

# Old Farm School

Stankhouse Farm, Kilton, Saltburn, Cleveland TS12 2TZ

## Inspection dates

5–7 December 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The proprietor and headteacher share a well-articulated vision to provide a safe environment, in which pupils achieve well and develop important personal skills for the future.
- Staff are motivated by the headteacher's vision. They live out the school's values in their day-to-day work with pupils. As a result, pupils flourish, and the school is improving.
- Staff know pupils' needs very well. They plan learning to meet those needs, engage pupils and encourage them to achieve well. Occasionally, teachers and teaching assistants miss opportunities to challenge and move pupils' learning forward quickly.
- Leaders check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching carefully. Leaders work with staff to improve practice continually. As a result, pupils settle into school, and improve their learning quickly.
- Pupils from all backgrounds make consistently strong, sustained progress, especially in the core subjects. Occasionally, progress in a wider range of subjects is a little uneven, but nonetheless strong over time.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. It provides pupils with a wide range of learning experiences that re-engage them in learning. The curriculum is broad and relevant to pupils' needs.
- Learning plans are detailed in core subjects, but not quite as refined in a wider range of subjects.
- Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Leaders carefully plan the programme for personal development. As a result, pupils learn about the society they live in. Staff prepare pupils well for the next steps in education and training, and for adult life.
- Pupils conduct themselves well. They show respect for each other and the adults who work with them. Pupils understand that bullying is wrong and harmful. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils attend school regularly, once they settle into school life.

### 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - further sharpening staff’s questioning skills in lessons, to identify when pupils can be moved on more rapidly
  - challenging pupils frequently to reapply their learning across subjects and in real life contexts.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - further developing the quality of schemes of work across a wider range of subjects, planning progression in learning over time with greater precision, in order to continue to meet the widening range of pupils’ needs as the school grows.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The proprietor and headteacher work closely together to bring to life their shared vision to provide high-quality education and opportunities for personal development in a safe environment. They model their values throughout their work. As a result, staff are motivated. They are committed to their pupils. This builds positive, trusting relationships that underpin pupils' learning and personal growth. Pupils are proud to be members of this school. As a consequence, the school is improving.
- The proprietor works to ensure that all the independent school standards are met consistently. He is determined to provide pupils with the quality of education and opportunities for personal growth which prepare them well for life as young adults in modern Britain. The headteacher draws on her wide experience of educational leadership to translate the vision and values of the school into a dynamic learning and developmental experience for pupils.
- The proprietor and headteacher ensure that safeguarding remains a constant priority for everyone involved with the school. The school's safeguarding policy complies with the latest advice from the Secretary of State. As for all school policies, the full safeguarding policy is available to parents on request. Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are discussed in admissions interviews with parents and pupils. Termly visits to pupils' homes enable the school to be sure that any updates to arrangements for safeguarding are communicated directly with parents.
- Leaders and the proprietor ensure that the programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education provides frequent, appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about risks to their well-being and how to manage them. Leaders ensure that the school site is safe, and that suitable risk assessments are in place for all trips and visits off the school site.
- Leaders secure pupils' strong personal development through a well-planned programme of PSHE and citizenship, which ensures that pupils learn about their society and their part in it as young adults in modern Britain. Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn about other people's beliefs and backgrounds. Pupils demonstrate their respect for others in their mature, sensible discussions, and in their day-to-day interactions with staff, peers and visitors.
- Trips and visits play an important part of the school's curriculum. In addition to visits to the local sports facility for physical education lessons, staff organise a very wide range of learning opportunities to stimulate pupils' interest, for example trips to Holy Island or the local ceramics workshop. Staff use these experiences to bring out pupils' personal responses. Pupils reflect on and respond to their visits in a variety of ways. This contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum is well considered. It focuses strongly on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils can close gaps in their learning and begin to access the wider curriculum successfully. Alongside the focus on the basics, leaders ensure that every pupil follows broadly the same range of subject areas that meets the requirements of the independent school standards. Leaders recognise that programmes for learning in a wider range of subjects need further sharpening to accelerate pupils'

progress, as pupil numbers and the range of pupils' needs grow.

