

# Westfield House School

191 Sutton Road, Terrington St Clement, Norfolk PE34 4EX

## Inspection dates

5–7 July 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This school requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have not made good progress in their learning, and have not achieved their academic potential.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Assessment is not thorough enough to inform teachers' planning, or to ensure that pupils are stretched.
- Teachers do not do enough to ensure that pupils' work is completed and presented to a high standard.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to apply the skills they learn in English and mathematics and sometimes this limits progress.
- The school does not meet all of the standards for independent schools.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear and aspirational vision for the school. She has, in a short time, improved staff expectations and built an increasingly confident team. Her evaluation of the school's strengths is accurate and the priorities for development are well chosen.
- The operations director for Premier Children's Services (PCS) provides effective support and challenge to the headteacher.
- Improved teaching and assessment ensure that pupils make up previously lost ground in their learning. Pupils are starting to make accelerated progress, often from low starting points.
- Good relationships with staff contribute strongly to the development of pupils' self-confidence. Pupils feel that they are well looked after at school. Their safety is carefully attended to.
- Pupils increase their independent decision-making and show improved self-control. This leads to better command of their behaviour.
- Staff encourage pupils to be ambitious for their achievement. They foster increasingly positive attitudes to learning. A large majority of pupils attend more regularly than they did at their previous schools.
- A close and effective partnership with parents and carers helps to ensure that the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils are promoted well.
- Members of staff are attentive to the specific needs of each pupil. They ensure that pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education, training or employment.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.



## Full report

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

- Strengthen teaching, learning and assessment and improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
  - teachers assess pupils' work efficiently, and use this information to set suitably challenging work and ensure that pupils are stretched
  - more opportunities are offered so that pupils are able to practise their mathematics and writing skills in practical contexts
  - pupils' work is presented and completed to the highest standard.

The school must meet the following independent school standards:

