



The Secret Garden
School

School Prospectus

2026 / 2027

Education

Therapy

Futures



Proprietor details

Witherslack Group

Lupton Tower

Lupton

Cumbria

LA6 2PR

Tel: 015395 66081

Email: admin@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Head Teacher details

Mrs Elle Guest

The Secret Garden School

Email: elle.guest@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Holiday contact details

Senior Administrator: Mrs Sarah Hassan

Email: sarah.hassan@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Telephone number: 01675488825

School Vision

Be Responsible Be Resilient Be Proud

At The Secret Garden School, we aim to provide a place to grow, a place to belong and a place to thrive for pupils aged 6 to 19 with autism and associated communication, sensory, social and emotional needs.

Our values, Be Responsible, Be Resilient and Be Proud, guide how we learn, build relationships and celebrate achievement.

We aim to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every pupil feels known, valued and understood.
- Offer a broad, balanced and personalised curriculum that reflects pupils' needs, strengths and interests.
- Help pupils become responsible by developing independence, making positive choices and treating others with kindness and respect.
- Build resilience through supportive relationships, emotional regulation strategies and opportunities to persevere with challenges.
- Help pupils take pride in their progress, recognise their strengths and develop confidence in what they can achieve.
- Bring education, pastoral care and clinical support together to address barriers to learning.
- Work closely with families, local authorities and other professionals to plan and review individual support.
- Prepare pupils for adulthood through qualifications, careers education, practical life skills and experiences beyond the classroom.

Details regarding admission process

We specialise in supporting pupils between the ages of 6 to 19 with a primary need of Autism, Communication and Interaction Needs alongside other neurodivergent diagnoses.

Initial enquiries and informal visits are always welcome, but referrals are made to us directly from the pupil's local authority.

Referral applications are considered by our admissions panel, and a non-prejudicial visit can 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.

There will be an assessment period followed by a Post-Admission Review meeting within 12 weeks.

Referrals can be made throughout the academic year.

If you wish to discuss making a referral please contact Rebecca Dinneen, Partnership Manager, on 015395 66081/ 07502 630931 or email her on: Rebecca.Dinneen@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Our Admissions Policy in full is available on request.

Details of our Clinical Services provision

Essential to the Witherslack Group Therapeutic Model are our Clinical Services Team who work alongside the wider multidisciplinary team to provide an integrated provision of therapeutic intervention, care and education.

Each learning environment is supported by a designated and bespoke team of clinicians which may include therapists, psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and assistant psychologists. Our pupils and the staff supporting them also have access to other specialist clinicians within the wider Witherslack Group including our consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist.

Our practicing clinicians are registered practitioners with The Health and Care Professions Council or their appropriate designated regulatory bodies such as The British Association of Counselling Psychotherapists, British Association of Play Therapists, and the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy. All receive supervision from other senior clinicians within the Group or from externally commissioned specialists within their field.

Line management for the clinicians is provided by senior clinical colleagues and the Regional Director (Clinical), who in turn is line managed by the Group's Clinical Director. All clinicians are supported to maintain their registrations through Continuing Professional Development opportunities; many being supported by the Group to develop specialisms such as Sensory Integration Therapy and Trauma Informed Communication Approaches.

Clinical Governance is the responsibility of the Clinical Director who chairs the quarterly Witherslack Group Clinical Governance Board; attended by external advisors and internal Directors.

Approach to positive behaviour support, rewards and sanctions

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication. Our approach is based on positive relationships, high expectations and calm, consistent support.

Staff seek to understand pupils' feelings, needs and triggers. Clear routines, visual supports and individual strategies help reduce anxiety and prevent difficulties.

We teach emotional regulation, self-awareness and strategies for making positive choices. Support is tailored to each pupil, with staff, families and other professionals working together.

Recognising achievement

We celebrate positive choices, individual progress and achievement. This helps pupils build confidence, recognise their successes and feel proud of their development.

A copy of our Behaviour Policy is available on request.

Suspensions and Exclusions

At The Secret Garden School the sanction of a fixed term suspension is only ever invoked after serious deliberation and appropriate consultation with relevant parties. This would be in response to the most serious of circumstances, where a child has endangered themselves or others in a way which makes their continued presence at the school an unacceptable risk.

Provision for EHC Plans

All pupils have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. We strive to provide a specific, bespoke curriculum to meet each pupil's individual needs through careful setting of pupil targeted support, intervention, daily structure, routine and through detailed assessment procedures. Each lesson will be geared towards the individual needs of learners and provision maps will be put in place on a termly basis to reflect how the objectives in the EHC Plans are being implemented daily.

For all new pupils, a Post Admission internal Team Around the Child (iTAC) meeting will take place within the first 12 weeks after a pupil's admission. This meeting provides an opportunity to consider how a pupil has settled in and their early progress or barriers to learning. It also allows for our clinical services team to share the findings of their multi-disciplinary team assessment and any intervention programs to be agreed.

An iTAC meeting is a forum for all staff working with your child to contribute and collaboratively work together. The iTAC process has core functions which can be carried out by a range of practitioners from across different disciplines.