- Leaders ensure that information gathered from parents, the learning outcomes in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans, and their own information about pupils' achievement on entry are used to formulate a pupil-level curriculum plan. Leaders promote engagement and positive attitudes to learning further by tailoring the curriculum to each pupil's learning needs and interests. As a consequence, pupils have positive attitudes to school and learn well.
- Leaders support and challenge staff to develop their practices continually. Weekly development sessions are used to share best practice in teaching and learning, and how best to manage pupils' behaviour. Staff value and contribute positively to these sessions. Staff also value the feedback and subsequent development opportunities following leaders' more formal assessment of their classroom practice.

## **Governance**

- The proprietor supports and challenges school leaders by ensuring that all the independent school standards are met and using his extensive knowledge of education in special schools to hold leaders to account for the well-being, safety and achievement of pupils.
- The proprietor uses his deep knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and further areas for development to organise resources and staffing to best meet the needs of pupils.
- The proprietor talks with staff and pupils very frequently to check that their day-to-day experiences match his vision for the school.
- By being involved with senior leaders and external teams in annual reviews of pupils with EHC plans, the proprietor ensures that the best possible provision is in place for each pupil.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All the required checks to ensure that only suitable adults work with pupils are carried out and recorded in a single central register.
- Safeguarding training for staff is kept up to date. Staff know how to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and are vigilant from the moment of pupils' arrival at school each day. They know what to do if they have a concern about pupil. The school works effectively with outside agencies and teams to make sure pupils get the support and help they need.
- Staff work with pupils daily to help them recognise and understand risks to their well-being. Staff provide appropriate guidance and advice. This helps keep pupils safe, both at school and out of school.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Staff use their detailed knowledge of pupils' learning and emotional needs to plan lessons. As a consequence, pupils respond positively and learn well.
- Staff establish positive relationships with pupils. Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Almost always, pupils respond well to the tasks they are set. Occasionally, pupils find it hard to manage themselves. When this happens, staff are adept at using a range of techniques to de-escalate potentially difficult situations, and help pupils regain control of their behaviour.
- Staff demonstrate consistently that they have good subject knowledge and use it to shape tasks that support pupils of different abilities to learn effectively.
- Staff use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning to set tasks that fill gaps in their learning and move them forward. They are skilled in asking questions to check pupils' understanding, and give extra explanations to help pupils correct any misunderstandings. However, sometimes, staff miss opportunities to use pupils' answers to their questions to challenge pupils' thinking further. They do not consistently challenge pupils to reapply their learning in different contexts, and so hone their skills and deepen their understanding.
- Pupils appreciate the comments staff make about their work. They understand that making a mistake is part of the learning process and helps them learn. This encourages them to improve and contributes to the progress they make.
- Staff pay constant attention to supporting the development of pupils' literacy skills. Support to develop pupils' reading is effective. Pupils read more fluently and accurately over time, and improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar. This supports their wider learning well. As a consequence, pupils are keen to offer their ideas and improve their learning.
- Staff challenge any inappropriate language effectively, on the rare occasions when this is needed. For the great majority of time, skilled classroom management makes this unnecessary.
- Visits to pupils' homes every term, alongside written reports on pupils' achievement and personal development, ensure that parents are both well informed and have opportunities to share in their child's education.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff use highly developed skills to build positive relationships with pupils, who have struggled to flourish in previous schools and settings. Thus, pupils begin to grow in self-esteem and confidence as they settle into the school's routines and understand the expectations staff have of them. This contributes to both their personal development and the progress they make.
- Pupils value their education, for many, for the first time. However, pupils have not yet developed the skills and resilience to become self-assured learners.
- Pupils learn to accept each other's differences. From this starting point, pupils develop

open and respectful attitudes to others, who may come from different backgrounds from their own. In their discussions and during visits outside school, pupils show respect for others, whatever their different cultural backgrounds or religious beliefs.

