

Inspection of The Cedars

33 Ashby Road, Stapleton, Leicestershire LE9 8JF

Inspection dates: 21–22 September 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?

A pupil told an inspector, 'This is like any other school. It's just a lot smaller.' He is right. The school caters very well for the complex needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils, who have often previously spent large periods of time out of education, receive close support to help them engage with their learning.

Staff have high expectations for all pupils. Staff expect pupils to behave well and work hard. They do. Pupils follow clear routines. They behave well. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and friendly. Pupils get on well with each other. They are happy here. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and that they are kept safe.

Pupils say that there is no bullying. Pupils can talk with a number of adults should they have a worry. They often write notes to the 'I wish you knew box'. This lets pupils share private and other information with staff. Staff act promptly on any concerns pupils raise.

Staff ensure that pupils are part of their local community. Pupils often visit the local shops and facilities, such as the village hall. They take part in bake sales, complete random acts of kindness, go on local walks and litter pick.

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

The carefully thought-out curriculum caters well for pupils' specific individual needs. Most subjects have their content planned and sequenced in a logical way. This helps pupils to know and remember more of what they learn. In science, for example, pupils firstly learn about the body structures of animals. They then progress to learning the bones of the human skeleton and finally the human life cycle. For a small number of subjects, curriculum plans are new. Learning in these subjects, including in music and computing, is not as well planned.

Staff use assessment wisely. They check what pupils know and understand in each lesson. These quick checks help teachers to alter their daily planning to suit each pupil's needs. Pupils appreciate this instant help. More formal tests also take place. These tell teachers which parts of the curriculum pupils have remembered and what needs to be revisited.

There is a sharp focus on ensuring that pupils can read fluently. Pupils experience 'Drop Everything And Read' (DEAR) time every day. This is to encourage them to read for pleasure. It is working. Pupils are beginning to read out of choice. They have recently enjoyed reading 'James and the giant peach'. Pupils have listened to audio books such as 'The curious incident of the dog in the night-time'. This improvement in reading helps pupils to access the rest of the curriculum.

Pupils have a positive attitude to school and to their learning. They engage well with different activities and tasks. This is particularly clear during practical activities such as physical education (PE). Pupils contribute well to discussions. Low-level disruption is rare. Pupils are learning to manage their own behaviours. They also help and support each other when they might be having a bad time. They enjoy receiving tokens for behaving well and working hard. They then 'spend' these tokens on various rewards, including spending time on laptops, for example. Attendance is very high. Pupils are punctual to lessons and at the start of the day. There are big improvements in pupils' behaviour, attitudes and attendance when compared with their previous setting.

The headteacher has thought carefully about how the curriculum provides for pupils' personal development. Pupils know about the British values of democracy, rule of law and tolerance. Therapy sessions in the 'well-being' room help to support pupils' mental health. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping healthy. They know to eat a balanced diet and to take regular exercise. They understand diversity such as disability and same-sex marriage. They know that some people may have a different culture or faith from their own. One pupil said, 'We are taught to respect everyone.' Leaders have carefully introduced the statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education curriculum. Pupils will learn about sex in the media, contraception and the right to give, withdraw and withhold consent.

Pupils receive effective and independent careers advice and guidance. Recently, pupils have completed work experience at a local pet shop and farm.

The range of opportunities available to pupils to develop their talents and interests beyond the classroom is too narrow. Pupils told inspectors that they would like to experience a wider variety of different activities. These include those outside the classroom.

The proprietor holds the headteacher to account. Frequent meetings and visits enable the proprietor to track the school's work closely. Any issues are identified promptly and acted on. Staff told inspectors that leaders are sensitive to their workload. They appreciate the support they receive and the training opportunities that are made available.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. The premises are of a good standard. There are suitable toilets, a shower and available drinking water. Statutory requirements around fire safety and electrical testing are met. The proprietor has made sure that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. There is an appropriate accessibility plan.

There is no school website. This is to ensure that the pupils are kept safe. Details of how parents and carers can access the school's policies are available in the school's prospectus. This includes the complaints and up-to-date safeguarding policies.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead has received up-to-date training. Safeguarding records are well organised. They are of a good quality. The leader contacts outside agencies promptly, should the need arise. Staff have received appropriate training. They know what to do should they have a safeguarding concern about a pupil. Pupils are kept safe when online. There is an internet filtering system in place. Leaders are notified if inappropriate content is searched for. Pupils told inspectors that they know how to keep themselves safe when they are online.

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

- Leaders have not fully planned the curriculum in some subjects, including music and computing. Where this is the case, pupils do not receive a curriculum that is fully sequenced to enable them to build their learning over time. Leaders should ensure that they identify what pupils should learn and when, in all subjects, so that pupils' learning allows them to know and remember more.
- Pupils do not yet have access to a wide, rich set of experiences beyond the taught curriculum, including outside the classroom. As a result, pupils do not have opportunities that are varied enough to develop their talents and interests. Leaders should ensure that pupils gain from a broad set of experiences to help complement their subject knowledge and broaden their cultural capital.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	148027
DfE registration number	855/6052
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10204917
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Hexagon Care Services Ltd
Chair	Caroline Ashdown
Headteacher	Kelsey Cummings
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,000
Telephone number	0333 6006600
Website	None
Email address	cedars.headteacher@hexagoncare.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2021. They had previously been the lead teacher at the school.
- This is the school's first standard inspection. The school was registered with the Department for Education on 21 August 2020.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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 had received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held various meetings with the headteacher and two directors from Hexagon Care Services Ltd. The meetings focused mainly on the school's curriculum, safeguarding and pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, geography and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors met subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- A meeting was held to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. Training certificates were checked and safeguarding records were scrutinised. Inspectors asked staff about their safeguarding training and the safeguarding procedures at the school. The single central record was checked.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and observed them on an off-site visit to play badminton at the village hall. Inspectors looked at a wide variety of documents and policies. The lead inspector undertook a tour of the school premises.

Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Davies

Her Majesty's Inspector

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