

The Grange Learning Centre

Unique reference number (URN): 135834

Inspection report: 14 July 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Exceptional

Attendance and behaviour

Exceptional 

The vast majority of pupils attend school every day and have built up their attendance from previously low levels. As a result of the school's work, pupils are intrinsically motivated to come to school on time. This is due to the diligent, consistent support from leaders in meeting pupils' needs and the highly positive relationships formed with members of staff. Pupils feel exceptionally safe in the environment. They feel celebrated as individuals and are consistently eager to learn.

Leaders have created a highly inclusive, positive culture that is built on trust. Expert staff know how best to support those pupils who have experienced difficulties, for example childhood trauma, as well as those who have struggled to engage with education previously. Bespoke, tailored support, including therapy, makes a remarkable difference, helping pupils to better understand themselves. They learn to reflect closely on their own behaviour and develop an array of strategies to deal with situations they may find challenging.

As a result, pupils develop huge confidence, engage willingly in the school community and show incredibly high levels of respect for others. While pupils trust staff to resolve issues relating to behaviour and bullying swiftly, many older pupils show great maturity in discussing and resolving issues with their peers without the input from adults. Together, these highly successful strategies allow pupils to learn and socialise together harmoniously.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard 

Pupils achieve very well academically, socially and emotionally, from their different starting points. Many join the school with significant gaps in their learning due to previous disruption to their education. Through tailored support, pupils build confidence in their ability to succeed. They are eager to participate in lessons, connect with learning and interact positively with others. Pupils progress well through the curriculum, particularly in reading, mathematics and science. Achievements are celebrated through weekly awards that recognise pupils' successes.

Throughout key stage 4, pupils produce high-quality work towards GCSEs and a range of other external qualifications. They overcome significant barriers to learning. Consequently, they gain a range of qualifications and life skills before they leave school. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are prepared carefully for the next stage in education and adulthood. Many pupils go on to successful placements in further education, employment and training.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Staff take great care to get to know pupils well when pupils join The Grange Learning Centre. Leaders prioritise pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing needs, recognising the

significant disruption many pupils have experienced in their education, alongside their social, emotional and mental health needs. Their deep understanding of pupils' individual needs allows leaders to build trusting relationships and provide effective support so that pupils succeed.

Leaders ensure that staff develop the expertise they need through appropriate training. The school works effectively with external professionals to identify pupils' needs precisely and spot if these change. This coordinated approach ensures that pupils receive consistent, timely and individualised support to reduce the barriers they face. Some pupils benefit from a 'soft start' to the day to provide a calm, structured transition from home to school. Others are supported by regular movement breaks, interactive activities and clearly structured learning. Each pupils' curriculum is designed around their particular interests and needs, and is enriched with carefully designed therapeutic support. This approach ensures that pupils sustain positive engagement with learning and they make secure progress.

Leaders' effective partnerships with several local authorities mean that looked-after children are well supported. Pupils' personal education plans are of a consistently high quality and provide pupils with specific targets to promote their learning, progress and personal development.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

The proprietor has an ambitious vision for the school and supports the delivery of this through the allocation of appropriate resources, including an impressive careers programme. The proprietor has made connections with industry and commercial businesses, so that pupils benefit from visiting speakers, work placements and pathways into apprenticeships.

Well-developed structures and experienced personnel within the company provide highly effective oversight and support for the school. They ensure that the independent school standards are being met and that the proprietor's vision is being delivered. Leaders accurately identify, monitor and act on priorities for improvement, leading to consistently high standards across all areas of the school's work or rapid improvement in any areas where this is not the case.

All new members of staff access an induction programme that includes safeguarding training and approaches to managing dysregulated behaviour. Leaders continually reflect and identify further training for staff. The emphasis on staff understanding childhood trauma and how to support pupils with emotional needs has made a significant difference for pupils.

Leaders constantly consider the needs of individual pupils. They liaise well with parents and carers to consider their views. There is highly effective communication between leaders, the therapeutic team and those working in residential care to tailor the provision for individual pupils. This underpins the dynamic approach to personalised pupil learning. Staff are proud to work at the school and can see the difference that they make to the lives of pupils.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive curriculum for personal, social and health education. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships, sex and health education. Younger pupils know why they should exercise often and eat well. Older pupils learn about the risks associated with substance abuse. Pupils make connections between physical and mental health. They enjoy sporting opportunities, such as activities in the 'pink gym', horse riding, football and golf.

