

Mackworth House School

305a Prince Charles Avenue, Mackworth, Derby DE22 4LL

Inspection dates

6–8 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders at all levels know the school and pupils well. They are ambitious for their pupils.
- Pupils make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. Some pupils, particularly in the key stage 2 provision, make even better progress because of the well-targeted support they receive to become secure in their skills.
- Leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching. They provide staff with appropriate support to ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Leaders have carefully designed the curriculum to cater for pupils' additional needs and their interests.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour is outstanding. This is because of the high levels of care and support that staff provide to ensure that pupils make strong progress in their personal development.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school, and attend regularly. This is because of the strong support all pupils receive from the adults who work with them.
- Staff and leaders provide highly effective support to help pupils to manage their behaviour and resolve any anxieties they may have.
- All staff are highly vigilant of pupils' welfare. They work closely with pupils, parents and carers to ensure that pupils are safe and know how to be safe.
- The director of the company which owns the school provides effective challenge and support, including through his appointed representative.
- While there is regular training for staff, the opportunity to work with colleagues from other, similar, schools is limited.
- Pupils in the key stage 3 provision do not always achieve as highly as they could. This is because they do not develop the full range of their skills securely across all subjects.
- Leaders work closely with the school's improvement partner. However, this support is recent and has yet to ensure that the quality of leadership is at the highest level.

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 that teachers in the key stage 3 provision set activities in all subjects that enable the pupils to become secure across the full range of their skills, particularly their communication and numeracy skills.
- Provide opportunities for staff to share and learn from the best classroom practice of professionals who work in other, similar, schools.
- Continue to engage with the support that the school's improvement partner provides, so that leaders at all levels refine their skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Leaders know the school, staff and pupils well. They have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas to develop further. They take effective action to improve aspects of the school's provision that are not of a high-enough quality.
- Leaders are ambitious for pupils and ensure that they receive effective support in their learning in order for them to make good progress. All staff share this ambition.
- Leaders have put into place highly effective systems of care and support to help pupils to make strong progress in their personal development. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and develop well their social and emotional skills.
- Leaders regularly check pupils receive effective support to manage their behaviour. They are quick to identify any emerging patterns in pupils' behaviour and swiftly put into place the right level of support. Leaders' work has ensured that, over time, pupils manage their own behaviour with increasing effectiveness.
- Through regular visits to lessons, leaders have a precise understanding of the quality of teaching. They provide effective support to any staff whose classroom practice does not meet their high expectations. This support, which staff welcome, has ensured that teaching across the school is consistently good.
- Leaders regularly review pupils' progress. This enables leaders to ensure that pupils receive effective support to make good progress.
- Leaders have carefully designed the curriculum to ensure that it caters for pupils' individual, additional needs and their interests. Because of this, pupils engage well with their learning, and make good progress.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum in the key stage 2 provision enables pupils to develop the full range of their skills across all subjects. As a result, pupils in this provision make at least good progress, with some making even better progress. However, pupils in the key stage 3 provision do not become consistently secure across the full range of their skills, particularly communication and numeracy skills, in all of their subjects. Because of this, pupils in the key stage 3 provision do not always achieve as highly as they could.
- There is a range of extra-curricular activities available to help pupils to develop their learning beyond the classroom. Pupils regularly visit the local community, including local shops and the library, and take part in trips further afield. Such opportunities help pupils to develop their social and emotional skills and to raise their awareness of how to be safe.
- Pupils receive wide-ranging opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, including through the personal, social, health and economic education programme. Pupils learn about religious festivals, including Eid and Diwali. They also learn about food from around the world and the art from different countries. As a result, pupils learn about cultural and religious differences, including in the school's local community, and of the need to respect all people.

- Leaders provide staff with regular and relevant training, including in effective classroom practice and in supporting pupils to develop their social and emotional skills. This training has ensured that the quality of teaching is good and pupils receive high levels of care and support to make very strong progress in their personal development.
- Opportunities for staff to work with professionals from similar schools are limited. Staff are not able to share and learn from the best practice of other professionals.
- Leaders have recently begun to work with several external educational advisers. This has allowed leaders to check the accuracy of their evaluation of the school's provision. Leaders have been quick to act on the guidance that these advisers have provided. However, the support from these advisers is recent. As a result, this support has yet to enable leaders to develop their skills fully to ensure that the quality of the school's provision is of the highest level.

