

Inspection of Active Wellbeing School

Longsdon Memorial Hall, Leek Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST9 9QF

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 October 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 are happy to attend school and they feel safe. Teachers work hard to get to know their pupils well. As a result, they know what pupils need to learn and plan lessons for them that are enjoyable and help them to learn well. Teachers give them plenty of support if they find the work a bit difficult. For example, pupils successfully improve their reading through extra reading with a teacher at lunchtime if they need to catch up.

Weekly educational visits with their class help pupils to learn more about the world. Teachers plan games and activities during these visits to ensure that pupils develop the school's five core values of respect, empathy, resilience, honesty and courage. For example, they developed empathy with the meerkats at Peak Wildlife Park. They said they were 'just like people'. The boating trip developed pupils' courage.

Pupils know that there is always someone to talk to if they are worried, upset or angry. Staff are patient and caring. They know each individual pupil's needs and know how they can help them to regulate their emotions. Bullying is rare. Pupils say this is because the staff are always around to help.

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

Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They work tirelessly to improve the life chances of their pupils. The highly experienced and organised directors of the proprietor body collaborate closely with school leaders. They know what needs to be done to improve the school. The headteacher ensures that staff have the time and professional development to improve practice. Staff say they love working at the school and feel well supported by leaders. Parents and carers are delighted with their children's progress.

Most pupils who attend this school have missed education in the past. Pupils have many gaps in knowledge and skills. Teachers make initial checks to find out what pupils know and can do. Teachers then map out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn over time. The work of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) supports teachers to plan for each individual pupil's academic and personal progress.

The recent work of the curriculum leader has ensured that schemes of work for all subjects are carefully sequenced. She has ensured that learning is presented to pupils in the right order, so that it builds on what has been learned before. Pupils frequently revisit learning so that they remember it well. For example, sounds and words from the morning phonics lesson are repeated throughout the day as they learn other curriculum subjects.

Leaders ensure that reading is prioritised. Phonics are taught daily. Teachers have the subject knowledge and skills they need to teach phonics. They enunciate sounds clearly and accurately. Teachers read to pupils daily. Books that pupils read themselves are well

matched to their abilities. They choose books independently when they are ready. The teaching of reading is effective and helps pupils to make strong progress.

Teachers use a variety of effective strategies to encourage pupils to develop their spoken language. They skilfully encourage pupils to begin to talk when they arrive at school unable to talk at all. In mathematics, teachers model mathematical language effectively. However, teachers do not have a strong focus on developing the use of more adventurous words in English. This means that pupils fail to use enough rich vocabulary in their writing and may not understand what they read. In mathematics, there is not enough emphasis on problem-solving and mathematical reasoning. Therefore, pupils do not make sufficient progress in this area of mathematics.

There is a calm and orderly environment throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. All staff have the knowledge and understanding to support pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff manage any emotional outbursts from pupils with skill and understanding. This helps them to settle down quickly and begin to learn. Pupils' attendance has improved markedly compared to their records in previous settings. Because of the effective support that pupils receive, their behaviour and confidence improve over time. Parents spoken to said that their children want to come to school and behave better at home.

'Freedom to flourish' is the school's motto and staff lead pupils to be increasingly resilient and independent. Through a range of activities and studies, pupils learn how to keep themselves physically healthy. Leaders plan opportunities for them to be active during the school day. Every lunchtime, teachers encourage pupils to walk a 'daily mile' around the playground. Pupils learn about fundamental British values, including mutual respect for others. For example, they learn about celebrating the achievements of others in sport. Teachers encourage pupils to support those who may find sports more difficult. They learn about different cultures by sharing both food and languages. During the pandemic, staff and pupils clapped for nurses and discussed why we should respect them. As a result of these activities, pupils gain a greater understanding of what it means to be a responsible citizen.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding policy is displayed on the website and meets government requirements. Leaders are diligent in their care for pupils. Leaders collaborate closely with the work of outside agencies. All staff are well trained in procedures and know where to find the information they need in case of any concerns. Leaders are trained in safer recruitment so that they ensure that all adults are safe to work with children. Concerns are managed appropriately and are well documented. Pupils say that they enjoy school and feel safe. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe.

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

- In mathematics, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to engage in problem-solving and reasoning. This means that pupils do not make sufficient progress in this area of mathematics. Leaders should ensure that teachers regularly challenge pupils through providing tasks in mathematics that require pupils to apply their problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- In English, teachers do not help pupils to use more adventurous words. This means that pupils are not developing a wider vocabulary to help them make progress in English. Leaders should ensure that teachers help pupils to acquire an increasingly rich vocabulary. In this way, they will have the opportunity to improve their speech, reading and writing.

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	148037
DfE registration number	861/6024
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10192411
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Active Resilience Ltd
Chair	Mr Mark Lovatt
Headteacher	Kerri Walton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,000
Telephone number	01782405598
Website	www.activeresilience.co.uk
Email address	head@activewellbeing.school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is housed in Longsdon Memorial Hall, Leek Road, Stoke-on-Trent.
- The school is registered to provide education for pupils aged five to 11 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). At the time of this inspection, there were no children in early years education. The youngest pupils were in Year 1.
- Prior to the inspection, due to several cases of COVID-19 among staff and pupils, the school had recently been closed for ten days after consultation with Public Health England.
- At the time of the inspection, all the pupils were boys, although the school is registered to take both boys and girls.
- The school offers places to pupils who have an education, health and care plan and/or those who are children looked after. It caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, including those with an autism spectrum disorder. Many pupils have missed substantial amounts of schooling and have significant gaps in their learning.
- The premises are leased through the trustees of the hall. The school consists of three classroom areas, a kitchen, a sensory room and a first-aid room. The school makes use of local leisure centres for physical education.
- Pupils are placed in the school by local schools or local authorities.
- The school opened in January 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school does not have a religious character.
- This is the school's first standard inspection.

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

- Inspectors held meetings with directors from the school's proprietor body, with governors, including the chair of the governing body, with the headteacher and

the deputy headteacher. She spoke on the telephone to one governor who was unable to attend meetings at the school.

- Inspectors completed deep dives in English, mathematics, early reading and personal, social, health, cultural and economic education. They met with the curriculum leader, teachers and groups of pupils to talk about the quality of education at the school. Inspectors visited lessons and looked at examples of pupils' work in each subject.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils reading and also observed reading catch-up sessions at lunchtime.
- The lead inspector toured the premises with the headteacher to check their suitability.
- Inspectors examined a large number of policies, schemes of work and curriculum plans, as well as documentation related to health and safety and first aid. The lead looked at the school's self-evaluation document and the school development plan.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead, and the deputy headteacher, who is the deputy safeguarding lead, to discuss safeguarding procedures and scrutinised safeguarding documentation, including the school's single central record. She also spoke to staff about their knowledge of how to safeguard pupils.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with the new SENCo who had just taken over this role, as well as with the headteacher and deputy headteacher (the previous SENCo), about planning and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The lead inspector spoke to the senior SEND commissioner for Stoke-on-Trent local authority on the telephone.
- The lead inspector spoke to parents on the telephone and looked at testimonials sent in by parents. The lead inspector took account of the text responses from parents on Ofsted Parent View. She took account of Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mary Maybank, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

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