

Inspection of Hidelow Grange School

Hidelow House, Acton Green, Acton Beauchamp, WR6 5AH

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

The headteacher has relentlessly high ambitions for each pupil. Staff support the pupils to achieve well and gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need for life beyond school. Staff know the pupils well. They are committed to ensure pupils get the best education. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their ambitions for the future.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their interests and talents. Staff support pupils to take part in opportunities beyond the classroom, for example sporting competitions and a range of clubs. Pupils talk about how the wide range of activities 'push me out of my comfort zone'. For example, pupils made a full-sized working canoe and navigated a canal boat. Pupils recognise their contribution to society and are proud of their achievements.

Relationships between staff and the pupils are very strong. Pupils behave well because the staff look after them and know how to support their needs. Staff are skilled in ways to calm pupils down who need support in managing their behaviour. Staff closely supervise pupils so any fall-outs between individuals are quickly sorted out. Pupils learn to manage their own behaviour when needed. Bullying is rare. Adults handle situations that do arise with expertise.

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

School leaders ensure they teach pupils what they need to know for future employment and independence. Teachers plan sequences of lessons that motivate pupils. They ensure that the content of the topics is ambitious. Pupils experience a broad curriculum that meets their individual needs. For example, the school introduced design and technology GCSE because some pupils are interested in jobs in carpentry.

What the school does for the pupils' personal development is exceptional. Staff plan and sequence experiences so that pupils build and develop self-esteem and resilience. Staff meet the individual needs of every pupil because they know them so well. This results in pupils gaining a wide range of knowledge, skills and qualifications. For example, pupils achieve qualifications in cooking, canoeing and climbing. Staff support pupils to make considered choices about their future. Pupils receive appropriate education and careers advice and guidance. Some pupils go on to study at higher levels, such as A levels, and others follow vocational routes or apprenticeships.

Leaders prioritise developing pupils' reading and writing. They promote reading in a variety of ways. Pupils read daily newspapers, choose the termly reading text and receive a book for Christmas. Pupils enjoy their planned half-termly visit to the library and bring back an extensive selection of books. Pupils who have fallen behind with their reading are well supported to catch up and become confident, fluent readers.

In a minority of subjects, teachers do not always deliver the planned curriculum as well as they could. At times, the ways staff present subject matter can be a little confusing for pupils. For example, overly long explanations or incorrect vocabulary are used. When this is the case, pupils are unable to fully understand their new learning. This means that some pupils do not always learn as deeply as they should.

That said, teachers are skilled in using assessment to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers address the gaps successfully. Therefore, pupils usually gain the essential knowledge they need to progress in their learning.

The support for pupils' behaviour is excellent. In lessons, pupils are resilient and motivated to learn. Pupils understand that if they do not follow instructions and miss out on learning, they will have to make this learning up later. Therefore, pupils normally choose to behave well. On the rare occasions that pupils struggle to behave well, staff support pupils to return to learning as quickly as possible. Staff know the individual strategies to support every pupil in the school. The school has never used exclusions or suspensions. Staff rarely use physical interventions. Behaviour has improved because of the strong relationships that exist among pupils and between staff and pupils.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils learn in depth about different religions and festivals, such as Diwali. Staff enhance pupils' learning through well-planned trips, for example to the local Hindu temple. Pupils have opportunities to engage in the local community. For example, they designed and made a statue of a famous sports person for the local sports centre, and planted trees in the community.

Over time, and in an age-appropriate way, pupils learn about healthy friendships and relationships. They develop their understanding of different behaviours. Pupils learn about what is unacceptable behaviour, including harmful sexual behaviour.

Teachers enjoy working at the school. They share the headteacher's ambitions for the pupils. There is a strong sense of pride and teamwork. Staff said that leaders consider work-life balance well.

The proprietor body provides appropriate support and challenge to school leaders. Effective systems are in place to quality assure the work the school does. The proprietor body ensures that the independent school standards are met and that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 by having a suitable accessibility plan.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff provide an extremely caring and nurturing environment. Pupils' safety and welfare are a priority for leaders and staff. Designated safeguarding leads work closely with the other agencies, including the care home, to ensure that the pupils

get the help and support they need. All staff are well trained to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff take prompt action if they identify any potential concerns.

Staff teach pupils to keep themselves safe. This includes when pupils use the internet and within their local community. Staff ensure pupils learn about how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a small number of subjects, the delivery of curriculum plans does not support pupils' learning as well as it could. Teachers are not always clear enough about what they want pupils to learn and know. This means that pupils sometimes get confused about their learning and do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers deliver the planned curriculum accurately and effectively so that pupils learn what is intended.

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	144717
DfE registration number	884/6016
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10205103
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Caretech Community Services Limited
Chair	Declan Tuer
Headteacher	Becky Cooper
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,000
Telephone number	01886 883821
Website	No website available
Email address	becky.cooper@caretech-uk.com
Date of previous inspection	8–10 May 2018

Information about this school

- Hidelow Grange School is an independent special school located in Herefordshire.
- It caters for boys aged between 11 and 18 who are experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties. At the time of this inspection, there were no post-16 students on roll. Consequently, inspectors could not make a judgement about post-16 provision.
- Typically, pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils attending the school are children looked after.
- There are currently five pupils on role. Three pupils are in Year 10 and two are in Year 11.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in May 2018. Inspectors judged the school as requires improvement. Several independent school standards were unmet. A progress monitoring inspection in March 2019 judged that the previously unmet standards were met.
- The school does not use 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 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 evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education (PE) and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. In these subjects, inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to staff. An inspector visited a PE session that took place at a local sports centre. Inspectors also looked at plans and work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the director of education of Caretech Community Services Limited. Both inspectors spoke with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector completed a tour of the premises to check its suitability.
- Inspectors examined the way in which the school keeps pupils safe. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central record, along with pupils' safeguarding records, records of incidents and physical interventions and

attendance registers. Inspectors spoke with staff about their training and how they keep pupils safe.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during the school day.
- Inspectors considered the small number of free-text responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the five responses to the pupil survey and three responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Humphries

Her Majesty's Inspector

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