

# Inspection of The Stables Independent School

The Old Rectory, Old Rectory Road, Brumstead, Norwich, Norfolk NR12 9EU

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Inspection dates: 29 June to 1 July 2021

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## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are welcomed and cared for in the school's positive and nurturing environment. Many pupils join after being out of full-time education for long periods of time. Staff understand this and provide pupils with the motivation and confidence to believe in themselves once more. As a result, pupils flourish, make new friends and become successful learners.

Pupils' behaviour improves significantly. Pupils understand that they are expected to follow the school's routines and to behave sensibly. Pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs mean that they do become anxious or agitated from time to time. Staff sort out any problems quietly, sensitively and without fuss. During the inspection, pupils were polite and keen to talk with us about their school.

Pupils feel safe. They told us that bullying is not a problem. Pupils say that there is always someone on hand to help if they are worried or upset.

Pupils enjoy outdoor learning. Activities such as horse-riding and hiking enhance pupils' well-being considerably. Pupils are proud of the school's outside environment that they have helped to design. Older pupils have help with decision-making about their future education and careers.

Parents and carers praise the school and say it has transformed their children's lives. A parent, summing up the views of others, commented, 'This school is all we could want for our child. Our child is understood, supported, encouraged and inspired.'

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

Since the previous inspection, much has been done to improve the curriculum and embed a positive culture for learning. Leaders and the staff team work together well. They share the same determination for all pupils to succeed. As a result, the quality of education the school provides is good and improving.

The headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, ensures that staff receive appropriate information before pupils start. Many pupils have gaps in their learning. Leaders and staff are quick to assess pupils' needs when they join the school. They understand that getting this aspect correct at the start will pay dividends later. They also understand that low levels of self-esteem and high levels of anxiety need to be addressed before pupils will engage successfully in learning.

The curriculum follows the national curriculum. The deputy headteacher has made sure that teaching plans for all subjects are well sequenced and support pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding over time. In English and mathematics, teachers follow these plans closely so that pupils build their literacy and numeracy skills successfully.

However, for some other subjects such as geography and personal, social and health education (PSHE), teachers do not always deliver the curriculum that has been planned. This means that pupils do not build upon their prior knowledge as effectively as they should. Teachers do not make enough links between what pupils have learned before or what they are going to learn later. On occasions, when teaching is disjointed, a few pupils become restless and lose interest in their learning.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. Pupils develop their phonics knowledge successfully through daily sessions. Leaders make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds that they know. Pupils enjoy class story times. They told us about their favourite stories and authors.

Pupils value their education and attend school well. They know that working hard in school will help them in the future. Pupils learn important life skills, such as money management, cooking a meal for others, and how to stay fit and healthy. All pupils take part in the school council committees. They are encouraged to work together and make decisions for the common good. Leaders enhance the curriculum through a range of trips to local places of interest. Leaders are seeking to extend the enrichment programme to include trips and experiences beyond the local area. This will support pupils to broaden their understanding of the wider world and society's diverse culture.

The proprietor body wants the best for every pupil. Members' commitment makes a positive difference to the school's provision. They ensure that the school is well resourced. The proprietor body is outward looking. Members seek external professional expertise and advice to strengthen leadership further and support the school to continue to improve.

The proprietor body has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school complies with the Equality Act 2010. All the buildings and the outside area are kept well. The classrooms are appropriate places for learning. There are robust health and safety policies and procedures in place so that the school site is safe. The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents on request.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding very seriously. They make sure that staff are well trained and watch out for any signs that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders document any safeguarding concerns diligently and check that procedures are followed correctly. The school business administrator makes sure that all the necessary checks on adults are completed before they work at the school.

Pupils have lots of opportunities in the curriculum to learn how to keep safe, including when online. Staff keep in close touch with parents and carers so that any concerns are discussed immediately.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In some subjects, such as geography and PSHE, teaching staff are not delivering the curriculum plans as leaders intend. Over time, pupils do not learn or remember important knowledge and concepts as they should. Leaders need to make sure that teachers deliver the intended curriculum across all subjects so that lessons logically build on what pupils know and can do.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145960
<b>DfE registration number</b>	926/6018
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10193489
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6 to 14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	16
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	None
<b>Proprietor</b>	Clover Childcare Services Ltd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Natasha Foucher
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£31,200
<b>Telephone number</b>	01692 581467
<b>Website</b>	No website
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@thestableschool.co.uk">admin@thestableschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 to 14 March 2019

## Information about this school

- The Stables is an independent special school that opened in September 2018. It is registered to take 22 pupils, from ages six to 14 years, who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Pupils are children looked after and are placed at the school by local authorities. All pupils on roll have personal education plans and education, health and care plans.
- Staff are supported by medical practitioners, including a clinical psychologist.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school does not use supply staff.
- To date, Ofsted has conducted a pre-registration visit, one standard inspection, evaluated one action plan and conducted a progress monitoring inspection. The details of these are:
  - 9 July 2018, a pre-registration visit was carried out and registration was recommended
  - 12 March 2019, a standard inspection, when the overall effectiveness of the school was judged to require improvement
  - 28 June 2019, an evaluation of an action plan, which was judged to be acceptable
  - 11 September 2019, a progress monitoring inspection, when independent school standards were met.

## 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 was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. We discussed the impact of the pandemic with you, and have taken that into account in our evaluation.
- This inspection was carried out with a day's notice.
- As part of this inspection, we held meetings with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They are also the designated safeguarding leaders.
- I met with a member of the proprietor body, a consultant employed by the school and the quality assurance manager. Various documents relating to leadership and management were considered.

- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography and PSHE. We met with the deputy headteacher who is the curriculum leader for these subjects, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teaching staff and pupils. We also observed some pupils reading and talked to pupils about their reading habits.
- We spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes. I spoke more formally with two groups of pupils to seek their views about the school.
- A phone conversation was held with a local authority adviser to discuss their work with the school.
- We scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's own evaluation and improvement plans, school policies, child protection and safeguarding information, curriculum plans, attendance and admissions registers and the minutes of the leadership team and proprietor body meetings.
- I looked at the school's single central register of checks on the suitability of staff.
- We considered the 13 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire, including 13 free-text responses. During the inspection, I held phone conversations with some parents and carers. I also met with a group of carers to discuss their views about the school. We took account of 18 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 16 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cindy Impey

Her Majesty's Inspector

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