

Embleton View

Westgate House, Coniscliffe Road, Darlington DL3 8TF

Inspection date

30 January 2025

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(i), 2A(1) to 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2)

- The proprietor proposes to lower the age range of the school from 11 to five years old. This is to develop a primary phase of the school. All pupils who join the school will have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils will also have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Pupils will have social, emotional and mental health needs. They may also have a diagnosis of autism.
- The school has worked with other providers, both mainstream and special schools, to develop and extend its ambitious curriculum to start for pupils aged five and above. The curriculum is at least as broad as the national curriculum. Schemes of work and curriculum plans ensure that the steps of knowledge and key skills are identified. The curriculum builds key knowledge progressively over time. It is coherently organised.
- The proprietor has recruited key personnel with primary-age experience to ensure that the curriculum is implemented by experienced teachers.
- The school will tailor the curriculum to the individual needs of pupils. Staff will check carefully what pupils already know and can do when they enter the school. The therapeutic work which links to pupils' EHC plans will be expanded to take into account younger pupils' needs. This will support their social and emotional development.
- Proposed timetables demonstrate that pupils will benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum supported by therapeutic intervention. Pupils will access daily core learning in English and mathematics alongside wider curriculum subjects. The school has chosen an accredited phonics curriculum. Recruited staff have the skills to teach this. All new staff will access the necessary training for the chosen phonics scheme.
- The school has a personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum for older pupils. The school has developed an age-appropriate PSHE curriculum for younger pupils. This brings together aspects of PSHE alongside teaching linked to fundamental

British values and relationships and sex education (RSE). The wider PSHE offer helps pupils in readiness for the established PSHE and RSE curriculum in key stage 3.

Paragraphs 3 to 4

- Newly recruited staff have worked alongside experienced colleagues to understand the ethos and aims of the school in preparedness for the inclusion of younger pupils. Staff have the necessary qualifications and experience to work with and teach primary-aged pupils. Experienced advisory board members support staff to understand the complex social and emotional needs which pupils may have.
- The curriculum, alongside the appointment of a qualified special educational needs coordinator, means staff have a range of resources to support pupils with SEND.
- The proprietor has ensured that the independent school standards (the standards) in this part are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

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

Paragraphs 5 to 5(d)(iii)

- The school ensures that pupils benefit from a social, moral, spiritual and cultural development offer. This is through a planned curriculum and enrichment activities. The proprietor, with school staff, has ensured that curriculum plans are suitable for pupils in the primary phase.
- Well-chosen library books are diverse and reflect life in modern Britain and around the world. They are well matched to primary-age pupils.
- A separate religious education (RE) curriculum and the weekly teaching of RE will enable pupils to understand different faiths. Older pupils benefit from visiting places of worship, such as a local mosque. These opportunities will extend to younger pupils.
- The primary phase PSHE curriculum will ensure that pupils understand British values and protected characteristics.
- Pupils have their voice heard through regular discussions with staff. Current older pupils on roll articulate well how they are listened to. This includes developing resources, such as the creation of a calm therapy space for dedicated intervention.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 32(1)(c)

- Designated safeguarding leads and staff are knowledgeable and well trained. Staff receive regular training updates. Daily briefings help staff understand the complex safeguarding needs of some pupils. Clear processes and procedures help pupils feel safe.
- The safeguarding policy is reviewed regularly and reflects any changes in legislation. This is up to date and is available on the school's website. Recording-keeping is detailed and demonstrates how safeguarding leads and staff keep pupils safe. Where

necessary they involve other agencies such as social care and the police in a timely way.

- The school ensures that newly appointed staff receive detailed and pertinent safeguarding training promptly.
- Where needed, pupils benefit from individual support to meet their welfare needs. The school's curriculum helps pupils understand the risks they might face. For example, the school has worked with pupils and other agencies to understand hate crime. Such age-appropriate opportunities will be afforded to those in the extended age range.

Paragraph 11

- The proprietor has a comprehensive health and safety policy to meet the needs of the school, its buildings and pupils. It is published on the school's website. This policy has been developed further to include the new premises and increased age range of pupils. It details specific aspects of health and safety relevant to the new site, such as the supervision of pupils and how to report incidents and accidents.
- As part of the induction procedures, new staff and supply staff must familiarise themselves with the health and safety policy.

Paragraph 12

- The proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The new building has the appropriate firefighting equipment. There are clear evacuation procedures and signage to ensure that the site can be evacuated safely.
- The proprietor ensures firefighting equipment and systems are checked by a suitable external agency. Staff conduct regular checks on the equipment. The school conducts fire drills on the sites already in operation. These drills will be extended to the new site.

Paragraph 14

- The school has appointed some new staff to meet the intended growth in pupil numbers. Further recruitment is planned to ensure that current supervision ratios are sustained across school and increased for the extension in age range. This ensures that, if the DfE grants the material changes, pupil to staff ratios will be sufficient.