Governance

- The director of the company which owns the school shares the staff's ambition for the pupils. He is committed to ensuring that pupils receive the highest-quality provision, to support them in their learning and personal development.
- Since the previous inspection, the director has strengthened his links with the school by appointing a representative who works closely with the school's leaders. The director also visits the school on a monthly basis, to check on the quality of the provision for himself.
- Through his engagement of educational advisers, who are independent of the school, the director's representative has ensured that he has a sharp understanding of the quality of the school's provision. He shares this insight regularly with the director.
- The director and his representative provide effective challenge and support. For example, the director has ensured that the new headteacher, since taking up her post, has received support from her predecessor over a sustained period. This has ensured that there has been no disruption to the quality of the school's provision and its care for pupils' welfare during this period of significant leadership change.
- The director understands his responsibility to keep pupils safe. His representative ensures that the school's procedures to secure pupils' welfare, health and safety are robust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. The policy accurately reflects the government's latest guidance.
- All staff are highly vigilant of pupils' welfare. They are sensitive to any signs that pupils may be upset or anxious, particularly for those pupils who are not able to express their concerns verbally. Staff are quick to pass on any concerns they may have about a pupil's welfare to the school's safeguarding leaders.
- All staff receive regular safeguarding training, as well as daily opportunities to discuss the welfare of the pupils with all their colleagues. These daily meetings provide all staff with timely information about any emerging safeguarding concerns. They also reinforce staff's understanding that it is everyone's responsibility to keep pupils safe.

- Safeguarding leaders are quick to take action to support pupils about whose welfare they have a concern. In so doing, they work closely with parents to provide effective support.
- Safeguarding leaders ensure that they keep all staff up to date about any safeguarding concerns they may have, so all staff can assist to keep the pupil safe. Leaders keep detailed records of the actions they take.
- Close communication between staff and parents ensures that there is continuity in the support pupils receive at school and at home. Staff work well with parents to plan for any possible breaks in the continuity of this support that may cause pupils to be anxious.
- Safeguarding leaders work well with external agencies where this is appropriate. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that the agencies provide pupils with the right level of support.
- Leaders and staff undertake comprehensive assessments of the possible risks pupils may encounter when engaging in any activities, both on and off the school site. They involve parents in this process to ensure that, together, they identify all possible risks. Staff take appropriate action to reduce the risks they have identified. These assessments of risk help to keep pupils safe when undertaking these activities.
- Pupils can approach any member of staff if they are worried or upset. Pupils told the inspector they are confident that staff will help them to resolve their concern.
- Those parents who expressed a view highly commended the school's staff for the level of care and support they provide for their children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- All staff who are involved in teaching, including teachers and teaching assistants, pay careful attention to pupils' prior learning, their interests and their additional needs when planning learning activities. Overall, as a result, pupils complete activities that are at the right level and enable them to make good progress.
- Strong relationships with the adults who support them ensure that pupils engage well with their learning. Adults' praise and encouragement of pupils' efforts help pupils to maintain their focus on their work for increasingly sustained periods of time.
- By providing simple instructions and through demonstrating what they wish pupils to do, staff ensure that pupils understand how they should complete a task. When pupils are uncertain about the activity they are completing, staff provide appropriate support.
- Staff regularly check pupils' understanding and their welfare. They provide appropriate support to pupils who are not secure in their learning or who are becoming anxious. This support helps pupils to engage well with their learning and make good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are secure in their subject knowledge in the subjects they teach. This ensures they plan tasks at the right level.
- Staff who teach pupils in the key stage 3 provision do not always set pupils activities that enable them to develop the full range of their skills, including their communication and numeracy skills. On such occasions, pupils do not achieve as highly as they could, as they are not secure enough in their use of these skills.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff's thorough knowledge of pupils ensures that they provide highly effective support to help pupils to make outstanding progress in their personal development. Pupils rapidly develop their emotional, social and communication skills, and grow in confidence.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. They engage enthusiastically with their learning and are keen to do well. This is because of the effective care and support they receive from all the adults who work with them.
- All staff work closely with pupils and their parents so that pupils are safe and develop an appropriate understanding of how to keep safe. For example, pupils learn about how to decide when it is safe to cross the road. Staff work with parents to ensure that they help their child to be safe, including when online.
- Staff work very closely with parents to ensure that there is consistency in pupils' routines. Staff accommodate in advance for any changes to these routines to ensure that pupils continue to feel safe and engage with their learning.
- Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect other people. Staff encourage pupils to listen to each other and to engage positively with the adults who work with them. Staff also praise pupils when they demonstrate positive attitudes to others. This helps pupils to make very strong progress in developing their social skills.
- All staff are sensitive to occasions when pupils become anxious or unsettled. They are quick to provide appropriate support to help to resolve pupils' concerns. This helps pupils to develop their emotional skills well and to remain engaged with their learning.
- Pupils receive regular therapy sessions, including speech and language therapy. These sessions help pupils to manage their feelings well and to learn how to communicate effectively with those adults who support them in their learning.
- Staff support pupils well to understand the importance of living healthy lives. Staff encourage pupils to undertake regular physical exercise and to make use of the outside area during social times. Through science and cookery lessons, pupils learn about making healthy choices, particularly in the food they eat.
- Older pupils in the key stage 3 provision learn effectively about the world of work. They are aware of different types of employment and take part in work experience placements. Leaders carefully check that these placements are appropriate to pupils' interests and provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about that aspect of work. As a result, pupils receive effective preparation for their next steps.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is due to the high level of commitment all staff show to support pupils to attend the school regularly and to develop the necessary skills to manage their behaviour effectively.
- All staff are highly vigilant about pupils' behaviour and are quick to identify when a pupil

is becoming anxious or upset. On such occasions, they provide close support to ensure that pupils respond appropriately and manage their behaviour well.

