

Pollyteach Limited

The Gables Farm (Bleak Hall) Off Beauvale Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield NG17 9FW

Inspection dates

4–6 December 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This recently formed school operates over three sites: The Farm, The Hub and The Clubhouse. The school offers pupils a variety of appropriate academic and vocational training in safe and welcoming environments.
- Pupils enter the school having spent a considerable time out of mainstream education. Pupils have a range of emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.
- Some pupils recently leaving the school have achieved GCSE passes in English, mathematics and science. This represents good progress.
- The proprietor and headteacher are determined for all pupils to succeed. The mantra of 'get the grades, get the choices, get the job you want' is evident throughout the school.
- Leaders frequently monitor the work of staff and pupils. This helps to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good. Staff plan interesting activities that motivate and engage pupils.
- Leaders ensure that an appropriate curriculum is on offer. Pupils experience subjects and topics that suit their individual needs and interests.
- Pupils' attendance increases dramatically when compared with that at their previous school or setting.
- Pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning are good. Incidents of low-level disruption and bullying are extremely rare.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe at all three sites. Relationships between adults and pupils are extremely positive. Adults know the pupils and their families very well.
- The headteacher and proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The newly formed governing body has made a good start. However, governors have not yet received appropriate training to fully understand their roles and responsibilities, and thus be able to hold the senior leaders to account for their actions.
- Not all pupils have the opportunity to attend appropriate work experience placements.
- Teachers do not effectively enable pupils to problem-solve and reason in mathematics.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide the newly formed governing body with training so governors more fully understand their roles and responsibilities and, thus, can hold leaders fully to account for their actions.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to attend appropriate work experience placements.
- Ensure pupils are more proficient in problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and proprietor set high expectations for staff and pupils alike. They are relentless in their desire for pupils to succeed, regardless of the pupils' previous educational experiences. The proprietor wants 'pupils to feel safe and value their education' while they are at the school.
- The well-trained and experienced proprietor has a very good understanding of the school, its strengths and development areas. The proprietor works alongside the pupils and staff daily, and is, therefore, well aware of the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning.
- Leaders are successful in motivating staff to succeed. Lesson observations and the effective checking of pupils' workbooks help to ensure that, for example, staff are planning for pupils' needs well and are consistently using the school's marking policy. Staff appreciate this feedback and say that they are supported well by the school's leaders.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a broad and balanced curriculum that is helping to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. A display at 'The Hub' reminds pupils of British values and the importance of democracy, tolerance, liberty, pride and community.
- The leader responsible for the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective in ensuring that these pupils achieve well. Frequent meetings with parents and carers ensure that they are kept up to date with their child's progress. Strong links with outside agencies, including an educational psychologist, help to ensure that pupils receive extra support promptly.
- Subject leaders have a good overview of standards in their area of responsibility. The 'record of sessions' inform leaders of how well pupils are performing on a daily basis and if staff have identified any particular weaknesses. Leaders then act on this information to support staff with, for example, future lesson planning.
- The proprietor is insistent that pupils should make worthwhile contributions to the local community. For example, pupils have recently supported the local wildlife centre and park by making repairs to pathways and fences.
- Leaders ensure that before pupils start at the school they experience appropriate transition arrangements. Pupils and parents and carers visit the school, or staff make home visits to gather information regarding pupils' strengths and the areas in which they need to develop. Consequently, pupils settle quickly and make good progress because staff know them well before they start at the school.
- The work of the leader who oversees pupils' behaviour and the successful implementation of the school's behaviour policy ensure that pupils receive effective support to behave well. There are opportunities for pupils to discuss any rare instances of poor behaviour with the leader. Consequently, this helps to reduce the potential of further instances by identifying any patterns or potential triggers.
- The headteacher and proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

Governance

- The newly formed governing body has a good mix of skills and experience. Governors already have a good understanding of the school's context, its aims, strengths and development areas.
- Individual governors have visited the three sites to check on the appropriateness of the safeguarding arrangements.
- The governing body has made a good start in a short space of time. Governors have not received appropriate training to understand their roles and how to hold the proprietor and school leaders fully to account for their actions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has ensured that the school's safeguarding policy is made available on the school's website. The policy meets the required independent school standards.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture at the school. Leaders and staff have received appropriate training in such areas as the 'Prevent' duty, online safety and spotting the signs of neglect and child sexual exploitation.
- Staff are clear regarding the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a pupil's safety. Safeguarding concern forms are completed diligently and passed on swiftly to outside agencies should the need arise. Strong links with social care and the local safeguarding team ensure that pupils and their families receive help promptly.
- Communication between staff and parents is a strength. A mobile application allows for information to be shared easily in the mornings, enabling staff to alter their plans for the day as necessary. Staff use the application to celebrate any successes with parents at the end of the day.
- The headteacher ensures that no adult is allowed to work at the school until all the relevant recruitment checks have been made.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Adults are skilled in settling pupils into routines, quickly building positive relationships and earning their trust. Consequently, pupils respond well to the appropriate and stimulating learning activities planned for them.
- Teachers make daily assessments on pupils' progress, behaviour and attitudes to learning. These help to ensure that any issues are spotted quickly and pupils who are falling behind are given the help they need to catch up.
- The Hub is a hive of activity. Teachers provide a wide variety of educational and vocational experiences that fully engage pupils. For example, during the inspection, pupils were thoroughly enjoying learning how to fix hinges to doors, correctly apply moisturiser to cleanse the face, edit and improve photographs, record music and understand the relationship between protons, electrons and neutrons in atoms.

