

Hardwick House School

Glebe House, 190 Forest Road, Loughborough, LE11 3HU

Inspection dates 28–30 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- The headteacher and fellow directors are providing good leadership. They have created a strong culture of high expectations for learning and well-being in the short time that the school has been open.
- School leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met and that the quality of teaching is good. As a result, all pupils are making good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have good attitudes to learning. This is reflected in the rapid improvement in their attendance and their eagerness to participate in all that the school offers.
- The school's efforts to ensure the safety of pupils are good, as confirmed by pupils and parents.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. They maintain good relationships with pupils and make good use of well-chosen resources to stimulate pupils' learning.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for learning by clarifying any misunderstandings and breaking tasks down into small achievable steps. As a result, all pupils complete their learning tasks in lessons and make good progress.
- Pupils are making good progress in all areas of learning. The youngest pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy. The oldest pupils are making good progress in their examination courses.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few weaknesses remain in teaching and not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Pupils do not have long-term targets for reading, writing and mathematics to help them understand what they are expected to achieve during their time in school.
- Occasionally, pupils' thinking is not fully extended.
- Subject leaders do not monitoring how well teachers are promoting literacy and numeracy in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons jointly with the directors to observe the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Nearly all teachers were seen.
- The inspector heard a few pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work across the school.
- Meetings were held with the directors and informal discussions took place with different pupils. A telephone discussion was held with a local authority representative.
- The inspector took account of parents' views. Informal discussions took place with individual parents who accompanied their children to school. The outcomes of the school's most recent survey to parents were also looked at as there were too few responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including the self-evaluation document, school improvement plan, safeguarding documentation, attendance figures, records of behaviour and records of pupils' progress over time.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hardwick House School is an independent day special school for pupils with high functioning autism. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The local authorities of Leicestershire and Leicester City place pupils at the school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British and none speak English as an additional language. There are no pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is the additional government funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- Prior to joining the school, many pupils have not attended school for significant periods of time.
- The school is currently registered for up to 25 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Most pupils attend on a full-time basis. There are two post-16 students who attend on a part-time basis to complete their GCSE courses with the approval of the Department for Education.
- The school makes use of Loughborough Leisure Centre to provide physical education for its pupils. Pupils do not attend any alternative provision.
- The three proprietors are trading as a limited company and form the school's senior leadership team as headteacher, head of welfare and head of finance.
- The school occupies a large Victorian house in its own ground on the outskirts of Loughborough and adjacent to the university campus. The school was refurbished to a high standard by the landlord, Leicestershire County Council, prior to its registration. The school opened in September 2014 with 10 pupils.
- The school aims to develop pupils' abilities to foster positive relationships; independent life and living skills; healthy and fulfilling lives; and enhance pupils' employment prospects.
- This is the school's first inspection since its registration in July 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement by making sure that:
 - pupils have long-term targets in reading, writing and mathematics so that they understand what they are expected to achieve during their time in school
 - pupils' thinking is always extended
 - subject leaders monitor how well teachers are promoting literacy and numeracy across different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The directors have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. They consistently communicate their vision and expectations for the school to be at least good and move towards outstanding. As a result, the morale of staff is high and this is reflected in their overwhelmingly positive responses in their questionnaires. Parents have full confidence in the work of the school.
- Good leadership of teaching, based on a rigorous monitoring of the impact of teaching on learning over time and effective systems for managing the performance of staff, has resulted in good teaching, learning and progress for all pupils. All staff have fully participated in induction training and are currently completing their probationary period.
- The school has an accurate view of itself based on a detailed evaluation of all aspects of its work. The information is used well to set clear priorities for improvement. New subject leaders are making a good contribution to this work, although their roles in monitoring teachers' promotion of literacy and numeracy skills across their subjects are still developing.
- The school's well-organised curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets regulatory requirements. The range of subjects offered is relevant to the needs of all pupils and ensures that they are well motivated to learn. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills. In addition, all pupils follow topics in science, technology, creativity, physical education at the local leisure centre, and a programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- The newly introduced field studies curriculum, based on Forest Schools, is proving particularly popular with all pupils and has a positive impact on their personal development. The oldest pupils follow a range of examination courses, including GCSE. They are provided with independent careers guidance and a work-related learning programme, which includes work experience, to enable them to make informed choices when they leave.
- Leaders are promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, especially their good behaviour and their increasing awareness of how to stay safe. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of curiosity, to stimulate enjoyment of learning and for working collaboratively together. Leaders promote their moral development well by ensuring that teachers consistently set targets and use the rewards and sanctions system to promote good behaviour.
- The school works well with parents and placing authorities to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met. The directors have established firm links with the local safeguarding board and the outreach team for autism. School personnel also attend local authority training events.
- Leaders promote safeguarding well through the thorough vetting of staff and visitors to the school, together with the effective implementation of safeguarding policies. Detailed assessments of any potential risks, including when pupils attend the leisure centre of physical education, are in place. Staff accompany pupils to the leisure centre so that attendance and behaviour are also closely monitored.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - provides consistent challenge and support in driving improvement forward
 - carefully monitors teaching and uses data well to develop priorities for improvement
 - has established robust procedures for managing the performance of staff based on an accurate view of the quality of teaching
 - ensures that all legal requirements for safeguarding are met through the implementation of robust policies and procedures
 - ensures pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the promotion of British values and is developing procedures to deal with any form of extremism
 - ensures the efficient use of financial resources to ensure staff are effectively deployed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is evident in lessons and as they move around the school. Parents, staff and pupils all say that behaviour is good.
- Pupils abide by the school's code of conduct. They respond well to the system of rewards and sanctions which is implemented well by staff. Pupils have clear targets to improve their behaviour and responses to learning over time. These are very effective in leading to rapid improvements in a short period.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning were seen in all lessons and in their books. They take pride in their achievements and in the presentation of their written work. They are nearly always fully engaged in learning activities and say they enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in the significant increases in their attendance, with half of all pupils now achieving 100% attendance this term.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning reflects the school's vision and ethos, impacting well on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils learn about British values, which are well promoted through topics within the personal, social and health education programme. Topics in citizenship include democracy, the rule of law and respect for other cultures within British society.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they are safe in school; parents and staff agree.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. Records of behaviour show very few examples of bullying or harassment of any kind. Pupils have a developing understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and prejudiced-based bullying.
- Pupils are well supervised and encouraged to keep safe at all times. The school ensures that the perimeter and all areas of the school and its grounds are safe. Regular assessment of potential risks takes place, including when pupils attend the leisure centre or when they participate in educational visits.
- Pupils know what constitutes unsafe behaviour and are very aware of how to stay safe. They move around the school safely and handle equipment and tools safely. Staff are rigorous in controlling the use of mobile phones in school and in promoting pupils' understanding of e-safety.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' books, the school's data and visits to lessons show that teaching in all subjects across the school is good. This has had a positive impact on pupils in the relatively short time since the school opened.
- Teachers' high expectations for learning were seen, for example, in a mathematics lesson where pupils were challenged to convert mixed numbers into improper fractions. As a result, all pupils deepened their understanding of fractions.
- Teachers consistently manage behaviour well. They refer constantly to the school's policy, providing positive praise and rewards against each pupil's individual targets.
- Teachers' good use of resources to stimulate learning was seen in the use of well-chosen prompt sheets to promote the use of vocabulary and punctuation in writing. Similarly, pupils made good use of the range of tools provided in the Forest School centre to carve tent pegs and make mallets.

