

Inspection of Silver Bridge School

54 Silver Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 3DL

Inspection dates: 29 June–1 July 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school. This school provides pupils with a chance to thrive and achieve, where elsewhere they had struggled.

Pupils join the school having experienced significant disruption to their education, with many having been excluded from previous schools. From day one, staff help pupils to settle well and overcome barriers to learning. Relationships and trust between pupils and staff are strong. Staff celebrate pupils' success as if it were their own. A sense of pride runs through the school. As one pupil, whose opinion represented many of his peers, described the school to an inspector, 'It's just right.'

The school is calm. In the classrooms, which staff and pupils refer to as 'base rooms', pupils work with focus and determination. Adults use careful questioning and instruction to guide pupils effectively. When behavioural incidents occur, staff manage these well and help pupils to get back on track. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare.

Pupils learn a broad range of subjects, but English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE) take priority. Leaders want pupils to know how to stay safe and healthy, and be able to further their development in education, employment or training.

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

School leaders, the governing body and the proprietor body have an accurate view of the school. Together, they have ensured that the independent school standards are met in full. In a short time, they have established a successful school with a clear vision and track record of helping pupils succeed. Pupils enjoy school, their behaviour improves over time, and they take pride in their achievements.

All pupils at the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Leaders break down pupils' targets into small steps, so that they can wisely track their development and review the support that the school provides. Pupils achieve well through carefully designed activities and experiences.

Pupils receive high-quality phonics and reading support. This helps pupils to catch up and become more competent readers. Leaders assess pupils' phonics knowledge when they start at the school, and this enables staff to begin phonics sessions without delay. Staff support pupils well, helping pupils read unfamiliar words with increasing accuracy. Pupils read books that enable them to practise reading sounds and words they know. All pupils benefit from a rich reading curriculum. They read and understand increasingly challenging texts. Staff choose texts to broaden pupils' vocabulary and spike their interest.

Staff implement the school's mathematics curriculum well. Leaders have revised curriculum plans to support pupils towards qualifications. Pupils enjoy mathematics

and know how this subject will help them in the future. They have opportunities to revisit and revise key concepts, so that they are supported to remember what they have learned. In most cases, staff check pupils' understanding and adapt future learning effectively.

There are pockets of inconsistency in how effectively teachers assess what pupils know, understand and can do. Staff gather assessment information, but this process lacks focus and does not pinpoint how well pupils have achieved particular curriculum milestones. For example, on occasions, teachers give pupils tests which go unfinished or do not inform what pupils will learn next. As a result, leaders are not always clear about how well pupils are learning the school's intended curriculum.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects. Staff are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach, developing and deepening pupils' understanding effectively. Pupils enjoy learning, partly due to the passion and enthusiasm shown by staff. As a result, pupils know more and remember more.

PSHE is the heartbeat of the school and runs through every part of the school's curriculum. Staff develop pupils' knowledge of PSHE through discrete sessions and by responding to pupils' individual needs. Pupils develop well-rounded knowledge of how to lead safe and healthy lives. They receive specific guidance that they can use in their everyday lives to make positive and informed choices.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Pupils develop their knowledge of a range of faiths and cultures and a sense of right from wrong. Leaders have facilitated pupils' enthusiasm to take a stance against racism, and celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) pride month. Leaders support pupils to make a positive contribution to their community, including supporting charities. The school's careers programme helps pupils develop their talents and interests for life beyond school. Pupils receive impartial careers guidance, which helps them make informed choices based on their qualifications, knowledge and skills.

A small number of pupils attend the school for only part of their working week. Leaders ensure that staff provide these pupils with activities to complete when they are not at school. There is an intent that eventually these pupils will increase their time at school. Leaders' oversight of the education provided to these pupils is not as strong as it needs to be. They are not always sure to what extent staff have provided activities for these pupils or checked how well they are getting on.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure prospective staff are subject to the full range of recruitment checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Once recruited, staff get the training they need to help them fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities well.

Leaders ensure that staff know the risks pupils might face, both locally and nationally, including county lines and drugs misuse. This helps to sharpen adults' focus, so that they can notice any potential signs of risk to pupils' welfare. Staff pass on any concerns they have to the designated safeguarding leaders, who escalate concerns to the relevant local authority when needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Teachers' understanding and use of assessment information are inconsistent. This means teachers sometimes do not have a clear understanding of what pupils know and what they need to learn next. Leaders need to ensure that teachers' assessments pinpoint how well pupils have met curriculum milestones and inform what they will teach pupils next.
- Leaders do not have a secure enough understanding of what teachers provide to pupils who attend school part time to learn when they are not on site. Leaders are not always clear what work teachers have provided for pupils or to what extent they have checked how well pupils are getting on. Leaders need to improve the way they assure themselves that pupils who attend school part time benefit from the same rich curriculum and personal development opportunities as those who attend full time.

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	147705
DfE registration number	933/6012
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10189125
Type of school	Independent school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	6 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	Spaghetti Bridge Ltd
Chair	Stephen Bradshaw
Headteacher	Dan Alipaz
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,000–£65,000
Telephone number	020 3946 3970
Website	www.silverbridgeschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@silverbridgeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The proprietor body, Spaghetti Bridge Limited, has three directors. One of these is the chair of the proprietor body, another is the headteacher of the school and also the chief executive officer. The third director is responsible for strategy and quality assurance.
- This was the school's first standard inspection since it opened in June 2020.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. Pupils have been placed at the school by a range of local authorities.
- The school provides specialist education for pupils with: specific learning difficulties; moderate learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social development needs; behavioural emotional and social difficulty; speech, language and communication needs; and autism spectrum disorder.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading and phonics, mathematics, PSHE and geography. Inspectors met with senior leaders and curriculum leaders, considered pupils' work, visited lesson and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with directors from the proprietor body. He also met with representatives from the local governing body.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders responsible for: supporting pupils' personal development; pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; pupils' attendance; monitoring pupils' progress against the school's curriculum; careers guidance; and supporting pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors met with the designated leader and deputy leader for safeguarding to evaluate the school's safeguarding procedures and checked the school's single central register.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss how well the school supports pupils' wide-ranging needs. They considered how pupils' EHC plans inform the education and pastoral provision the school offers pupils, and the impact this has on their progress.
- Inspectors considered responses to staff's and pupils' surveys. They also considered responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View.

- During this visit, inspectors also carried out a material change inspection in respect of the school's desire to increase its maximum number on roll from 35 to 65.

The school's proposed change to maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matt Middlemore

Her Majesty's Inspector

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