- This support enables pupils to conduct themselves very well, both in lessons and during social time. They engage well with the adults who support them, and show respect to other pupils when they are together, including in lessons.
- The well-targeted support pupils receive to communicate their concerns and manage their behaviour ensures that incidents of very challenging behaviour are rare.
- Leaders regularly check on pupils' attendance. When pupils are absent, leaders work with parents to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to be able to attend.
- Staff work closely with pupils who have been absent to ensure they catch up quickly in their learning upon their return to school. This helps to minimise the disruption that absence can have on the progress pupils make.
- Leaders are sensitive to any changes to established school routines that may cause pupils to be absent from school due to their anxiety. This includes the lead up to and the return from school holidays. Due to the very effective support they receive to manage these changes to their routine, pupils continue to attend school regularly during these periods.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All pupils arrive at the school with standards and competencies below or well below those expected for their age, both academically and in their personal development. Leaders are quick to establish pupils' prior attainment and their additional needs. They use this information to put into place well-targeted support.
- Due to the support that they receive when they first arrive at the school, pupils catch up quickly where they have previously fallen behind. This ensures that pupils grow in confidence quickly and engage well with their learning.
- Pupils in the key stage 2 provision make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics, with some pupils making even better progress. Overall, pupils in the key stage 3 provision make good progress, including in English, mathematics and science, due to the effective support that they receive from staff.
- Pupils in both the key stage 2 and key stage 3 provision make good progress in developing their creative and aesthetic skills, including through art and music lessons.
- All pupils make very strong progress in their personal development, particularly in developing their social and emotional skills. Pupils who arrive at the school with little or no communication skills make good progress in their ability to communicate verbally.
- All pupils receive effective preparation for adulthood. For example, in cookery lessons pupils develop key independent living skills and learn about making healthy choices in eating.
- The older pupils in the key stage 3 provision complete qualifications that prepare them well for their next steps when they leave the school.
- Pupils in the key stage 3 provision do not always achieve as highly as they could. This is because, on occasion, they do not complete activities that enable them to become secure across the full range of their skills, particularly their communication and numeracy skills.

School details

Unique reference number	139787
DfE registration number	831/6012
Inspection number	10039191

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 special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	St Michaels Residential & Educational Services Ltd
Headteacher	Marguerite Haye
Annual fees (day pupils)	£77,000
Telephone number	01332 606202
Website	www.mackworthhouse.com
Email address	info@mackworthhouse.com
Date of previous inspection	16–17 September 2014

Information about this school

- Mackworth House School is an independent special school located on the outskirts of the city of Derby.
- The school is registered to admit up to 18 full-time boys and girls in the age range six to 19 years.
- There are currently seven pupils on roll. Pupils are taught either in the lower school, which offers key stage 2 provision, or in the upper school, which offers key stage 3 provision.
- Pupils who are above the compulsory school age receive their education in the upper school. They pursue a curriculum that is appropriate to their stage of education, including

preparing them for adulthood.

- All pupils have autistic spectrum disorder with associated complex special educational needs. This includes either no or limited communication skills. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- Pupils have had significant disruption to their education with a history of poor attendance.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.
- The school's ethos is to provide high-quality personalised education and support for children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder.
- There has been a recent change to the school's headteacher. The current headteacher took up her post in February 2018.
- The school's last standard inspection took place on 16 and 17 September 2014.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector undertook a tour of the school site, to check the facilities against Part 5 of the independent school standards.
- The inspector observed learning taking place in six lessons, observing the learning of all the pupils in the process. He undertook these observations jointly with either the headteacher or her predecessor, who still works at the school as a senior leader.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work as a separate activity.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and her predecessor, the leaders of the key stage 2 and 3 provisions, and all the school's teaching assistants. The inspector met with the representative of the director of the company which owns the school. The inspector also spoke by telephone with the director.
- The inspector spoke with the school's improvement adviser who is currently supporting the new headteacher. The inspector also spoke with a member of the local authority's department which is responsible for safeguarding.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during their social time.
- The inspector formally met with two pupils.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View, for the inspector to consider. However, he did take into account the three responses to the free-text service, and met with two parents.
- The inspector took into account the 12 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the online survey for pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's provision, including those concerning: the school's self-evaluation and improvement; pupils' attainment, achievement, behaviour and attendance; pupils' EHC plans; the quality of teaching; accessibility plans; safeguarding and complaints against the school.
- The inspector checked the school's recruitment procedures and records of the checks made on new staff and volunteers.

Inspection team

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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