

# Inspection of Seven Hills

80b Kenn Road, Clevedon, Bristol, Avon BS21 6EX

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Inspection dates:

8 to 10 March 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

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 at the school and enjoy good relationships with staff. However, the curriculum for English is not well developed. Pupils who need to catch up with reading are not given sufficient help.

Pupils say that staff care about them and that they take the time to listen to them. Pupils feel that the school is a safe place for them. As a result of this level of care, many of the pupils re-engage with learning. The positive and supportive climate in the school also helps pupils to manage their own behaviour.

Leaders focus on meeting the needs of individual pupils. They plan the curriculum carefully to match it to pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans and pupils' learning needs. Even so, in some areas the curriculum does not help pupils to know and remember important knowledge.

The school focuses upon the personal development of its pupils and delivers a strong curriculum in this area. Staff work with pupils and support their personal growth, helping them to overcome challenges.

Parents value the school and the support that it provides for their daughters and their families as a whole. The school has strong communication with families, who value this and feel involved in their daughters' education.

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

The recently appointed headteacher has made progress in establishing a broad and challenging curriculum in the school. Nevertheless, some subjects do not have a well-sequenced curriculum in place. Even though some pupils are beginning to make progress in their learning, many are not.

In English, there remains work to secure the full range of knowledge within the curriculum. Many pupils have reading attainment that is low. There is not a structured programme in place that rapidly improves pupils' reading. Few pupils read widely and often. Leaders have not established a rigorous and sequential approach to the teaching of reading.

Subject leaders teach their subjects with confidence and most have the relevant subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum. This helps them to offer clear explanations and model concepts and knowledge helpful to pupils. For example, in science, the subject leader constantly refers back to key subject-specific terminology, which helps the pupils. However, in other areas, the design of the curriculum does not help pupils remember long-term the content they have been taught.

The school has a positive and supportive climate and pupils benefit from good relationships with staff. Classes are very small, and this supports positive relationships. Everyone is respectful and considerate of each other. The school feels calm and orderly as a result. Staff ensure that classrooms are places where pupils feel comfortable to join in, ask questions, offer up answers and make mistakes. They receive positive praise and feedback, which supports the development of their self-esteem and well-being. Even so, some pupils do not attend regularly enough to benefit fully from this positive environment.

The school focuses strongly on the personal development of its pupils, and the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is well sequenced and matched to the needs of the pupils. As a result, pupils are able to engage in discussions about sexual health, substance abuse and other aspects that are key to their longer-term well-being and personal development. The school's management group provides an effective careers service to the school, which has been online this year.

Staff feel well supported in the school. There is a professional and mutually respectful climate. Leaders consider the well-being of their colleagues. The school leads and manages its professional development and support for its early career teachers effectively and they feel that they are making good progress with their careers.

The school's curriculum is not fully developed, in both its intent and implementation. Subject leaders have not yet established a coherent curriculum in all subjects across the school.

The proprietor and the school's management group are well organised and support the school effectively. The school environment is attractive, well maintained, and resourced. Leaders are well aware of the independent school standards (the standards) and have worked effectively to ensure that they are fully met.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and a suitable accessibility plan is in place.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school gives close attention to the identification of pupils who need early help and liaises very effectively with their safeguarding partners to secure this for them. Systems are well organised and there are efficient processes for the management of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that there is a well-developed and strong culture of safeguarding across the school that results in pupils feeling safe, well-informed and confident to speak to staff.

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

- The curriculum in English does not include a sharp enough focus on reading. Therefore, pupils do not improve their reading skills quickly. Leaders need to implement a phonics-based approach to the teaching of reading. The school also needs to ensure that pupils are given books that match their phonic knowledge.
- The school does monitor the attendance of its pupils and works successfully with many families, but some pupils are missing too much of the school's curriculum. This results in gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should improve the rate of pupils' attendance.
- Leaders have begun to plan and sequence the curriculum, but not all staff have the knowledge and expertise to teach all of the subjects. As a result, pupils do not know and remember new knowledge effectively. Leaders should ensure that staff have the necessary subject knowledge and teaching skills to enable pupils to know more and remember more.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148418
<b>DfE registration number</b>	802/6011
<b>Local authority</b>	North Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212968
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	8
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Hexagon Care Services
<b>Chair</b>	Caroline Ashdown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Robert Kemp
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£45,000 to £65,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	0333 600 6600
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hexagoncare.com">www.hexagoncare.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:sevenhills.headteacher@hexagoncare.com">sevenhills.headteacher@hexagoncare.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	24 to 26 February 2021

## Information about this school

- Seven Hills School is a small special school, located in a detached bungalow in Clevedon, Bristol.
- The school caters for girls with a range of complex needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Many pupils have experienced disruption to their education, with periods out of school due to significant trauma in their lives.
- All pupils at the school have EHC plans.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## 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.

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 that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the proprietor and the deputy head of education.
- Inspectors examined the school's arrangements for safeguarding by meeting with the designated lead for safeguarding. They also scrutinised policies, procedures and record-keeping and reviewed the safeguarding checks made on staff when they are recruited.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils around the school site and talked with them during lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour management, exclusions and attendance.
- As there were so few responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, and no free-text comments, the lead inspector phoned several parents to seek their views on the school.

- The lead inspector toured the premises to check that they were compliant with the standards.

### **Inspection team**

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Steve Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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