

Inspection of Orchard School

South Leverton, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 0DJ

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their welcoming school. They enjoy attending and say that it is a friendly place. Pupils value the personalised support they receive. They say, 'Teachers care as much as we do that we do well.'

Pupils are polite and respectful. They apply themselves well in lessons. They take pride in their work. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. Pupils get on well together and include new pupils well. They say that bullying rarely happens, if at all. They trust all staff to help them. They feel supported to resolve issues that may arise in a mature manner.

Pupils gain from a range of opportunities that support their personal development. They develop self-confidence, self-awareness and resilience. Older pupils are well prepared for their chosen next steps.

Pupils enjoy studying a wide range of subjects. Older pupils do well in external examinations. Leaders have not yet ensured the curriculum securely builds pupils' learning across all phases of the school. Some pupils do not learn to read as well as they should.

Parents and carers value many things about this school. Parents appreciate that staff know their children well. They say there is a family feel and 'genuine care'.

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

Many pupils arrive at Orchard School at different points throughout the school year. Leaders help them to consider their future goals. They identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and give personalised guidance to improve their achievement quickly. Pupils respond well.

The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, has made sure that teachers have appropriate specialist knowledge to prepare older pupils well towards exam success. In some subjects, such as science, there is consideration of how what pupils learn in younger years supports future learning. All teachers are diligent about planning learning for the pupils in their class. However, leaders have not ensured that what is taught in each class builds on what pupils have learned before and prepares them well for what they will learn next.

Leaders encourage a love of reading. Less-confident readers read with an adult every day. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the books they are reading, and about the different authors. The current approach to teaching pupils who are at an early stage of reading is not structured or resourced well enough. There is not a consistent phonics scheme in place.

Staff make sure that children in the early years are cared for and looked after well. The early years curriculum covers all of the required areas. They learn about

interesting topics, such as 'animals around the world'. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils learn the most important knowledge to prepare them for Year 1 and subsequent years.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and conduct themselves well. Pupils value their education. Leaders work closely with parents to optimise attendance and maintain learning, including for those pupils with medical needs.

Leaders provide rich opportunities for pupils' personal development. They provide pupils with a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Pupils learn about different aspects of physical and emotional health and well-being. Leaders have developed a well-sequenced and age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education curriculum. Pupils develop a sense of right and wrong. They have opportunities to celebrate their learning and reflect on life's big questions. Leaders have developed a strong culture of respect. Pupils show a deep understanding of equality and diversity. They learn about different world views and religions in religious education. Pupils have a mature understanding of difference. Teachers prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Teachers encourage pupils to be aspirational. Older pupils receive impartial and effective careers guidance. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education or training.

All staff are proud to be part of this school. They are diligent in fulfilling their duties and morale is positive. They recognise that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload. Teachers new to teaching are well supported. There is a strong team ethos.

The school's proprietors are also the site manager. They have a deep sense of care for their pupils and staff. They have maintained this through the pandemic. Proprietors ensure that appropriate policies, risk assessments and checks are in place. However, they have not ensured, over time, that the school site consistently meets the standards as outlined in Part 5 of the independent school standards. Inspectors identified several minor concerns in relation to the site at the start of the inspection. Leaders acted promptly to resolve these matters. The site provides a suitable environment for learning.

The school provides information to parents as required by the independent school standards. Parents report that the school communicates with them well. They are kept up to date with all aspects of their child's life at school. Parents are extremely positive about the school.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor has not ensured that the independent school standards are consistently met over time. However, their urgent response during the inspection shows their capacity to improve and sustain standards continuously, moving forwards.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know individual pupils well. Leaders ensure staff receive effective training. Staff are quick to spot and share concerns. Leaders take appropriate action. They work with external organisations and professionals. Leaders keep detailed safeguarding records.

Leaders complete all pre-employment checks before adults start working with pupils. Pupils learn about risk and how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, pupils are taught about online safety and potentially harmful relationships.

Relationships are positive between staff and pupils, and between staff and parents. This supports the school's safeguarding approach.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The proprietor does not have sufficient oversight of the school's work. The staff have not received the necessary training to be fully effective in their roles. The proprietor should ensure that systems are in place to monitor the quality of leaders' work and to hold leaders to account effectively.
- Leaders have not established a consistent approach to teaching reading. Leaders should ensure that there is a coherent and consistent approach to teaching reading. They should ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach reading, including how to teach phonics effectively. They should ensure that pupils' reading books consistently match their reading knowledge.
- There is not a coherent curriculum plan that builds up pupils' knowledge and understanding across the different phases of the school, particularly as children in the early years move into Year 1, and pupils move through Years 1 to 6. Teachers in different phases of the school plan pupils' learning independently of each other. Therefore, what they decide to teach pupils does not always take into account what pupils already know, so that pupils can build knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that, across all subjects and in all phases of the school, teachers' consideration of what they teach considers what pupils have learned previously, so that pupils can build on prior knowledge to help them know and remember more over time.

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

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| Unique reference number | 122933 |
| DfE registration number | 891/6015 |
| Local authority | Nottinghamshire County Council |
| Inspection number | 10209744 |
| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 112 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 15 |
| Proprietor | Mr and Mrs Fox and Mr P Atkinson |
| Headteacher | S Fox |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £4,880 to £8650 |
| Telephone number | 01427 880395 |
| Website | www.theorchardschool.co.uk |
| Email address | office@theorchardschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 7–9 November 2017 |

Information about this school

- The Orchard School is an independent all-through school. It is much smaller than an average all-through school.
- Orchard School Nursery comes under the school's registration, but operates from another site, at 21 Holly Road, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 6BE. This nursery was inspected on 7 September 2017 and was judged to be good.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of 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 met with two of the proprietors, one of whom is the headteacher, and other staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, looked at pupils' work, visited lessons and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about their understanding of safeguarding matters. The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and other related policies. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children and the school's safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector toured the school sites to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered parents' views as shared through free-text comments entered on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Liz Moore

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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