- The proprietor must ensure that teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3, 3(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(b)).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, with the full support of the operations director for Premier Children's Services, has quickly implemented necessary changes to consolidate the school's recent improvement. Leaders have established high expectations of pupils' achievement and attendance. The headteacher has rigorously audited all aspects of school practice and further developed key elements of teaching so that standards are rising quickly.
- School leaders know their school well and accurately identify priorities for improvement. Staff work as a close-knit team in a purposeful, effective way. The failure to meet the independent school standards at the previous inspection has been tackled vigorously and systematically. Most of the independent school standards are now met.
- Members of staff are ambitious for the school to continue to improve. They are keen to take on additional responsibilities. An example of this is the way in which effective temporary cover for a teaching vacancy is being provided by teaching assistants. Staff are confident that their school is improving and that they each have a definite role in maintaining that improvement.
- School leaders have significantly improved the training opportunities for teachers and other staff during the current school year. All members of staff are now given bespoke pathways for their professional development that they are strongly encouraged to follow. This is welcomed by staff. They confirm that they are supported by the school in taking up opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and skills. Increasingly, teachers are held to account for the performance of pupils. Systems for assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are developing well, but are not yet sufficiently accurate to inform the performance management of teaching.
- School leaders achieve a good balance in the curriculum between academic and vocational subjects and those calculated to be valuable in boosting pupils' confidence and skills in independent decision-making. Mathematics and literacy are given due prominence. There is a range of useful vocational options, including horticulture and horse riding. The horticultural option gives pupils the opportunity to grow and to market their own food and also to develop mechanical skills in managing farm equipment. Horse riding is used to build confidence and independence.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. The teaching of all subjects incorporates consideration of such issues as equality and diversity. What it means to be British is considered in a consistently thoughtful way, for example in tutorials. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Moral choices, for example, are examined on a regular basis using different scenarios that have particular relevance to each pupil's interests and level of understanding.
- The use of the pupil premium funding to provide extra support to disadvantaged pupils is tailored well to meet individual needs. Magazine subscriptions, in an area of interest to the pupil, are subsidised. For pupils showing commitment to practical and vocational options, their specialist clothing and equipment is provided from this additional funding. This is beneficial in building self-esteem and confidence.
- Leadership is improving at all levels. A recently appointed deputy holding pastoral responsibilities has improved the extent to which the wider curriculum underpins the school's work in building pupils' capacity to be confident when entering new situations and in building their emotional resilience.
- The school works in close partnership with families and external agencies. Academic achievement and attendance are both approached collaboratively, with all parties contributing to their promotion.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The operations director has an accurate view of the performance of the school developed through close attention to pupil performance information. Regular monitoring visits result in a well-informed understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
  - The operations director provides well-informed challenge and support to school leaders.
  - There is close supervision of the quality of school policies and practice, and effective oversight is maintained of the spending of funding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records are meticulously maintained. All members of staff are trained to the appropriate level and maintain vigilance with regard to the safety of pupils. Pupils confirm that the school's systems to keep them safe make them feel secure and able to concentrate on their learning.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Despite recent improvements, the quality of teaching is not consistently good. Teachers do not make effective use of assessment to ensure that work is pitched at the right level and that pupils are suitably stretched in their learning. Pupils say that work is now more interesting and challenging, but that some is still too easy. Teachers do not use questioning well enough to check pupils' understanding and to ensure that learning proceeds at the right pace.
- In mathematics, pupils practise basic skills intensively. However, although this contributes to pupils making progress in, for example, calculation, they are not given enough opportunities to apply the skills they are practising in scenarios that are relevant to their everyday lives. New learning is not consolidated as well as it could be.
- Likewise, in English, pupils are coached to improve their punctuation, spelling and grammar but have too few opportunities to put their skills into practice in a range of writing tasks including those that relate to real-life contexts. Pupils are encouraged to make use of dictionaries independently to check on word meaning but sometimes the word being searched for occurs in a formal exercise rather than in a context that makes its purpose clear.
- Relationships in classrooms are good-natured and constructive, and teachers make learning enjoyable without compromising on the need to work hard. Above all, they communicate a 'can-do' attitude to pupils, many of whom have previously become used to failure and are easily discouraged by any early setback.
- The best teaching has high expectations for what pupils can achieve, and ensures that pupils work hard to make up for any ground previously lost. Tasks are skilfully adapted so that account is taken of barriers to learning. Gaps in knowledge which are a result of learning time previously missed are distinguished from those derived from specific difficulties in learning.
- Teachers provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Specific training has given teachers increasing knowledge and skills to enable them to provide well-matched programmes for pupils who have autism.
- Teachers skilfully encourage perseverance in learning. Consequently, pupils of all abilities produce impressive quantities of work. Many pupils say that they have no experience previously of working so hard in such a sustained and diligent way.
- Pupils are encouraged to broaden their outlook and to become more independent across a range of subjects. Teachers ensure that pupils are involved in discussion of work objectives and how they will be achieved. In a measured way, appropriate to each individual, decision-making opportunities are increased.
- The role of teaching assistants is integrated closely into the planning for lessons so that they are clear about what they need to do. They provide effective individualised support to pupils. When required to lead teaching, they do so capably.
- Pupils' presentation of their work is improving but teachers are not consistent in insisting on the highest standards. On occasion, pupils' work is undated or incomplete, which makes progress harder to check and does not convey fully to pupils how important this work is.
- Teachers report on pupils' achievement to parents and carers at the end of each week. This detailed report makes clear what the next steps in learning need to be and how pupils may best be supported to continue their learning at home.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils express their views with confidence. Many showed a clear understanding of the problems they had experienced in their education and behaviour in the past, and how they are addressing them. A large majority have a clear view of how to improve their learning and, through discussion with school staff, have developed clear expectations for what they expect to do in the future. They were able to talk lucidly to the inspector about their previous schools and their current one. When talking to the inspector, pupils were supportive of each other and concerned that everybody's view was heard and respected.
- Pupils are provided with a broad range of opportunities that encourage them to consider and manage new situations and challenges. Activities are closely supervised by staff, and safety instructions carefully

explained, which assists pupils in developing confidence as they explore new situations and become more mature in considering potential risks.

