

# Longdon Park School

Park Hill, Hilton Road, Eggington DE65 6GU

## Inspection dates

22–24 March 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Proprietors and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils demonstrate exceptional improvements in their behaviour and academic progress, in response to the high expectations shared by senior leaders and staff.
- Pupils with previous negative experiences of education settle quickly into school life. They can identify strong individual improvements in their self-esteem, behaviour and cooperation with adults.
- Pupils have made outstanding progress in their knowledge and understanding in all subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Pupils are motivated to learn and to take pride in their achievements.
- Excellent arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress ensure that teachers identify and communicate challenging next steps to aid pupils' learning.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are exemplary. Staff at all levels thoroughly assess risk to keep pupils safe.
- Governors provide strong and effective challenge to school leaders. They have a precise and accurate understanding of the school's performance.
- The executive principal and headteacher provide excellent leadership and motivation for the staff. They clearly identify the school's priorities for improvement. All staff are responsible for the effective implementation of these improvements.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy to show pupils how to improve.
- Implement a whole-school approach to improving pupils' handwriting and presentation of written work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Senior leaders provide excellent leadership through an ethos of high expectations, together with care and consideration for the needs of pupils and staff.
- The school has made rapid progress during its first year of operation. Well-chosen developments have ensured a positive impact on the curriculum, assessment, off-site and outdoor learning, and pupils' social and communication skills.
- Senior leaders, together with teaching and support staff, have implemented rigorous arrangements for monitoring all aspects of the school's work. Their judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils are secure and accurate. Nevertheless, not all teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy.
- Proprietors and senior leaders take great care to ensure that high-quality staff are appointed. Teachers and support staff are dedicated and committed to the values of the school. They accept high levels of responsibility and work tirelessly to enable pupils to experience and achieve success.
- Staff, in their responses to an inspection questionnaire, state unanimously that they are proud to be members of staff at the school and that the school is well led and managed.
- The school is an effective therapeutic community. Pupils experience a creative and imaginative personalised curriculum. This curriculum successfully promotes pupils' social and emotional development.
- Senior leaders ensure that the quality of teaching is outstanding and that pupils are able to make excellent progress in their learning. Staff are skilled in assessing pupils' current stages of achievement and in planning appropriately to move pupils on so that they make rapid progress.
- Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating staff performance are effective. Staff have access to all required aspects of training, including safeguarding, first aid and fire safety. Systematic records are maintained meticulously and deadlines for updates are monitored effectively.
- Staff maintain daily contact with pupils' parents and families. In doing so, staff share any concerns they may have with parents. Staff also ensure that they take prompt action to follow up their concerns. Parents and representatives of placing authorities are extremely positive about the improvements in pupils' behaviour, their development of positive attitudes to school, and how well the school works to keep pupils safe. There have been no formal complaints since the school opened.
- Arrangements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are exemplary. Pupils benefit from a suitable range of opportunities to study local and national community services, including how the legal system functions, and to understand fundamental British values. They experience aspects of the democratic process through the workings of the school council, and have good opportunities to contribute to the wider community through social and charitable events.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance arrangements are outstanding. The chair of governors has established effective, continuous dialogue with school leaders. Governors keep all aspects of the school's work under constant review and identify appropriate priorities for further development.
  - Governors have implemented a range of appropriate measures for independent, external review of the school's work. As a result, outstanding practice is celebrated and decisive action is taken to remedy any apparent weaknesses.
  - Governors are well informed about pupils' progress and achievement. They understand the challenges facing school leaders and staff in managing pupils with complex personal needs. They oversee arrangements for rewarding outstanding staff performance.
  - Governors work effectively with senior leaders to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are extremely effective. In particular, senior staff are meticulous in their arrangements for the recruitment of suitable staff, and in their training in all aspects of pupils' welfare and safety.
- Thorough records are maintained of any concerns about pupils' welfare which require contact with external agencies. Senior leaders ensure that communication is prompt and results in effective action.
- Senior leaders have achieved considerable success in establishing excellence in a short time. They demonstrate outstanding capacity to maintain and extend this success.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is outstanding**