- Pupils learn about the importance of physical activity and healthy food to keep them well. They develop important skills to recognise how to keep well emotionally. For example, pupils learn about the psychological and social impact of alcohol and drugs misuse. They understand how associated risk-taking behaviours can make them vulnerable.
- Pupils learn about healthy relationships, including same-sex relationships. Their mature responses to discussions about healthy relationships help keep them safe. This contributes to the school's work to prepare them well for adult life.
- The broad-based PSHE and citizenship curriculum provides pupils with insight into public services and how democracy works. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed their certificated first-aid course, held during the inspection, learning important life-saving skills. Activities such as these, and the charity events they engage in, help pupils understand that they have an important contribution to make to wider society.
- Careers advice and work-related learning opportunities are tailored to pupils' needs. The curriculum focus on basic and personal skills supports them well in preparing for the next steps in education and training. As pupils move into Year 11, the school has engaged the support of external advisers with experience of guiding pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Universally, pupils say they feel safe and cared for well. Parents who contacted the inspector and the results of the school's own surveys fully support their view. There are no well-founded concerns about pupils' welfare, behaviour or personal development.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the harm bullying causes. They know it is wrong. Behaviour logs confirm pupils' views that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils have absolute confidence that staff will help them, whatever concern they might have. Similarly, pupils understand that some people can be bullied because of their background, beliefs or sexuality and that digital technologies can be a medium for prejudice-based bullying. This supports the school's work to promote equality and diversity.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Almost always, pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day. This reflects the school's work to promote pupils' personal development and achievement.
- When individual pupils find it hard to manage themselves, staff support them effectively, so that they can calm themselves. Staff help pupils develop skills to recognise when they are feeling stressed, and how to deal with it. As a result, learning time is not wasted or disrupted.
- There are very few instances of serious misbehaviour. As pupils settle into school, these diminish further.
- The vast majority of pupils make significant improvement in their attendance at school, often from very low starting points. Parents were keen to tell the inspector how keen pupils are to come to school regularly, sometimes even when they are unwell. However, a small number of pupils do not attend regularly enough, despite the efforts of the school.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across key stages 3 and 4, pupils make strong progress from their starting points at the time of admission. After a relatively short period of settling in, pupils make very strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics and science. They begin to close the gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Well-judged, engaging tasks help pupils of all abilities to learn well. Therefore, there is no discernible difference in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and others. Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to challenge pupils' learning to take the next small steps that would accelerate their learning further.
- Pupils enjoy their learning in a wider range of subjects, and, as they improve their basic skills in reading and writing, they make increasingly strong progress. Pupils' learning in art, food technology, physical education and PSHE reflects both their growing enthusiasm for learning and their positive achievement.
- The school's work with pupils to improve their reading is effective. Many pupils quickly improve their reading skills, and enjoy their class reading books, such as 'The Boy in the Dress'. Their response to the book demonstrates how reading makes them think more deeply, and helps them develop the communication skills they need to discuss its themes.
- Focused work, seen in all lessons, on developing the range of pupils' vocabulary contributes well to improving their ability to use subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils spell words correctly and use punctuation with increasing accuracy. This broadens their ability to write well. For example, in a science lesson, pupils quickly adopted the vocabulary needed to help them express their ideas and reflect their learning about pathogens, and bacterial and viral infections.
- In mathematics, well-chosen examples of how pupils can apply their skills and understanding in real life situations helps them cement their knowledge.
- Circle time is used in a variety of ways. It focuses on enabling pupils to express their feelings and ideas orally. As a result, pupils improve their ability to express their views coherently, and engage in discussion, showing respect for others' points of views.
- Despite their difficulties in making good progress in previous schools, effective teaching and pupils' positive attitudes lead them to make consistent improvement in their learning. As a consequence, pupils are prepared well for their next steps in education and training.

## School details

Unique reference number	143429
DfE registration number	807/6001
Inspection number	10040149

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	William Francis Ashton
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Angela Noble
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,365
Telephone number	01287 677178
Website	None
Email address	<a href="mailto:billashtonbehave@hotmail.com">billashtonbehave@hotmail.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Old Farm School is an independent day special school for pupils aged 11 to 16.
- The school provides full-time education for pupils in the Redcar and Cleveland area. A small number of pupils travel from neighbouring local authorities.
- All pupils have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities. The vast majority are supported through an education, health and care plan.
- A much larger than average proportion of pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The school makes occasional use of Right Trax, an alternative education provider, based



in Stockton-on-Tees.

- The school works with a representative of the local authority to carry out annual reviews of pupils' education, health and care plans.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with pupils and discussed their views. The inspector also reviewed work in pupils' books across the range of subjects they study.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and the proprietor throughout the inspection.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning and how pupils conduct themselves throughout the day.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and talked with a small number of parents directly. The views of staff were also taken into account.
- The inspector scrutinised a large number of documents, including the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils and keep them safe, the school's own evaluation of its performance and plans for the future. The inspector also reviewed the school's records of pupils' progress.

## Inspection team

Chris Campbell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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