

The Nook

Knotts Lane, Colne, Lancashire BB8 8HH

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2019

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

- The acting headteacher, well supported by the head of education of Hexagon Care Services and the proprietor, has created a caring and supportive environment. The school enables pupils who have had disrupted education in the past to re-engage with their learning.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers know pupils well. They plan activities which enable pupils to make good progress from their different starting points.
- Staff are excellent role models and have strong relationships with pupils. This enables pupils to improve their confidence and self-esteem.
- Leaders have an honest and accurate view of the strengths and areas for the school's development.
- Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching are improving. However, they are not as well developed as they should be.
- Pupils receive effective careers guidance. However, planning for careers information, advice and guidance is not comprehensive.
- Leaders and staff have created a secure environment in which pupils feel safe and are well cared for.
- The curriculum is continuing to develop as the school expands. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is tailored to pupils' individual needs. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to participate in investigative activities in science.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' attendance and behaviour have improved during their education at The Nook.
- Representatives from local authorities say that pupils' social and emotional needs are catered for well.
- Staff appreciate opportunities, including from within Hexagon Care Services, to learn from others and improve their practice.
- The proprietor works closely with leaders to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.

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?

- Sharpen the procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
- Broaden the curriculum to include more opportunities for pupils to engage in practical activities in science.
- Further enhance the delivery of information, advice and guidance to pupils about their careers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school's opening in February 2019, the acting headteacher, head of education and the proprietor have created a caring and nurturing environment. Pupils start at the school with large gaps in their education, having suffered significant emotional trauma. Pupils follow programmes of learning that are tailored to their specific needs and enable them to make good progress.
- The acting headteacher is determined to ensure that pupils develop their self-identity and confidence so that they can lead purposeful and enjoyable lives. The school's motto, 'creating positive futures together', underpins the work of the school. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils' complex educational, social and emotional needs are well catered for.
- Staff enjoy working at The Nook. They are committed to helping pupils re-engage with education. Staff value the professional development opportunities that they have access to in other Hexagon schools. They say that this helps them to improve their knowledge and skills for teaching, mentoring, care and support work. Staff are appreciative of recent training in child sexual exploitation, speech and language therapy, self-harming and autistic spectrum disorder.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the priorities for development. There are few records to show that evaluations of teaching and learning are carried out. The acting headteacher has plans in place to improve the monitoring of the quality of teaching in order to develop the quality of teaching and learning further.
- The school does not receive any additional pupil premium from local authorities placing pupils in the school.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is regularly reviewed as the school expands. The curriculum is tailored for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of subjects. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' functional skills in literacy and mathematics and their personal and social skills. The local area is used well to support pupils' understanding of history and tourism. Opportunities for pupils to engage in investigative work in science are limited.
- Pupils have opportunities to visit local shops and cafés. They regularly go for walks in the surrounding countryside. These activities help them to develop their the social, emotional and mental health.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed well. Leaders promote pupils' understanding of different cultures and religions. For example, pupils enjoyed finding out about Aboriginal art. They also learn about voting, equality and respect. Pupils are taught about protected characteristics and develop respect for all people regardless of their age, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Representatives from placing authorities feel that pupils are motivated to do well and that their behaviour and motivation have improved. Leaders work closely with social workers and virtual school staff to produce good-quality personal education plans (PEPs) and

ensure that individual needs are met.

- Leaders and the proprietor ensure that the independent school standards are met.

Governance

- The school does not have a governing body. Governance is provided by Hexagon Care senior management team, which includes the proprietor. The head of education manages and supports all Hexagon school headteachers. The acting headteacher and head of school report to the proprietor.
- The proprietor is ambitious for pupils and is passionate about the future of the school. He knows the school well. The proprietor and head of education provide effective support and challenge to leaders. They have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for further improvement as the school continues to grow each year.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is given a very high priority. The acting headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding leader, and his deputy are trained to a high standard. The single central record of pre-employment checks is in place and up to date. The safeguarding policy takes account of the most recent guidance and legislation. Staff have received safeguarding training and know what to do if they have a concern. A wide range of risk assessments is in place.
- Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to keep pupils safe and secure. Handover meetings at the start and end of each school day ensure that information is shared well between care and education staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their pupils well and have high expectations of them. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use to plan activities which meet pupils' learning needs. Teaching captures pupils' interest and supports them to re-engage with education and make good progress.
- Pupils learn in bright and spacious classrooms. Staff provide excellent role models and have strong relationships with pupils. Pupils are very positive about the one-to-one support which they receive.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are regularly reinforced, as appropriate to each pupil's needs. Teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to think hard and share their ideas. This was shown in an activity requiring pupils to consider the ethics of medical research. Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that pupils have opportunities to apply their calculations skills to real-life contexts, such as bank loans and discounts on goods in shops. Pupils' written work is well presented and neat.
- Teachers place a strong focus on developing pupils' reading comprehension skills. Pupils read confidently and fluently. This was demonstrated in a literacy class where pupils read about the risks of using industrial solvents.