Paragraph 16 to 16(b)

- There is a clear risk assessment policy for the school. The proprietor has developed this further to reflect the change in age range, new premises and increase in capacity.
- Individual risk assessments are completed for on-site and off-site activities. These reflect the unique aspects of each activity.
- Where necessary, individual safety plans and risk assessments for pupils are used. These are reviewed regularly by leaders and the proprietor to ensure they support individual needs.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2) to 19(2)(d)(ii), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(5) to 21(6)

- The school makes the robust and necessary checks needed to ensure staff are suitable to work with pupils. This includes newly appointed staff to support the education of primary-age pupils. The single central record contains all the checks that the school completes. The school ensures that checks are completed before employment starts.
- The school uses the same rigour when supply staff are employed to work for the school.
- The single central record is up to date.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(1)(c), 24(1) to 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- The new premises have adequate newly refurbished toilet facilities for male and female pupils for the proposed age and number of pupils.
- The school has a dedicated and well-resourced medical room. This room is solely used for first aid and the care of sick and injured pupils. It is fitted with the necessary washing facilities and is located next to a toilet.
- The school has additional resources and spaces to support pupils with SEND. A sensory room is available to support pupils. Rooms have flexible seating arrangements. Pupils can sit at desks or use softer seating to help them regulate their emotions and engage in learning.
- The age range for the new site does not require a shower. This requisite is afforded to older pupils who are educated on other sites.

Paragraph 25

- The new premises have been redeveloped to a high standard. The new learning rooms are well resourced. This means pupils can work both in groups or on individual tables.
- Additional dedicated rooms have been designed so that pupils can engage in therapeutic support. The school's library is welcoming, with a diverse range of texts for pupils to enjoy.
- Each classroom and the communal areas have sufficient space to accommodate the increase in capacity requested.
- The proprietor, with leaders, makes regular checks of premises to ensure that health and safety standards and the condition of buildings are maintained.

Paragraph 26 to 28(2)(b)

- The newly resourced classrooms are bright and have adequate soundproofing. Other rooms are refurbished in the same way.

- Outside, the access areas are well lit with new lighting.
- Drinking water is clearly labelled throughout the new building. They are separate from the toilet facilities. Pupils will use personal water bottles in their learning areas.

Paragraph 29(1) to 29(1)(b)

- The dedicated outdoor space provides sufficient grounds for pupils to complete physical activities linked to the curriculum in small groups and play together. This area has been extensively refurbished so that pupils can enjoy sand and water play as well as use the age-appropriate climbing frame. The proprietor has had the equipment checked by an external agency and made necessary amendments to ensure all fixtures are safe.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor proposes to increase the capacity of the school to open a primary-phase offer. This will also increase the number of pupils on roll. The new phase of school will be in a new premises. The capacity request and change in age range is to meet gaps in local provision linked to pupils with SEND who have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The proprietor and leaders understand the implications for the school with their request. They have taken time and reasonable actions to ensure that the request is achievable. Purposeful recruitment alongside the refurbishment of a building addresses the capacity and age range request.
- The proprietor and leaders have carefully chosen appropriate schemes of work and have made curriculum choices so that the standards related to part 1 are met for this change in age range. Employing skilled and qualified staff will help meet the needs of the pupils who will attend.
- The proprietor has a secure and detailed understanding of the independent school standards (the standards). The proprietor already has comprehensive oversight providing clear lines of accountability. The proprietor makes regular checks on the standards to ensure that they remain met over time.
- The proprietor has ensured that the standards in this part are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material changes.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	145127
DfE registration number	841/6008
Inspection number	10353459

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Ald Group Ltd
Chair	Graeme Turner
Headteacher	Gary Robinson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£61,815 to £85,664
Telephone number	01325 288722
Website	www.embletonview.co.uk
Email address	admin@aldgroup.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	21 to 23 March 2023

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18	5–18	5–18
Number of pupils on the school roll	24	40	40

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	24	40
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	24	40
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	24	40
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	24	40

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	12	16
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	12	18

Information about this school

- All pupils have an EHC plan. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils are placed and funded by a range of local authorities.
- The previous standard inspection took place on 21 to 23 March 2023, when the school was judged to be good. A material change inspection took place in July 2022, which increased the maximum number of pupils on roll to 24 and the age of pupils to 18.
- The school currently utilises three sites: Embleton View, Westgate House (main site), Coniscliffe Road, Darlington DL3 8TF; Embleton View Coundon, Coundon Industrial

Estate, Bishop Auckland DL14 8NR; and Unit 21, Durham Business Park, Newton Aycliffe DL5 6ZF.

- The school proposes to educate the additional pupils on a new site at Alington Road, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4LS. If the material change is approved, there is sufficient space for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to be educated on this site.
- The school makes use of one alternative education provision. This provision is unregistered.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the DfE, the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to determine whether the school would be likely to meet the independent school standards if the number of registered pupils was increased from 24 to 40 and the age range was extended from 11 to 18 to five to 18.
- The school proposes to continue to cater for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and autism.
- This is the second material change inspection since the school opened in November 2017.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, proprietor, senior leaders and staff. They had a tour of the proposed premises. The inspectors spoke with current pupils at the Coundon and Darlington sites. The inspectors also reviewed documentation relating to the standards that the DfE requested to be checked.
- The inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements and checks made on staff to ensure they are suitable to work with pupils.
- The inspectors checked that the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers. This requirement of the independent school standards is met.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

Mehnaz Kauser

Ofsted Inspector

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