

Inspection of Nurture Learning

County Buildings, Bewdley Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 6RQ

Inspection dates: 29 June to 1 July 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They thrive exceptionally well in the calm and caring atmosphere created by staff. Staff have a range of expertise in teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables staff to provide pupils with the social and emotional support they need. Pupils settle quickly at the school because their individual needs are well met.

Pupils trust staff and say they can turn to them with any worries. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Pupils say any incidents of bullying are quickly sorted out by staff.

Teachers support pupils to behave well. Leaders have recently introduced some new approaches to managing behaviour. These strategies are likely to help pupils who struggle with their behaviour to return to learning as soon as possible.

The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to follow their interests. Life skills are prioritised, and this helps pupils to be prepared for their future lives. For example, pupils complete work experience, learn to cook and have visited a laundry to learn how to wash and iron their clothes.

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

Senior leaders have worked hard to create a unique, supportive and safe environment for pupils. They are aware of the need for even greater consistency in approaches to behaviour and teaching and learning. They are working hard to achieve this.

Since opening the school, leaders have created a strong, united staff team. All staff are deeply dedicated and want to make a positive difference for each individual pupil. Leaders are ambitious about what pupils can and should achieve.

Leaders have planned the curriculum with the specific needs of pupils in mind. Some aspects of curriculum development and training were paused as a result of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Leaders know that some aspects of the reading and mathematics curriculum need some refinement.

Staff place great value on developing a love of reading in pupils. Many pupils, prior to attending this school, were fearful and anxious about reading. Most pupils can read with good fluency and understanding. Staff have a range of expertise in teaching pupils to read. Further training is planned so the approach to teaching phonics and reading skills becomes more consistent. English lessons use high-quality texts in order to engage pupils. For example, pupils share and discuss class texts such as 'The Boy in the Dress'.

Pupils study a broad curriculum. There is a strong focus on pupils becoming literate and numerate. Alongside this, outward bound activities provide pupils with

opportunities to participate in kayaking, climbing and archery. This helps promote team building and cooperation between pupils.

In lessons, pupils generally behave well and focus on their learning. High levels of supervision help pre-empt any potential behaviour issues. Pupils play well together in imaginative ways with appropriate adult interactions. Pupils want to come to school. Attendance is high.

Personal development is at the heart of everything the school does. Leaders care deeply about pupils and are working to develop the confidence and skills needed by pupils for their future lives. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is coherently planned. Pupils understand fundamental British values, such as democracy. Leaders encourage pupils to have respect for the protected characteristics. Pupils learn about diversity through celebrating events such as Pride Month.

Bespoke programmes relating to pupils' individual education, health and care (EHC) plans are in place. Pupils take a range of nationally recognised qualifications, including vocational courses such as animal care. Pupils receive impartial careers advice. They receive support to apply for courses and attend interviews.

The proprietor is knowledgeable and knows the school's strengths and areas for development. The independent school standards are met in full. Leaders are determined to ensure pupils grow in confidence and achieve as well as they can. Leaders ensure the school complies with the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff enjoy working at the school and feel valued. Leaders are considerate of their workload and mindful of their well-being. Parents who responded to the survey praise the school. They are pleased with the social and emotional progress their children have made since joining Nurture Learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's safeguarding policy, which is available to parents, reflects the most recent government guidance.

Keeping pupils safe is at the core of this school. Leaders and staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. The PSHE curriculum provides frequent opportunities to discuss issues such as healthy relationships, peer pressure and the dangers of illegal drugs.

Leaders ensure all staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Record-keeping is meticulous. The designated safeguarding leads are tenacious in following up any concerns about pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Staff expertise in the teaching of reading and mathematics is variable across the school. As a result, approaches to teaching these subjects is inconsistent. Leaders need to train staff in these subjects, so they become more confident in delivering these subjects.
- Some new behaviour strategies have only recently been introduced. This means that behaviour expectations vary throughout the school. Leaders need to monitor the implementation of these strategies to ensure there is a consistent approach to supporting pupils in returning to their learning as quickly as possible.

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	147465
DfE registration number	885/6056
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10193301
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Ethical Influence Ltd
Chair	Sarah Fernihough
Headteacher	Sarah Fernihough
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,000 to £45,000
Telephone number	01562 515068
Website	www.nurturelearning.co.uk
Email address	info@nurturelearning.co.uk

Information about this school

- Nurture Learning school is located in Kidderminster, Worcestershire. It is situated in a former school that was converted into county council offices. The building was renovated before re-opening as a school.
- The school caters for pupils aged five to 16 years. Some pupils are looked after or have previously been looked after. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences. Most pupils have anxiety issues, executive functioning or sensory processing difficulties.
- All pupils have special educational needs; most have an EHC plan. Many pupils have missed substantial amounts of schooling and/or have significant gaps in their learning. Most pupils are referred by local authorities.
- The school opened in November 2019. The school registered with the Department for Education on 31 October 2019. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.
- The school does not make use of any 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.

- We met with the executive headteacher, who is also the chair of the proprietary body. We met with the two assistant headteachers, one of them being the SEND coordinator. We also met with the school's improvement adviser and several other staff.
- We carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, PSHE and physical education. We spoke to the curriculum leader, teachers and pupils. We visited lessons and looked at subject planning and at examples of pupils' work.
- We scrutinised a range of information provided by the school. This included leaders' self-evaluations, the school improvement plan, behaviour, safeguarding and attendance records. We spoke to the designated safeguarding leaders about procedures to keep pupils safe, including the pre-employment checks made on staff.
- There were insufficient responses to our online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, for inspectors to consider. We took note of the eight responses to the parental free-text facility and the 15 responses from staff who completed Ofsted's staff survey. There were 15 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Heather Phillips, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Cameron

Ofsted Inspector

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