Our iTAC policy is available on request.

We have a multi-disciplinary team consisting of teachers, pastoral care staff, teaching and learning assistants, a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, mental health practitioner, assistant psychologist and educational psychologist.

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

On admission a pupil'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, our pupils have access to a Complaints Procedure. Informal complaints or concerns will be addressed by the class teacher or teaching assistant. Formal complaints directly from a pupil or via a parent, carer or member of staff should be reported directly to the Head Teacher, Mrs Elle Guest.

Complaints or concerns arising from adults also follow set procedures. Firstly, the concern should be addressed informally with the school.

The Complaints and Representations Policy are available on request and also on our website.

Accessing exam results

Our children who are academically and emotionally able to access SATs tests will do. This is assessed on an individual basis.

Pupils and parents will be informed in advance of the arrangements for accessing KS4 examination results. Results are normally made available on the national results days set by the awarding bodies. Pupils may collect their results in person from school, and guidance on next steps, including sixth form or further education options, will be available on the day. Detailed information regarding timings, access

arrangements, and support will be communicated to pupils and parents prior to the release of results.

Safeguarding Mission Statement

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils. We believe in the importance of working with partner agencies to ensure that all children and young people are kept safe, happy and healthy. All staff working here are made aware of the need of child protection and how to respond to these concerns.

We have a Child Protection Policy and all staff are trained and supported by our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Ms Clare Robinson with support from Mr Edward Wright, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, (DDSL) Hayley Porter (DDSL) and Sarah Morris (DDSL). The DSL and/or DDSL can be contacted via the school office on 01675488825.

Where we suspect that a pupil 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]/carer[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.

If you require further support on safeguarding matters, you can contact:

Mary Aurens, Witherslack Group, Safeguarding Lead:
Mary.Aurens@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Alternatively, you can contact Warwickshire LADO on 01926 745376 or by emailing lado@warwickshire.gov.uk

Provision for pupils with EHC plans

Teaching and support are adapted to meet individual needs. Provision includes personalised classroom work, teaching assistant support, targeted literacy and numeracy interventions, pastoral care and access to a sensory room.

Clinical and specialist support is provided where appropriate. Planning and review include individual support plans, additional assessments, annual EHC plan reviews and input from families and the local authority.

Parents and carers should contact the SENCO with questions about SEND provision or EHC plans.

Relationships, Health and Sex Education

PSHE and RSHE teaching is inclusive, carefully sequenced and appropriate to pupils' age, stage of development and special educational needs.

Learning covers positive relationships, consent and boundaries, online safety, mental wellbeing, physical health, rights and responsibilities, and preparation for adult life.

Pupils learn about kindness, respect, friendship, families, managing conflict, privacy and seeking help. We engage with parents and carers about RSHE content and make curriculum materials available to view.

Health and Safety

Our Maintenance Supervisor, James Dallaway is responsible for co-ordinating our Health and Safety responsibilities at The Secret Garden School. The whole site has health and safety checks in place for maintenance staff to complete, with an action plan put in place to rectify any faults.

The Witherslack Group's Safety, Health and Environment Team visit and audit the school each term.

First Aid/Medical Care

Our school has a medical room located on the first floor. All staff as part of their induction training complete a one day Emergency First Aid at Work course. All First Aid training is followed up with refresher training every three years. Key staff have completed additional First Aid Training.

The school is allowed to administer prescribed medication, and this is administered by members of staff who are trained in the administration of medication. All medication is recorded and kept in a locked medical cupboard. Paracetamol and Calpol can only be administered with parent/carers consent.

Details regarding staffing and recruitment

The Secret Garden School follow a rigorous recruitment process so that we recruit high quality staff and ensure that all pupils 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.

Attendance

Excellent attendance is encouraged for all pupils. We pride ourselves on pupils' attendance records greatly improving from previous schools they have attended. Great importance is placed on school attendance, and we ask that holidays be arranged during school holidays.

We work closely with pupils' families to ensure all pupils maintain an excellent attendance record. Our aim for academic year 2026-2027 is for our overall attendance to remain above 95% as a minimum.

If a child needs to be absent from school for any legitimate reason, a telephone call and/or notification in writing are required.

At The Secret Garden School, positive school attendance is important, and we ask that holidays are arranged during school holidays. A copy of our Attendance Policy is available on request.

Parent partnership charter

We believe that respectful relationships between families and school staff help pupils thrive.

We ask parents and carers to:

- Treat staff, pupils and other families with courtesy and respect.
- Use respectful language in person, by telephone, by email and online.
- Raise questions and concerns through the appropriate school contact.

- Allow staff reasonable time to consider and respond to enquiries.
- Respect privacy and use social media and parent groups responsibly.
- Support the school's values and work with staff to promote their child's progress and wellbeing.

In return, we commit to listening respectfully, communicating openly, responding promptly, valuing feedback and keeping pupils at the centre of our work.

Pastoral concerns should be raised with the Pastoral Team, academic concerns with the class teacher, safeguarding concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and general enquiries with the school office.

Access to examination results

A summary of Year 11 accreditation results is available on request. Parents and carers can request a copy by contacting the school office.



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