- The outstanding quality of teaching ensures pupils make excellent progress and achieve well.
- The outstanding commitment and dedication of the staff are central to the school's positive ethos and success. Teachers and support staff, working alongside pupils, demonstrate exemplary professional standards in their preparation and implementation of interesting learning activities which engage and challenge pupils.
- Teachers and support staff share responsibility for explaining to pupils and helping them manage their behaviour. As a result, pupils are motivated to sustain their concentration, and enabled to identify and value their successes.
- Teaching staff give excellent attention to pupils' individual learning styles and characteristics. They take full account of the different stages of development at which pupils are working and ensure that learning activities are suitably challenging and engaging.
- Staff place a strong and appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy skills across all subjects. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud and to analyse and discuss the meaning of texts. Teachers value pupils' ideas and oral contributions, and they encourage all pupils to listen carefully and build on the ideas of others.
- Teachers' questioning skills are excellent. For example, during the inspection, key stage 3 pupils made excellent progress with their identification and analysis of differences between civil and criminal law. They were able to recall appropriate case studies and to provide illustrative evidence to justify their oral contributions.
- Staff management of pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are placed at the school because of the difficulties they experience in managing social relationships. They make rapid progress as a result of the consistently high expectations of staff and the strategies that pupils learn in order to manage their responses appropriately.
- Pupils enjoy school and respond positively to learning activities which increasingly challenge them to respond at greater levels of difficulty. They demonstrate high standards of engagement and interest, and are able to sustain their concentration to complete tasks effectively.
- Pupils experience excellent opportunities to develop creative and practical skills, for example in the production of wind chimes in design technology. Similarly, the curriculum includes an excellent range of physical education activities. Team games are adapted to the needs and abilities of pupils. They demonstrated, for example, excellent recall and implementation of passing skills in a small group rugby session.
- Teachers' judgements about the standards at which pupils are working are secure and reinforced appropriately by the use of standardised assessments. Senior leaders use this evidence effectively to provide a secure analysis of the extent of pupils' progress over time. Teachers use this information well to identify learning targets for each pupil, and to inform regular reporting to governors.
- Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop and improve their writing skills across a wide range of subjects. Pupils learn important rules of grammar and how to develop imaginative and creative writing. However, the teaching of pupils' handwriting and presentation skills is not consistent across the school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress in the development of their confidence and self-esteem; some pupils demonstrate, for the first time, a willingness to take part in group activities and to respect the contribution of others.
- The school's strong emphasis on the development of social and life skills contributes effectively to pupils' outstanding progress towards the self-confidence and responsibility required for future success. Pupils can identify the progress they have made in cooperating with adults, in completing tasks to the required standard, and in sustaining their concentration.
- There are no recorded incidents of bullying. A continuous focus on the development of pupils' responses to social situations, coupled with high levels of staff supervision, enables pupils to develop appropriate responses to any potential incidents. Pupils experience a suitable range of opportunities to develop their awareness of healthy and safe lifestyles, for example through cooking healthy meals and understanding

how to stay safe while using the internet.

- Pupils make a genuine contribution to the development and improvement of the school through their elected school council. Minutes of their meetings demonstrate their constructive impact on, for example, the school logo, menus, furniture, breaktime arrangements, and enrichment activities within the curriculum.
- A small number of pupils benefit enormously from their attendance at training away from school. They demonstrate strong improvements in attendance and motivation, and the ability to listen and cooperate with practical activities.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding and makes a strong contribution to their academic progress and social development.
- Patient staff ably support pupils to develop suitable strategies to manage their anxieties and frustrations. Staff are consistent in the implementation of arrangements for 'time out', and they enable pupils to improve their responses to challenging social situations.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well to avoid disruptions to the learning of others. Any potential incidents are predicted appropriately as a result of staff's detailed knowledge of pupils' individual characteristics. The school's therapists make a strong and effective contribution in supporting staff to develop effective approaches to engaging and motivating unsettled pupils.
- All members of staff contribute to an excellent daily review of behaviour and pupils' individual responses to expectations. Systems for recording incidents and improvements in behaviour are comprehensive. Senior staff continuously analyse and evaluate patterns of behaviour for individual pupils and across the school. They take appropriate action promptly to address any emerging concerns.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average for secondary schools and there are no persistent absentees. This represents outstanding progress for pupils who have typically been excluded from previous placements and had significant periods of time out of school.
- The school provides an extremely safe environment for pupils' learning and personal development. Risks are assessed and addressed continuously both on the premises and for off-site activities.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **are outstanding**