- Pupils collaborated in the design of the new school uniform and logo. Many wear the uniform with pride and appreciate that it is a symbol of the increasing expectations in their school.
- Pupils are provided with a comprehensive programme of personal development in which consideration of what it means to be an adult in modern Britain is prominent. Pupils see that the adults around them are measured in their actions and give reasons for decisions. As a result, pupils develop an appreciation of negotiation. Their growing appreciation of rewards and consequences for actions prepares them well for their next steps in education, training or work.
- Pupils confirm that they feel safe. They are given sound guidance in how to assess new situations and about how to keep themselves safe in a variety of contexts, including when using the internet. Pupils reflect on the poor choices they have made previously. They now consider themselves better prepared to make mature decisions, having learned to weigh options more carefully.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good given their stage of development when joining the school. A significant proportion of pupils have developed the self-management of their behaviour to the point where they are attentive and disciplined in almost all lessons and during social times in school. Other pupils, particularly those who have joined the school recently, are given close adult support in order to help them to improve their behaviour. Disruption to lessons is rare. Year 10 pupils preparing for examinations are very clear that getting on with work without fuss is the norm in their classroom.
- Respect for the school environment has improved markedly over recent months. Any damage or graffiti has become very unusual. Pupils take pride in their surroundings and the displays of their work.
- Prior to joining the school, almost all pupils have experienced major disruption to their education and have had very low levels of attendance. On joining Westfield House, pupils' attendance rates show a marked improvement. This is because staff work relentlessly with pupils to encourage them to value their education, and persistent absence is tackled firmly with rewards and sanctions made very clear. An increasing number of pupils have achieved 100% attendance in successive half terms.
- Internal interventions mean that 'time out' and reflection on incidents have removed any need for fixed-period exclusions. Physical interventions occur less frequently as pupils increasingly learn to take control of their own behaviour. Close working between the school and families has accelerated the rate at which pupils improve their behaviour.
- Effective systems support pupils in improving their behaviour. Staff closely track and analyse any incidents of poor behaviour. They have a clear view of each pupil's specific difficulties. This allows most problems to be anticipated and to be resolved with pupils in advance of serious problems occurring. Pupils are given opportunities to build confidence in a measured way.

## Outcomes for pupils

## require improvement

- The starting points for almost all pupils on admission to the school are very low, and many pupils have been unsuccessful in their previous educational placements. Staff endeavour to make up lost ground, but pupils have not achieved as well as they should because teaching has not been consistently good over a long enough period of time.
- The school meets pupils' personal development needs well, so that pupils develop as more confident and resilient learners who are better prepared for life after school. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attendance quickly improve, their progress accelerates and their standards of achievement rise.
- Pupils attain as expected from their individual starting points in functional skills courses in English, mathematics and science. They improve their literacy and numeracy skills so that, even if they do not achieve GCSE grades before the end of Year 11, they are well prepared for further attempts after the age of 16.
- Those pupils who have education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs make expected progress toward the objectives set in their plans, including those that relate to improving resilience and readiness to engage in education.
- The most able pupils are well supported. Where GCSE courses are followed, the school accesses centrally provided Norfolk County Council resources that help teachers to provide work of the right standard.
- Planning for pupils' progression to the next stage in education or training is comprehensive and takes full account of their achievements and aspirations.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138138
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012965
<b>DfE registration number</b>	926/6002

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>	Other independent special school
<b>School status</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	19
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	None
<b>Proprietor</b>	Premier Children's Services
<b>Chair</b>	Lindsey Blickem
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Murray
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£12,000–£40,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01553 827 848
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://westfieldhouseschool.co.uk">westfieldhouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Jo.murray@westfieldhouseschool.co.uk">Jo.murray@westfieldhouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24–25 April 2013

## Information about this school

- Westfield House is an independent special school run by Premier Children's Services (PCS). It was previously known as Newton House and previously catered for boys only.
- The headteacher has been in post since March of this year.
- The school specialises in provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils have education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs. Many have been excluded from their previous schools or have experienced a breakdown in school placement allied to social problems. A number of pupils have other additional needs such as autistic spectrum conditions. The majority of pupils have some degree of delay in their learning.
- Pupils are placed by local authorities from across England.
- Almost all pupils have a White British heritage and their first language is English.
- A large majority of pupils are eligible for support provided by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority).

## Information about this inspection

- Lessons were visited and all teachers seen. Aspects of the wider curriculum were also viewed.
- Pupils' work was sampled, including jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings held included those with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teaching assistants, the managing director of PCS and the operations director for the company. A telephone discussion was also held with the virtual headteacher for Norfolk, who is responsible for the progress made by children looked after. There was also a meeting with a group of pupils as well as informal conversations at various times of the school day.
- The inspector checked compliance with the independent school standards. The inspector looked at a wide range of information. Documentation scrutinised included that on the progress and achievement of the pupils, attendance, planning and assessment for teaching, school self-evaluation and improvement planning and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Paul Copping, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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