

Inspection of The Haven School

Wolverhampton Road, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 9DJ

Inspection dates: 10–12 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

The Haven School is making a real difference to pupils' lives. Many pupils join the school having previously experienced difficulty and disruption to their education. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They inspire all staff to support pupils to become personally, socially and academically successful.

Leaders have created a broad, rich, personalised curriculum with a good balance of academic and vocational qualifications, including GCSEs. Pupils see the value of what they are learning about. They know teachers want to help them to achieve well, become independent and gain valuable skills for employment and for their future. Students in the sixth form are well supported.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are safe and well cared for. There is always someone to talk to if they have any worries. Bullying is rare. Should it happen, it is resolved quickly. Pupils behave well. Their behaviour improves over time because there are clear expectations that are understood and followed by everyone. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and treat adults and each other with respect.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The Haven School is an independent special school which aims to encourage pupils to 'raise the aspirations they set for themselves'. Many pupils have significant gaps in their learning because of the previous interruptions to their education. The school is very successful at supporting pupils to re-engage with education. Pupils develop self-confidence and an understanding that they can be successful learners. Leaders are aspirational. Their intention is to make sure as many pupils as possible leave the school with GCSEs in English and mathematics.

The school's curriculum has been well planned to be flexible and meet the needs of all the pupils. Pupils are able to develop key skills as well as achieve qualifications in a wide range of subjects. Teachers are skilful at adapting lessons to make sure pupils learn what they need to. This is because they know their pupils and their subjects well. Sometimes, though, adults give pupils more support than they need. This restricts pupils' opportunities to do things for themselves.

Before joining the school, nearly all pupils had very low rates of attendance. Several pupils had not attended school for a significant period of time. Leaders use strategies to help pupils to improve their attendance. These strategies include using part-time timetables and making changes to the curriculum. For some pupils, this has been successful, but there are other pupils whose attendance is still too low.

Students in the sixth form are able to continue to study the same curriculum as those in key stage 4. This means that pupils who join the school in Years 10 and 11 can still complete GCSE qualifications before they leave the school. They are also taught the skills they will need for the workplace and to enable them to live successful independent lives.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment. They are given high-quality careers guidance and support. The school's programme of careers activities includes visiting speakers from a wide range of industries. Pupils take part in work experience in the local area. Teachers provide support for pupils to apply for jobs and college courses.

The way in which leaders and teachers support pupils' personal development is strong. All pupils have access to a broad, rich curriculum. Pupils can take part in a wide range of opportunities aimed at developing their skills and increasing their confidence. These include learning about farming and the environment, taking part in outdoor education activities and learning how to use public transport. Pupils also support their local community, for example by planning activities to raise money for charities, supporting the local foodbank and helping elderly local residents with gardening. Pupils greatly value these opportunities and say they have been able to try things and achieve things they never thought they would.

Pupils are becoming well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is detailed and has been carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils. Teachers deliver the PSHE curriculum well. Pupils have a good understanding of values such as democracy, individual rights and responsibilities, and the law. They are able to explain the importance of these values and give examples of how they demonstrate them within the school.

The school's work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also a strength. Through the school's PSHE curriculum pupils learn about difference and diversity. They demonstrate a genuine respect for people with different backgrounds to theirs. Pupils confidently explain why it is important to learn about other cultures and 'treat everyone the way they would like to be treated'.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders have a good understanding of the independent school standards and ensure that they meet them consistently. Leaders have made sure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The accessibility plan shows clearly what actions the school will take to make sure it continues to meet the needs of pupils and staff. The school is fully inclusive and treats all staff and pupils equally.

The proprietor works closely with the leadership team and provides support. The proprietor also works with the board of directors to provide governance and hold leaders to account. The members of the board of directors understand their role well and make sure the school meets its statutory requirements.

Leaders engage well with staff and make sure staff are well supported to carry out their roles. Staff are very supportive of the school and have no concerns around workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe and are safe. Staff know the pupils well and understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The systems for checking that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children are thorough. Written records are kept securely and contain appropriate information. The school's safeguarding policy meets requirements and is available on the website.

Pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of situations, for example when they are online. The designated leaders for safeguarding are well trained and know how to deal with a wide range of concerns. They work closely with other professionals to make sure that the most vulnerable pupils, and their families, are supported.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- When pupils join the school, they are put on part-time timetables. This is appropriate for the majority of pupils given that they have missed so much school previously. Leaders have implemented a range of options to encourage pupils to attend school for longer. However, these have not been as effective as leaders hoped in increasing overall attendance. Leaders now need to find more ways to support pupils so that overall attendance improves, and more pupils attend school full time.
- Teachers and teaching assistants generally support pupils well in lessons. Sometimes, though, adults give pupils more support than they need. This means pupils are not able to fully develop their skills of independent learning. It also means teachers don't always find out what a pupil can do for themselves. Leaders should make sure that teachers build in more opportunities during lessons for pupils to work independently of adult support, where this is appropriate.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	142516
DfE registration number	860/6042
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10119225
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	15
Proprietor	Jane Spensley
Chair	Nicola Pierzchalla
Headteacher	Zoie Stevenson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,500
Telephone number	01785 214 172
Website	www.thehavenschool.com
Email address	office@thehavenschool.com
Date of previous inspection	23–25 May 2017

Information about this school

- The Haven School opened in May 2016.
- The Haven School is an independent special school for young people who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan for social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

- Many of the learners have experienced significant gaps in formal education and often arrive at the school with considerably low starting points.
- The school is a small setting that provides a therapeutic approach to learning with the support of a clinical psychologist.
- The school provides education for up to 25 young people. Some pupils are children looked after.
- Pupils are referred to the school by the commissioning local authority. All pupils have an EHC plan.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This inspection was carried out by one inspector over three days and two additional inspectors who each attended for one day.
- Inspectors met with the proprietor, headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, support staff and the chair of the board of directors.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives into English, mathematics, science and PSHE. The deep dives consisted of visits to lessons, discussions with leaders and teachers, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- A meeting was held with the school's designated safeguarding lead. A wide range of safeguarding documentation was scrutinised, including safeguarding records and the school's single central record.
- A range of health and safety documents were checked, including the school's health and safety policy, first aid policy, risk assessments and fire safety checks.
- Inspectors looked at the school's written curriculum plans for all subjects.
- A check of the premises was carried out.

Inspection team

Janet Satchwell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Bev Petch	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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