- Teachers and teaching assistants usually work well together to systematically check pupils' understanding and clarify any misconceptions, especially during individual activities. They listen carefully to pupils and use skilful questioning to modify tasks and improve their learning.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good with many opportunities to promote these skills across the curriculum. However, the impact of such opportunities on pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy has yet to be monitored by subject leaders.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly in lessons, recording it on a daily basis and reviewing this termly. They provide good feedback to pupils on how well they are doing and what they have achieved in a lesson. Assessment of progress in behaviour is strong and pupils know their targets for behaviour. However, pupils are not provided with long-term targets in learning to show what they are expected to achieve in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of each key stage.
- Pupils' books show that occasionally there are missed opportunities to extend their thinking further.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school's data and pupils' work show that, in the short period of time the school has been open, pupils have made rapid progress from their low starting points on entry.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' books show good improvements in presentation, letter formation and use of full stops and capital letters in writing. Displays of pupils' work demonstrate that they can successfully use a variety of three-dimensional shapes, with increasing understanding of their properties, to construct aliens for their project on outer space.
- Pupils also make good progress in Key Stage 3, developing the use of paragraphs, commas, speech marks and question marks in their writing. In mathematics, these pupils have rapidly moved in one term from inserting missing decimal numbers in a number line to identifying equivalent fractions, and adding and subtracting fractions.
- Older pupils at Key Stage 4, including part-time students re-taking GCSEs, are on course to achieve higher grades than expected from their previous targets at GCSE.
- Older pupils are following an effective programme of careers education and work-related learning as part of personal, social, health education and citizenship. They are preparing for work experience placements during the summer term. Pupils' books show that they have completed options on safe travel and independence skills to prepare them well for the next stage of their lives.
- The school makes good use of its assessment system to identify pupils who are falling behind and put strategies in place so they can catch up.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress from their slightly higher starting points. For example, they are on course to exceed their anticipated GCSE grades in English and mathematics at the end of this academic year.
- The least able make equally good progress from their starting points. This is because good support for learning is provided to meet their needs and assessment is used to match learning tasks to the abilities of these pupils.
- Displays of pupils' work and scrutiny of their books show they make good progress across a range of subjects such as physical education at the leisure centre, computing, art, humanities and outdoor activities through the Forest School curriculum. However, pupils do not always know how well they are using literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	141127
Inspection number	455281
DfE registration number	855/6033

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Day Special School
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part time pupils	2
Proprietor	John Furborough
Chair	Cecilia Mitchell
Headteacher	John Furborough
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,000
Telephone number	01509 218203
Fax number	01509 218203
Email address	Info@hardwickhouseschool.co.uk

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