- Assessment information is used well. Pupils of all abilities are challenged effectively. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and give clear guidance on areas that need to improve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers create a calm atmosphere in lessons which is conducive to learning. Pupils are encouraged to succeed and are regularly praised for their achievements. Consequently, they grow in self-esteem. The inspector found pupils to be confident and polite.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, well looked after and listened to. They are taught how to keep themselves safe when online and when using social media. Pupils trust staff to resolve any issues quickly, should they arise.
- The personal, social, health and education programme enables pupils to understand the dangers of drinking alcohol and using illegal drugs. Pupils learn about homophobic bullying and racism. This helps them to develop tolerance and respect for others.
- Staff encourage pupils to keep themselves fit and healthy. Pupils attend a local leisure centre and go swimming. Pupils have access to a spacious outdoor area where they can enjoy outdoor exercise.
- Pupils receive impartial careers information organised by Hexagon Care Services. However, comprehensive planning for careers information, advice and guidance is not consistent for all pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils join the school with complex needs. Staff are highly skilled in managing pupils' behaviour and emotional needs. During their time at The Nook, pupils are supported to reduce their anxieties and learn what is expected of them. As a result, they become calmer and their behaviour improves.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning in lessons and re-engage well with their education. They value the school's token system which rewards good behaviour. They are respectful towards adults.
- Records show that there have been no incidents of bullying since the school started in February 2019.
- Pupils have missed regular education for long periods of time prior to coming to the Nook. Staff work hard to ensure regular attendance. Leaders monitor and track attendance carefully. They use rewards to encourage pupils to come into school. As a result, pupils' attendance is good and there is little unauthorised absence.
- Pupils respect their school environment. There is no evidence of litter or graffiti.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The Nook is only its first year. Pupils join the school at any stage within the age range and at different times in the year. They stay in the school until they are ready to move on to a mainstream school. Pupils have experienced long periods of disrupted education. As a result, they have significant gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Information from tests on entry, including reading, writing and mathematics, provides baseline information from which teachers plan work which matches pupils' abilities and motivates them to learn.
- Inspection evidence, including scrutiny of pupils' work, shows that pupils make good progress from various starting points and catch up on missed education.
- All pupils study for entry level 1 and functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. Leaders are rightly focusing on increasing the range of accredited courses on offer in the future.
- Pupils make good progress in literacy because teachers support them well in refining their grammar and punctuation skills. They have good opportunities to write at length, as demonstrated by their work on famous writers who campaigned for freedom. Reading is promoted very effectively. Pupils use their mathematical skills well to solve problems on fractions and percentages.
- All pupils currently in the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers have a good knowledge of the barriers that these pupils face in learning. They ensure that timely support is available to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils are inspired by their teachers to produce high-quality artwork as shown in pupils' landscape work.
- Pupils are supported well in acquiring social and communication skills. These skills include being able to purchase goods and checking change.

School details

Unique reference number	146030
DfE registration number	888/6115
Inspection number	10102295

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 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	Two
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Hexagon Care Services
Chair	Francis Ashcroft
Acting Headteacher	Steve Barrand
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,940
Telephone number	0333 6006600
Website	www.hexagoncare.com
Email address	headoffice@hexagoncare.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Nook is a small independent school for girls aged 11 to 16 years. The school is one of eight schools owned and operated by Hexagon Care Services in the North West. The chief executive of the company acts as the proprietor.
- The school has not been previously inspected. A pre-registration inspection took place at the school in February 2019.
- The school caters for pupils with complex needs including social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils attending the school are vulnerable and in the care of local authorities.

- All pupils currently in the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school shares a site with a children's home owned by Hexagon Care Services. Pupils from the home attend The Nook School. Pupils return to the children's home at break and lunchtimes.
- Due to the vulnerable nature of pupils, the school does not have its own internet website. The school produces a prospectus and makes this and all necessary safeguarding and policy information available on request. Due to the nature of the provision and the circumstances in which the pupils find themselves, the school does not publish direct contact details. Any correspondence or contact with the school is directed through the company's head office.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Discussions were held with the proprietor, the head of education for Hexagon Care Services, the acting headteacher and a teacher. The inspector met two representatives of a local authority. He also held a telephone conversation with a representative from another local authority. A meeting was held with pupils in the presence of teachers.
- The inspector observed teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils' written work was scrutinised to evaluate learning over time.
- The inspector reviewed the one free-text comment submitted to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Two staff questionnaires and one pupil questionnaire were considered.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, to consider as part of this inspection.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance; safeguarding information, including risk assessments and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children; records of pupils' achievement; and personal education plans and behaviour plans. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan.
- The inspector looked at all parts of the school site and evaluated a range of documentation to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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