

Inspection of Aspiration House School

Church Road, Boston PE22 0NX

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 November 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?

Staff care deeply about each pupil. They understand each pupil's strengths and needs. They make sure that all pupils are safe at school.

Staff understand and support when pupils struggle to manage their emotions. They have a calm and consistent approach. Staff are vigilant to spot and deal with any bullying that may occur, but there has been none since the school opened.

Teachers support pupils to do their best. They choose topics that keep pupils interested and stretch them. They set tasks that challenge pupils to recall previous learning and help them to know and remember more. They build pupils' resilience and celebrate their successes.

Staff extend pupils' learning through a range of opportunities. For example, pupils visit the cloud observatory, and explore plant life, waves and sea defences. Pupils warmly recall a visit to the train museum. They learn about the local community. They visit the village church, and Boston to follow the 'Buoys art trail'. Pupils value these and other experiences, such as their music lessons.

Most pupils like looking after Jason and Matthew, the school rabbits. They feed them with food that they have grown in the polytunnel.

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

Leaders have high expectations and aspirations for all pupils. They lead a successful school that supports pupils to re-engage with education. Pupils have gaps in their learning because of interruptions in their previous education. Pupils develop self-awareness and confidence. They become successful learners.

Leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum is well planned and sequenced in all subjects. The curriculum reflects the breadth of the national curriculum and accredited qualifications. Staff focus on developing pupils' speaking, reading, writing and mathematics. Staff provide effective support for pupils who are at different stages of learning to read. For example, they build on pupils' interests in poetry in order to support them to become fluent readers.

Teachers ensure that subject curriculums are flexible in order to meet the pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers and support staff are skilful in adapting learning to make sure pupils learn what they need to. Staff know pupils very well. They continually assess and adapt their teaching. They revisit previous learning. They enable pupils to gain new knowledge, understanding and develop skills. All staff plan for and teach an ambitious curriculum that enables all pupils to be successful. Pupils make small yet significant steps in their learning. Leaders use ongoing assessments to help identify pupils' strengths and additional

educational needs. They use this information to develop individual pupils' improvement plans and education, health and care plans.

Pupils have had high absence at their previous school settings. Leaders use strategies that have significantly improved all pupils' attendance. Most pupils attend every day and follow a full timetable of learning. They show positive attitudes and engage well with staff.

Pupils experience a range of opportunities that supports their personal and emotional development. They take part in a range of activities that interest them, for example swimming, bird watching in the school's hide, listening to an organ recital, and playing tennis. Staff provide pupils with many opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, they learn about different religions and cultures. They promote equality of opportunity for all.

Pupils are becoming well prepared for life in modern Britain and independent living. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. Pupils learn about difference, diversity and respect. Leaders make sure that the relationships and sex education curriculum is adapted to pupils' ages and maturity. Pupils are being well prepared for their next stages of education. They learn about different jobs and engage in community voluntary work.

The school is well led and managed by the director and headteacher. Leaders have a good understanding of the independent school standards and make sure that they meet them consistently. They ensure that pupils' welfare, health and safety are paramount. The premises are well maintained. Detailed risk assessments are reviewed regularly. Leaders make sure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school is inclusive. Leaders make sure that all policies are readily available on request to parents and carers.

Staff comment positively about the way in which leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being. They gain from a range of professional development opportunities. All staff enjoy working at the school. They are proud to be part of this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. Staff receive safeguarding training when they start at the school. They receive regular training updates. Staff know and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They are vigilant and respond quickly to any concern they may have about a pupil's welfare. Leaders take swift and effective action. They work with external agencies when extra support is needed.

Leaders have clear understanding of safer recruitment processes. They make sure all pre-employment checks are undertaken before an adult starts working with pupils.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when in the local community and online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have established a coherent, ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that is being implemented effectively. Pupils gain from a well taught curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that these approaches to curriculum planning and delivery are fully embedded, enabling pupils to benefit in the long term.
- Leaders have effective processes in place to monitor and evaluate the school's current provision and its impact. If the material change request is approved, leaders need to ensure that they build on these systems to maintain and further improve the school's good provision for more pupils.

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	148189
DfE registration number	925/6058
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10210449
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	Aspiration House Limited
Chair	Danielle Betts
Headteacher	Jade Corssen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,000
Telephone number	01205 875587
Website	No website
Email address	jade.c@vals-place.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is located in Freiston, Boston.
- The proprietor of the school is Aspiration House Limited. The school is part of a group of schools and children's homes operated by VAL's Community Foundation.
- The school's director was appointed in March 2021. This occurred at the same time that the two previous directors resigned.
- The school provides full-time education for pupils with SEND aged between seven and 18 years. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils have a range of learning difficulties. All pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- The current headteacher started at the school in June 2021. This followed the departure of the previous headteacher.
- The other members of staff started at the school in October 2021.
- The first pupils started at the school in July 2021.

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 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluations.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the other three members of staff. They met with the director. They spoke with a social worker on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, PSHE, music and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited sample lessons, spoke with the teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors looked at a range of other subjects, including reading and cooking.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, who is the special educational needs coordinator, designated safeguarding leader and careers leader.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils informally about different aspects of school life.

- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included policies related to curriculum, teaching, assessment, and health and safety. Inspectors reviewed the single central register and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors toured the premises to review the suitability of the accommodation.
- Inspectors considered communication from a parent. They reviewed three responses to the survey for staff.

The school's proposed change to the 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.**

Information about the material change inspection

- This is the school's first material change inspection. The material change has not been implemented. The DfE wrote to the school in January 2021 stating that the maximum number of pupils the school can admit is four.
- The school's material change request is to increase the school's capacity to 10 pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school. They reviewed records and policies related to safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety, risk assessments and the single central register.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and director to discuss the material change request. They reviewed plans to increase staffing and maintain suitable pupil supervision.
- The school has an appropriate health-and-safety policy. This is effectively implemented. The school complies with the relevant fire-safety regulations.
- The school has an appropriate risk-assessment policy. Leaders ensure that there are appropriate written risk assessments in place. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed.
- The current premises provide sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of the proposed 10 pupils. The premises are currently maintained to a standard such that, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- Leaders demonstrate commitment to the school's purpose and vision. They are mindful that any changes should not have an adverse impact on pupils currently at the school. They intend to implement these changes in a phased manner over time. They are committed to providing high-quality education for each pupil.

- Leaders demonstrate strong capacity to implement the proposed material changes, meet independent school standards, and maintain the current standard of provision for pupils.

Inspection team

Chris Davies, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Simon Hollingsworth

Her Majesty's Inspector

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