Pupils secure a deep understanding of staying safe online. They learn about age restrictions on applications and games and artificial intelligence. They understand how to protect their personal information and know how to spot insecure websites. Pupils often take part in discussions that help them develop their understanding of social cues, listening skills and different viewpoints. When necessary, pupils receive additional support that develops their vocabulary, speech and language skills successfully.

Pupils understand their learning around British values. For example, they understand democratic processes. They are tolerant of difference and are proud of the fact that everyone is treated equally at this school. A tailored programme of wider experiences nurture pupils' interests and meet their individual needs. Pupils often visit shops, museums and theatres to encourage their social development and cultural appreciation. Pupils learn about money management and how to cook meals in preparation for adulthood. They develop their love of the natural world through outdoor learning.

Pupils benefit from appropriate careers advice. They learn how to write a competitive application and develop their interview skills. Frequent visits from a wide range of employers provide pupils with insights into the world of work. Sustained work placements, aligned with pupils' interests, develop the knowledge and skills pupils need for the workplace. Pupils go on to secure ambitious destinations when they leave the school.

Staff provide first-rate pastoral care for pupils. They spot quickly if pupils are experiencing difficulties and act decisively. When necessary, pupils receive tailored, therapeutic support.

Expected standard ●

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard ●

The school's curriculum is ambitious and is informed by the national curriculum. It is, typically, designed and delivered well, and is usually adapted effectively to meet pupils' individual needs. However, the curriculum does not identify clearly enough what pupils need to learn in the earliest stages. As a result, teachers do not consistently support pupils to secure the essential knowledge and skills that are needed, particularly in writing. Some pupils who are in the earliest stages of learning to write do not get the support they need to help them to write fluently or independently.

Teaching is typically delivered as planned. Occasionally, approaches to teaching are a little inconsistent and learning activities do not build on what pupils already know as well as they

could. Nonetheless, over time, pupils progress well academically from their starting points.

Staff receive relevant training to support their practice. Leaders check carefully how well pupils learn and make progress towards their education, health and care plan outcomes. Staff link learning to topics that inspire and interest pupils. Trips and enrichment opportunities, such as visits to historical sites, help bring learning to life. Pupils speak excitedly about the Romans and the Victorians as a result of attending exhibitions and examining historical artefacts.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils benefit from very positive relationship with staff. This helps pupils to feel safe in school and, consequently, they attend very well. Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour. They greet staff courteously at morning handover and follow routines independently. This reflects the consistently high expectations and effective support provided by leaders and staff, who encourage pupils to be the best versions of themselves. Bullying seldom happens and is dealt with promptly. Pupils have a deep sense of belonging in this highly inclusive school where leaders ensure that pupils' voices are heard.

Pupils enjoy learning. The school celebrates their achievements. Pupils benefit from a carefully considered, broad curriculum. Staff ensure that barriers to pupils' learning are removed successfully. Over time, pupils achieve well from their wide range of starting points and are aspirational for their futures.

Pupils build and demonstrate confidence, resilience, independence and teamwork during their time at school. They actively support each other. During trampolining, for example, they make positive comments to spur each other on. With the guidance of skilled staff, pupils learn how to regulate their emotions and to manage challenging situations very effectively.

Pupils value the rich programme of activities that supports them in developing their interests and finding out more about the world. The outdoor learning environment encourages pupils to learn bush craft skills. Some enjoy horse-riding sessions and gymnastics.

The school's work has a lasting impact on pupils. Pupils are supported by high ambitions and personalised support from staff. Pupils gain a wide range of qualifications. Many go on to sustain further educational placements and employment. They are very well prepared for their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen how teachers develop pupils' foundational knowledge and skills, especially in writing, to enable pupils to improve the quality of their work across the curriculum.
- Leaders should review the curriculum to ensure that the core subject and disciplinary knowledge to be taught is sequenced consistently and takes into account pupils' starting

points.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the proprietor, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, members of staff, parents and carers, pupils and local authority representatives during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school does not use alternative provision.

The school is registered to admit pupils up to the age of 19 years. At the time of the inspection, the oldest pupils on roll were 16 years old.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

The chair of the proprietor body is Stephen Bacon.

The chair of governors is Stephen Hall.

The fees currently charged are from £111,000 per year.

The school's email address is: mark.boyle@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Mark Boyle: Headteacher

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided

Standards met

All standards have been met.

2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:

Mary Cook, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Dan McKeating, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 14 July 2026

Total pupils

18

School capacity

19

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

18

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0

Our grades explained

Exceptional ●

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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