- Pupils make outstanding progress from starting points which are below, or well below, the average for their age on entry to the school.
- Pupils, in the first year of the school's operation, have made excellent progress in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. They demonstrate the ability to listen with respect to the ideas and views of teaching staff and of their peers.
- Key stage 2 pupils learn to take turns and to present their ideas systematically, for example through effective electronic presentations. In outdoor education, they gathered and researched information about creatures living in the school grounds. They demonstrated confidence in speaking and presenting to their peers, and in answering thoughtful questions.
- Pupils at key stage 3 demonstrated excellent speaking and listening skills while debating a moral dilemma, including the ability to challenge the evidence provided by others to justify their judgements.
- Pupils' success and confidence in effective speaking and listening skills also demonstrates considerable progress in social skills, respecting the contributions of others and experiencing self-esteem through personal performance.
- The majority of pupils enjoy reading and are confident to read aloud in class. Many pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and can talk about the characters and events in books which they have read both in class and at home.
- Work in lessons and in pupils' books demonstrates similar excellent progress in the development of numeracy skills, including the identification of solid geometric shapes, the use of fractions, and plotting coordinates. Pupils also demonstrate success in the application of these skills in practical design lessons.
- Pupils make excellent progress in a range of additional subjects, including science, personal and social education, citizenship, physical education, art and humanities.
- The proportions of pupils making or exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics, from their various starting points, are high compared with national figures. Disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs or disability, begin to close the gaps in their previous learning.

- The school's baseline assessments demonstrate that pupils join the school, at key stages 2 or 3, with standards of writing which are mostly well below expectations for their age. Pupils' progress with their writing skills is variable. They produce some excellent written work when using computers, including good progress in the use of creative vocabulary, and accuracy in the use of punctuation and grammar. However, their handwriting and presentation is generally less well developed than other aspects of literacy, particularly among younger pupils. This is evident, for example, in weaknesses in letter formation, spacing of words and legibility of script.
- The small number of pupils attending off-site training make excellent progress with the development of their social and life skills. Individual reports from the provision illustrate strong progress in speaking and listening, the application of numeracy and the ability to follow instructions and complete practical tasks. These activities contribute to appropriately accredited qualifications in horticulture, working with small animals and the use of farm machinery.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141994
<b>Inspection number</b>	10008629
<b>DfE registration number</b>	830/6043

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Day special school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–18 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	16
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Acorn Care and Education
<b>Chair</b>	Graham McEwan
<b>Executive principal</b>	Matt Storey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jon Foster
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£41,438
<b>Telephone number</b>	01283 73 3195
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.longdonparkschool.co.uk">www.longdonparkschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@longdonparkschool.co.uk">enquiries@longdonparkschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	N/A

## Information about this school

- Longdon Park School is situated in a rural location between Derby and Burton-on-Trent. It is a day school catering for pupils with complex educational needs, communication difficulties and challenging behaviour.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 55 boys and girls between the ages of seven and 18 years. There are currently 16 boys on roll, aged seven to 14 years.
- All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. A small number are looked after children and in the care of their placing authority.
- The school uses the services of one off-site training provider, Highfields Happy Hens, a local working farm.
- This is the school's first full inspection since its registration in May 2015.
- The school's vision is 'to help each young person to maximise their potential, to promote their self-esteem and well-being and to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens'.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work across all teaching groups. The majority of classroom observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector met with members of the senior leadership team, the chair of governors (who is also an assistant director within the Acorn Group), teachers and support staff.
- The inspector held discussions with individual pupils, parents and representatives from placing authorities. A small number of responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire were considered. The inspector took into account questionnaires submitted by 13 members of staff.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of school policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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