- Teachers effectively develop pupils' vocabulary and writing skills. For example, during a Year 9 poetry session at The Clubhouse, pupils were learning about personification. They spent some time outside before thoughtfully writing, 'The wind screamed as it wrapped itself around the quivering tree.'
- Teachers possess good subject knowledge. For example, during a Year 10 and Year 11 science lesson at The Hub, pupils were accurately making models of planets and showing the relative distances between them.
- Pupils engage well in the activities planned for them at The Farm. A group of pupils were using mathematical and scientific knowledge to calculate the atomic mass of different chemical compounds using the periodic table.
- Adults are patient and caring towards pupils when they are learning something new. For example, during a Year 11 mathematics lesson at The Clubhouse, pupils persevered admirably when calculating the area of different triangles using Pythagoras theorem.
- Teachers insist on high standards. They encourage pupils to contribute fully in lessons and to try their best. Pupils respond well to these expectations by producing work which is generally neat and well presented.
- Teachers consistently use the school's marking and feedback policy. This involves a mixture of verbal feedback during a lesson and pupils themselves correcting spellings and errors in calculations.
- Teachers provide parents with appropriately detailed information regarding pupils' attendance, behaviour and their attainment and progress. These reports are either posted home or hand delivered during a home visit. Parents are, therefore, kept up to date with their child's successes and future targets.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient activities to develop their problem-solving skills and reasoning in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils display significant improvements in their attitudes to learning, and in their willingness to participate positively, when compared to their previous school or setting.
- Pupils' knowledge of personal, social and health education is a strength. Pupils' workbooks show learning in a wide range of areas including: controlling emotions; recognising the symptoms of depression; how drugs affect people; and the dangers of radicalisation.
- Pupils are reminded of how to keep themselves healthy through taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet. This is reinforced by various displays situated at the three sites. Other displays include contact information should pupils have a safeguarding concern, and information about the consequences of using homophobic language or behaviour.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are consistently positive. They treat each other with respect and courtesy.

- Pupils say that they enjoy attending all three of the school's sites and feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to be safe when online, with pupils saying that, 'People on the internet aren't always who they say they are.' The local police officer has spoken with pupils regarding the dangers of knife crime and the negative influences of gangs.
- Through the student email and the newly formed student council, pupils can contribute ideas about how the school can be. For example, pupils suggested a later lunch break because they felt they were more productive during the morning session.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils at all three sites is good. Pupils follow adults' instructions quickly, therefore enabling lessons to run smoothly and without interruption.
- Pupils state that instances of bullying and low-level disruption are rare. They are confident that adults follow the school's behaviour policy consistently and fairly.
- Pupils respond well to praise and enjoy being part of the '100 club' for receiving 100 points in a day. Pupils earn points and rewards for completing tasks well and showing a positive attitude to school, to staff and to each other.
- Pupils' attendance is significantly higher than when compared with that at their previous school or setting. It is common for pupils to have missed whole academic years before starting at the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter the school having typically been absent for large periods of their primary and/or secondary education. They have missed significant pieces of the curriculum and therefore have large gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils settle quickly into the school's routines and attend frequently. These attributes, combined with high expectations from all staff, help to ensure that pupils make strong progress from their low and sometimes very low starting points.
- Pupils who left the school in July 2018 attained GCSE passes in English, mathematics and science. A number of other pupils attained passes at level 1 and level 2 functional skills in English and mathematics. These passes show good progress from the pupils' starting points.
- The school has recently started to offer a wide variety of vocational qualifications at The Hub. These include in hair and beauty, photography, woodwork, construction, music, media and vehicle maintenance. Results are not currently available for these subjects. However, inspection evidence indicates that current pupils are enjoying themselves and performing well.
- Inspection evidence and information provided by the school show that the vast majority of current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, are making strong progress in English and mathematics. Pupils are making particularly strong progress in science.
- Leaders are well aware of pupils' future ambitions. Staff often accompany pupils to

college interviews and help them with college applications and the writing of personal statements. The vast majority of pupils who left the school in 2018 went on to appropriate training or employment.

- Work experience opportunities are not as widely developed as they could be in order to help pupils make informed choices about their future careers.

School details

Unique reference number	145546
DfE registration number	891/6038
Inspection number	10077992

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	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	0
Proprietor	Pollyteach Limited
Chair	Not yet appointed
Headteacher	Catherine Brown
Annual fees (day pupils)	£21,000 – £30,000
Telephone number	07799 210 878
Website	www.pollyteach.com
Email address	office@pollyteach.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Pupils are not registered on the school's roll owing to the current policy of the local authority. However, for this inspection, the 10 full-time pupils have been treated as pupils on roll at this school as this is where they attend for most, or all, of their education.
- Pollyteach Limited has been registered as an independent school since June 2018. The school had a successful pre-registration inspection in April 2018.
- The school operates over three sites, all of which are in Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire. They are: The Farm, off Beauvale Road, NG17 9FW; The Hub, Forest Street, NG17 7BB; and The Clubhouse, Sutton Road, NG17 8GS.
- The school is registered to admit 20 full-time pupils in the age range 11 to 18. There are

currently no full-time pupils in the sixth form.

- The school aims to be a 'specialist provider for students with difficulty engaging in mainstream education'.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Ofsted announced the inspection to the headteacher the day before the inspection began.
- The inspector observed the learning in 12 lessons across the three school sites. He examined a wide variety of pupils' workbooks from a range of subjects.
- The inspector held a range of meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher proprietor, four teachers and subject leaders. The inspector also spoke with four pupils.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to the curriculum, assessment, pupils' progress, school improvement planning, attendance and records relating to safeguarding.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including the free-text service, pupils' questionnaires and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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