

Inspection of Olsen House School

C/O Kedleston Group Unit 8, Brook House, Cowley Mill Road, Uxbridge UB8 2FX

Inspection dates: 3–5 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who spoke with us told us they enjoy coming to school. They told us that they feel safe and well cared for. This view is shared by parents, carers and the local authority representatives who place pupils in the school.

Pupils said that behaviour is good most of the time and that bullying rarely happens. Pupils are confident that leaders will deal with it effectively when it does occur.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. This helps to ensure that pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects. Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning help them to succeed in reading, writing, mathematics and in vocational studies.

Staff encourage pupils to pursue their interests and develop their skills in a range of sports. These include football, table-tennis, swimming, rugby and badminton. Pupils demonstrate their creativity in art. They play various string and percussion instruments well.

Pupils enjoy field trips and visits to local places of interest, all of which are closely linked to their studies. These places of interest include local beaches, a squirrel reserve, local forest parks and industry museums.

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

Senior leaders, governors and the proprietor have created an ambitious curriculum. They want pupils to have strong communication, literacy and calculation skills. This is to help them to succeed in further education, employment and training. Leaders aim for pupils to be able to pursue their interests and become resilient and productive members of the community.

All pupils have significant gaps in their learning when they enter the school. Most pupils have been out of education for long periods of time. All have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Specialist staff include a highly experienced therapy team. They ensure that the curriculum is tailored to meet all pupils' individual needs.

Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. This is because the work that pupils study is matched well to their abilities. Pupils revisit prior learning frequently. This helps them to consolidate their understanding and to succeed.

Leaders ensure that pupils are accredited for their achievement. In 2019, some pupils acquired BTEC National Diplomas in food technology and construction. Some pupils also attained functional skills qualifications in computing, citizenship, mathematics, science and English. A small number of pupils gained GCSE qualifications in English, mathematics and science.

In some subjects, aspects of the curriculum are developing. For example, in history and geography the curriculum is not sequenced well enough for pupils to build their knowledge and remember more.

During the inspection, pupils and staff dressed up as characters from well-known books. This was to celebrate World Book Day, and it generated a sense of excitement. Pupils enjoyed identifying characters and matching them to the correct books and authors.

In key stage 2, reading is not planned and taught as effectively as it could be in order to enable pupils to catch up as quickly as possible. Pupils have gaps in the phonics knowledge that they know and use in reading. As a result, they do not have secure phonics knowledge and skills that they can use to help them to read fluently. Senior leaders are in the process of improving staff expertise to enable them to teach phonics effectively for older pupils.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum in some subjects, such as science. Here they excel. Pupils behave sensibly and safely in the 'lab'. This was evident during an experiment when pupils followed the instructions, observed the outcome and recorded their findings.

Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Leaders think carefully about pupils' welfare. They make sure that the premises are safe.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. For example, pupils raise money for various good causes, including animal rescue centres. School council members are elected democratically. They share their ideas with senior leaders about how to improve the school. Pupils understand British values. They commemorate Armistice Day and celebrate Black History month.

Staff follow the school's behaviour policy. This helps to ensure that the school is usually calm and purposeful. Disruption in classes is rare. Leaders have made sure that staff supervise pupils well.

The proprietor provides pupils with high-quality independent careers advice. Pupils know what skills and qualifications they need for different further education courses. As a result of the good advice and support that pupils receive, they make informed choices. In 2019, all pupils from Year 11 went on to further education and pre-apprenticeship courses.

Staff told us that the proprietor and headteacher are mindful of their workload. They said that they are supported well in managing pupils' behaviour. Staff are appreciative of the training available to them. This includes opportunities to learn alongside teachers in other Kedleston Group schools.

The proprietor has set out a plan to make access to the school as easy as possible for pupils with disabilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are vigilant when it comes to safeguarding. They are trained well to spot the signs of neglect and abuse. Leaders have good systems in place to protect pupils from harm. Staff know exactly what to do if they are concerned about the welfare of a pupil. Leaders record any concerns that they have about pupils, all of whom are vulnerable, and they help staff to minimise risks. All staff are trained to spot the signs of neglect and abuse.

Staff work closely with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils at risk of harm are promptly given the support that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Curriculum plans are implemented well in most, but not all, subjects. This means that pupils cannot always learn more and remember more in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that, across all subjects, the curriculum is clearly sequenced, and that teachers are trained well enough to deliver it effectively.
- In key stage 2, phonics is not taught as effectively as it could be. As a result, pupils who need it most, do not get the teaching necessary to enable them to develop the skills they need to become confident and fluent readers quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that teachers and teaching assistants improve their expertise so that they can teach phonics effectively in this key stage.

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	136088
DfE registration number	343/6134
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10128817
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Paul Brosnan
Chair	Linda Mitchell
Headteacher	Giora Berman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£46,410–£51,510
Telephone number	0151 924 0234
Website	www.kedlestongroup.com
Email address	olsenhouse@kedlestongroup.com
Date of previous inspection	11–13 July 2017

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, parts of the school have been refurbished. A new dining hall was built in 2019. Most staff are new to the school since the previous inspection, including 14 teaching assistants and four teachers. During the inspection, a teacher with experience of teaching phonics was appointed.
- An interim headteacher was in place at the time of the inspection. A substantive headteacher has been appointed.
- The school works in partnership with several local authorities.
- The school works predominantly with five providers of further education and vocational learning. These providers are Cornerstone Learning, Mary Bowlers

Riding School, BOWOW dog groomers, Myerscough College and MPH Training. Pupils follow accredited programmes in construction, equine studies, small animal care, dog grooming and skills for further learning.

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.

- We met with the headteacher, chair of governors, proprietor and the quality assurance leader for Kedleston Group schools. We also met with senior leaders responsible for pastoral support, the welfare of pupils, attendance and behaviour management, assessment and the curriculum.
- We met with members of the school's therapy team, including the occupational therapist, speech therapist and the specialist autism spectrum disorder leader.
- During the inspection, we visited pupils on placements at a Cornerstone construction centre and the Mary Bowlers Riding School.
- Telephone discussions were held with parents and carers and representatives of placing authorities. We also held meetings with parents and considered nine responses to Parent view, Ofsted's online questionnaire. We considered responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 11 members of staff and two pupils. We held discussions with pupils throughout the course of the inspection.
- We focused deeply on English, mathematics, science and personal, social, health, and citizenship education (PSHCE) during the inspection. In each subject, we met with teachers and tutors. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning.
- We met with pupils, teachers and other staff. We talked about safety, personal development and behaviour. We checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with children. We also talked with parents about matters relating to safety.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Shutt

Ofsted Inspector

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