and opportunities for success for all

At Oakwood Learning Centre we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the notion that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we aim to equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate learning and teaching experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

The curriculum at Oakwood embraces all that is learned through school, whether in lessons or as part of informal learning within and beyond the school day. It includes not only the requirements of the National Curriculum but also the wide range of activities that the school provides in order to enrich the experience and learning of the children. What the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave is also part of the curriculum. The school has a clear focus on the personal development and wellbeing of each child, as well as on their academic progress.

At Oakwood Learning Centre, we aim to teach our students how to grow into positive, responsible people who can work and co-operate with others while developing their knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their full potential. Students at Oakwood access a wide curriculum tailored to each student's specific areas of need.

At Oakwood Learning Centre we provide an education that provides students with opportunities to explore and develop their own moral values and beliefs, spiritual awareness, high standards of personal behaviour, a positive caring attitude towards other people, an understanding of their social and cultural traditions and an appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures. We understand the key role this plays in allowing students to achieve and develop both academically and socially. These key concepts will be promoted throughout the curriculum and in all aspects of school life.

Oakwood Learning Centre enjoys utilising the benefits of innovative curriculums including the use of Virtual Reality and LEGO Education within our curriculum. This is to enable students to be active, creative and collaborative and to solve a range of issues and problems they are presented with. We utilise these educational ideas as tool to develop students understanding of the modern world around them whilst providing the safety and continuity of the Oakwood site and staff team. Learning takes place with students actively constructing artefacts in the learning environment but simultaneously constructing knowledge in their minds. Constructing with others and vocalising their ideas collaboratively extends this learning even further, allowing students to focus on not only what they learnt but how they have learnt throughout the process. This in conjunction with our academic and vocational offer of education allows each learner to be fully immersed in their own educational journeys.

[Details regarding admission process](#)

Oakwood Integrated Therapeutic Provision is a co-educational, specialist 52 week fully integrated, therapeutic, education and care facility situated on a large rural site near Darlington.

The provision meets the needs of young people aged 8-18 exhibiting a diverse range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, alongside other associated conditions

Applications are considered by our admissions panel, and a non-prejudicial visit will then be arranged. Following this visit a place may be offered to pupils whose needs can be fully addressed by the school. Fees and NASS approved contracts will then be agreed with local authorities.

Referrals can be made throughout the academic year

If you wish to discuss making a referral, please contact Witherslack Group placement team.

Details for consideration of pupils/ parents whose first language is not English

On admission a child's need for additional support is identified. Appropriate provision is then established prior to the pupils start date. One to one support from a bi-lingual support assistant will be provided if this is an identified requirement.

Details of complaints procedure

In accordance with the Children's Act 1989, all students at Oakwood Learning Centre have access to a Complaints Procedure. Informal complaints or concerns will be initially addressed by the Centres Pastoral Manager. Formal complaints directly from the child or via a parent/carer or member of staff should be reported directly to the Head Teacher. If these complaints are in regard to the Head Teacher than the Regional Director should be contacted. The school's complaint and representations policy outlines details of how to make complaints and is available on our website or can be supplied via post if required.

Complaints or concerns arising from adults also follow set procedures as outlined in the school complaints policy. We have had zero complaints within the academic year 2025-2026, but any complaints would be taken extremely seriously.

Copies of all policies and procedures are available on request.

Statement regarding accessing exam results

Exam results are accessed in accordance with to the Awarding Body Policies and Procedures. Dates are published annually by Awarding bodies and we are compliant with their processes. Examination results can be obtained by contacting the Learning Centre Head Teacher. All Key Stage 4 pupils sit externally accredited examinations in line with their educational plans. The school offers a range of accredited examinations through a range of examination boards.

Safeguarding Mission Statement

Oakwood Learning Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our students. We believe in the importance of working with partner agencies to ensure that

students are kept safe, happy and healthy. All staff working here are made aware of the need of protection and how to respond to these concerns.

Where we suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, we have a statutory duty to make a referral to relevant agencies. Where local procedures allow, we will inform the parent[s] of the referral. The school will share any information relevant to the referral with those agencies and will contribute to any assessments being undertaken.

We have a Safeguarding Policy and all staff are supported by our designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's):-

Pastoral Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead: Gary Pickering

Deputy Head Teacher and Deputy DSL: Martin Barnes

If you require further support on safeguarding matters you can contact

Darlington Children's Access Point: 01325 406222

Emergency Duty Team: 08702 402994

Promoting General Welfare

Anti-Bullying

We pride ourselves on our warm and caring atmosphere. All members of our community are entitled to safety and protection and therefore bullying will not be tolerated. We have clear policies and guidelines raising awareness in staff, children and young people to signs of bullying. During the last 12 months there was 1 reported incident of bullying in Oakwood Learning Centre, this was swiftly dealt with and a positive outcome for pupils involved was secured. Students and staff take part in regular anti-bullying awareness events.

Health and Safety

At Oakwood Learning Centre the Health and Safety is coordinated by Lynne Nixon. The whole site has internal health and safety checks in place for the maintenance staff to complete, with an action plan put in place to rectify any faults. The Witherslack Group's Management and Risk Assessment Teams visits and audits the school each term.

First Aid/Medical Care

All staff as part of their induction training complete a one-day Basic First Aid course for children's services. All First Aid training is followed up with refresher training every three years.

The on-site Children's Homes administer prescribed medication to students, however a number of staff within the Learning Centre are also trained in the administration of medication should they be required to administer. All medication is recorded and kept in a locked medical cupboard.

Governance

Oakwood Learning Centre has a board of governors, chaired by Stephen Hall. Board meetings are held regularly, and notes stored for each meeting. The Head teacher provides accurate up to date information of the school's progress against its school development plan (SDP) and highlights the continued progress of all pupils in the school. The governors provide professional challenge and support the development and implementation of key strategies of improvement in the school.

Details regarding staffing and recruitment

Oakwood Learning Centre follows a rigorous recruitment process in order to recruit high quality staff and ensure that children and young people are kept safe. Senior Leaders involved in the recruitment process undertake safer recruitment training and all staff employed within the school are subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Within The Learning Centre we have a Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, 5 full time Teachers, 7 full time Teaching Assistants and a Pastoral Manager.

Attendance Data

Attendance at Oakwood Learning Centre was 99.4% for the academic year Sept 2025-2026

Complaints

Oakwood Learning Centre received 0 formal complaints for the academic year 2025-2026

Exam Results

Oakwood Learning Centre had a 100% pass rate (Grade 1-9) for pupils sitting GCSE examinations in 2024-25. Pupils left with an average of 9 external qualifications including GCSE's in Mathematics, English and Science.



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