

Inspection of Longdon Park School

Park Hill, Hilton Road, Egginton, Derbyshire, Derbyshire DE65 6GU

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

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?

Staff are aspirational for pupils' success. They care about each pupil as an individual. Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's work. Many pupils have experienced difficulties in previous educational settings. The school ensures that they have positive experiences that enable them to achieve well. Pupils recognise and value this. Staff take on board pupils' views, for example through the weekly 'SLTea and biscuits'.

A variety of activities at the start of each day helps to create a calm atmosphere. In tutor sessions, staff help pupils prepare to have a successful day. Some pupils take part in 'sensory circuits' that settle and focus the mind and body. Pupils enjoy these activities.

Pupils are supported to regulate their behaviour. Staff help pupils to reflect and consider the impact of their actions. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Pupils feel that they are treated fairly. They feel safe and supported in school. Pupils understand what bullying is. They are helped to develop positive relationships with each other. Pupils say that staff sort out any difficulties with other pupils.

The curriculum provides for pupils' interests and needs. Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities. Pupils enjoy school. They attend regularly.

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

The curriculum is based around the national curriculum and adapted to meet individual pupils' needs and interests. Personal development is incorporated into all aspects of the school's work, including subject curriculums. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to work towards accredited qualifications, including GCSEs, functional skills and vocational qualifications. Leaders continually review the curriculum offer to ensure that pupils reach their potential.

In some subjects, such as physical education (PE), mathematics and science, the curriculum is very well planned. Leaders have identified the key concepts that pupils should understand and by when. Content is broken down into manageable chunks. Activities help pupils to connect and build these blocks of knowledge as they progress through the curriculum. Teachers help pupils to recall knowledge through questioning and activities such as the weekly recap sessions in mathematics. This helps pupils to know and remember more over time. In some subjects, including humanities and art, the curriculum is less well planned. Content is not as well sequenced to help pupils build on their knowledge over time.

Most teachers have good subject knowledge. They identify pupils' misconceptions and gently guide them to understand and remember in future. Teachers' explanations are clear.

Reading is promoted across the school. Pupils who read to inspectors did so with enthusiasm and enjoyment. More confident readers choose their own books to read, using a system which guides them to select books that suit their reading ability. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading receive individual phonics teaching. Books are matched to the sounds that pupils know. They use their phonics knowledge to decode and blend words well. Pupils make good progress in their reading. However, not all staff who support pupils' phonics learning are trained to do this. Not all staff have the phonics knowledge they need to support pupils effectively.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is of exceptional quality. The preparation for adulthood curriculum is comprehensive and meticulously planned to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to be independent and resilient. Activities help pupils to develop the confidence to participate in society, for example through shopping and charity work in the local community. Enrichment opportunities are plentiful. Support for pupils extends beyond the school day. For example, staff support friendship groups and help pupils into out-of-school activities.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculums ensure that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils understand diversity. They recognise and reflect on British values, such as democracy. They understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and appropriate relationships.

Pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance. They benefit from high-quality support to prepare for their next steps. Pupils are confident to make the transition to college and other providers.

All aspects of the school's work consider pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. Activities are designed to help pupils work towards their targets. For example, in PE, pupils are encouraged to communicate with others in a game situation while also practising subject-specific skills.

Leaders place considerable focus on helping pupils to manage their own behaviour. Staff use a range of strategies to help pupils to reflect and self-regulate. There is a demonstrable improvement in many pupils' behaviour during their time at the school. Staff are skilled in de-escalation strategies and incidents of physical intervention are reducing.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel supported and say that leaders are considerate of their workload.

At the start of the inspection, a number of unmet standards were identified in relation to site maintenance. Leaders took prompt action to rectify these shortcomings and all standards were met by the end of the inspection. The proprietor has implemented more rigorous monitoring systems to ensure that standards continue to be met.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding matters. They know all pupils extremely well. The school's routine work supports pupils' safety and well-being so that potential safeguarding issues are avoided. Staff quickly identify signs that a pupil may need additional support, and they respond accordingly. When safeguarding concerns do arise, leaders take prompt action to support pupils. Leaders work with external agencies effectively in order to ensure that pupils get the help they need quickly. Records are detailed and of high quality.

The curriculum helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about the potential dangers posed by the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subject areas, the curriculum is less well designed than in others. Plans do not identify the most important content that pupils should know and by when. Plans do not support pupils to build on prior knowledge. This means that pupils do not know and remember more over time. Other subjects are well planned and sequenced and plans are in place to improve the curriculum in all subjects. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied. Leaders should ensure that all curriculums are planned sequentially and support pupils to build their knowledge from key stage 2 through to key stage 4.
- Not all staff have been trained in teaching phonics. They do not have the knowledge to support pupils effectively. They are not able to correct pupils' misconceptions. Leaders should ensure that all staff are trained in teaching phonics so that they can be effective in supporting early readers to develop and practise their phonics knowledge to become fluent readers.
- At the start of the inspection, some standards in relation to the site were unmet. Monitoring activities had not identified these shortcomings. The proprietor should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to accurately assess if standards are met. The proprietor should quality assure leaders' judgements in this regard so that any unmet standards can be rectified immediately.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	141994
DfE registration number	830/6043
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10209733
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Richard George
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,140
Telephone number	01283 733195
Website	www.longdonparkschool.co.uk
Email address	longdonparkschool@acorncare.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 to 28 February 2019

Information about this school

- The school is part of Acorn Care and Education, which is part of Outcomes First Group.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 65 pupils, aged 7 to 18. There are currently 57 pupils on roll, aged between 8 and 16.
- The school caters for pupils who have a diagnosis of autism or who demonstrate behaviours associated with autism. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school uses Chameleon School of Construction as an alternative off-site provider. Pupils who attend this provision are continually supervised by school staff. This provision is not registered with the DfE.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, reading, PE and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, looked at pupils' work, visited lessons and spoke with staff and pupils. Inspectors also met with leaders of other subjects and reviewed curriculum plans, including PSHE and RSE.
- Inspectors met with the designated leader of safeguarding and her deputies. They spoke to staff and pupils about their understanding of safeguarding matters. The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and other related policies. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central record of checks of staff's suitability to work with children, and the school's child protection records.
- The lead inspector toured the school site to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. She met with representatives of the proprietor to discuss the findings and reviewed the proprietor's plans to monitor compliance with the standards.

Inspection team

Deborah Mosley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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