

Inspection of The Eaves Learning Centre

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 March 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	Good
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	Good
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	Good
---------------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
--	------

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils have arrived from unsuccessful placements elsewhere or have had lengthy periods of school absence. At The Eaves, staff build trusting relationships by getting to know pupils' likes and dislikes. This personalised approach is the cornerstone of the school's success. It allows pupils to gain a sense of belonging and safety.

The school has high ambitions for pupils to do well. It has designed an effective curriculum to meet the needs of each pupil. Typically, pupils live up to the school's increased expectations for learning and behaviour. Staff unpick pupils' specific needs and provide a range of pastoral and therapeutic support. Over time, this helps pupils to become ready to learn and to experience success.

Well-established routines give pupils a sense of security. Staff greet pupils warmly as they arrive each day. Dedicated tutor time helps to reduce pupils' anxieties. Pupils enjoy how staff make breaktimes sociable and friendly by joining in with activities.

The school plans purposeful experiences beyond the academic. Pupils enjoy 'Move-it Monday', which develops their mental and physical health. During 'Enrichment Friday', pupils take full advantage of off-site pottery, climbing and BMX biking. These activities help to build pupils' social skills and resilience.

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

Linked to the school's motto, 'be ambitious', there is a relentless drive for continuous improvement. The headteacher leads with passion and determination. She has cultivated a strong spirit of teamwork. Staff value the support and guidance they receive to focus on their roles, including workload. Much of the school's recent work is making a significant difference to pupils' learning and behaviour.

The curriculum is broad and well sequenced. Pupils learn across academic, personal and preparation for adulthood pathways. Staff identify as much information as possible about pupils' specific special educational needs and/or disabilities when they join the school. They carefully align outcomes from pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans with short-term targets. From these starting points, most pupils achieve well. Many gain qualifications, including GCSEs, functional skills and BTEC National Diplomas. However, in a minority of subjects, the school does not track pupils' achievements with sufficient rigour. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, which hinders their future academic learning.

Staff teach the curriculum effectively. They follow an agreed lesson structure. In the 'demonstrate' part of lessons, teachers model the knowledge and skills they want pupils to develop. In physical education, for example, pupils successfully apply what they have learned when passing and shooting in handball.

Recently, the school has raised the profile of reading. Pupils of all ages enjoy daily 'drop everything and read' time. This includes adults acting as positive role models and reading aloud to pupils. Staff select interesting texts and extracts to broaden pupils' interests and vocabulary. They put in targeted help for pupils who need to catch up. However, some pupils do not value the importance of reading. The school recognises this. It is still exploring ways to foster positive reading habits for all pupils.

Pupils engage well with learning. Work in their books reflects this. Pupils enjoy earning 'Eaves bucks' for showing the school's Olympic values such as respect. Disruption to learning has become less frequent. Staff provide effective guidance for pupils who need help to engage fully and try their best. Behaviour incidents requiring restrictive physical intervention have reduced markedly. Pupils' behaviour improves the longer they attend the school.

School leaders monitor attendance with tenacity. They work closely with external agencies to secure the right support for the few pupils whose attendance is still too low. Almost all pupils attend school more regularly than in their previous settings.

Personal development is at the heart of the school's work. Staff use real-life scenarios to capture pupils' interest. Pupils maturely discuss pertinent topics, such as consent and healthy relationships. Through community projects, pupils learn essential skills. These include cooking, travelling on public transport, shopping and budgeting. Assemblies about Black History and religious festivals celebrate differences. They also develop pupils' understanding of protected characteristics.

The school provides pupils with relevant careers advice. This helps them to make informed choices about their next steps. Through its 'Futures programme', staff provide pupils with help writing a curriculum vitae and preparing for interviews. The school provides tailored work experience and taster days based on pupils' interests and aspirations. Typically, pupils successfully go on to take college courses.

The proprietor has ensured that the school consistently meets the independent school standards ('the standards') and complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor and regional director have a secure oversight of the school's work. The school maintains the buildings to a high standard. Pupils' safety and welfare sit at the heart of the school's work. From pastoral support to therapeutic interventions, the school meets pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- The school has not fully implemented its reading strategy. Some pupils do not read widely or enjoy reading, which limits their experience and success with reading. The school should seek ways to raise the profile of reading further so that pupils develop positive reading habits in preparation for the next stage of learning.
- The school does not track pupils' academic achievements as precisely as it could in a few subjects. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always addressed quickly enough. The school must ensure that staff identify gaps in pupils' academic knowledge and provide sharply focused support to help them achieve as highly as possible.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	148176
DfE registration number	865/6053
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10342173
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Witherslack Group Ltd
Chair	Richard Wilkins
Headteacher	Claire Speller
Annual fees (day pupils)	£109,183.00
Telephone number	01373 824 466
Website	www.witherslackgroup.co.uk/the-eaves-intergrated-therapeutic-provision
Email address	claire.speller@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 to 24 March 2022

Information about this school

- The Eaves Learning Centre provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. They are placed in the school by a wide range of local authorities.
- Several changes to leadership have occurred in recent years. The current headteacher took over the substantive post in October 2024 following a period of interim leadership from July 2024. The deputy headteacher started in September 2024.
- There are currently no pupils over the age of 16.
- The school currently uses two unregistered alternative provisions.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a range of staff to discuss aspects of the school's work. The lead inspector met with the regional director and operations director for the proprietor body. He also held telephone conversations with representatives from local authority commissioning teams.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education and personal, social, emotional and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to a range of pupils read.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors conducted a range of activities to confirm whether the school met the standards in full. This included health and safety checks of the premises, risk

assessments, record-keeping for behaviour management and supervision during social times.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and supervision on arrival at school, in classrooms and at lunchtime. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Dale Burr

His Majesty's Inspector

Gavin Summerfield

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked-after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025