

Inspection of Future Education

168b Motum Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR5 8EG

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value their school. They speak of the difference it has made to them. 'Staff listen to you here' and the 'smaller groups help you concentrate' are just a few of the positive comments they make. Pupils enjoy productive working relationships with staff. They know that staff have their best interests at heart. Pupils also appreciate the opportunity to self-regulate their behaviour in the reflection room.

Pupils feel safe and say that bullying is less frequent than it used to be. School records indicate that this is the case. Pupils trust staff to deal with any issues as they arise.

Pupils are proud of their achievements. They like to demonstrate their skills in their vocational courses, such as facials in the onsite hair and beauty salon. Staff help pupils prepare for adult life through many activities such as cooking for themselves and their peers.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the design of the curriculum and how it will secure pupils' next steps in education, training or employment. Pupils can study a range of qualifications from entry level certificates to GCSEs. There is also flexibility in the curriculum. For example, pupils can study a range of vocational courses for a qualification in occupational studies. If they change their minds about studying motorbike valeting and wish to do construction instead, they can do so. Pupils undertake interesting experiences in the curriculum, such as contributing to the running of the onsite radio station.

Not all curriculum plans are effectively sequenced and delivered. Some subject planning is further along than others when considering what pupils should learn and when. On occasion, teachers teach curriculum content out of order. This is due to a few pupils' absence, which means the majority end up repeating work. While examination courses in English are well-planned, this is not the case for the pupils who need phonics teaching. There is not a structured systematic phonics programme in place. Teachers do not take sufficient account of pupils' reading ability. For pupils who struggle to read, they sometimes have difficulty reading the texts that teachers provide. Leaders have plans to address this as well as the weak reading culture in the school.

All pupils at the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Leaders work closely with parents and carers and a range of other professionals to support pupils' social, emotional and learning needs. Pupils have access to different types of therapy and counselling. Many pupils have not attended school regularly in the past. Leaders use creative ways to engage pupils in education, such as using libraries and other public spaces to provide tuition. While attendance is improving, some pupils are still not attending school regularly.

The new behaviour policy is not implemented consistently. Where staff use the guidance in the policy, they help pupils manage their own behaviour. Some additional adults are adept at 'reading the signs' that a pupil may be becoming anxious and will subtly support their needs in the classroom. Where staff do not follow policy guidance, staff's actions can heighten anxiety rather than help calm pupils. The rate of suspensions, while reducing, is too high.

Leaders prioritise personal development. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is skilfully matched to pupils' needs. Pupils revisit key aspects that affect them, such as being safe when online and in the local community. In the beliefs and values curriculum, this is where pupils understand what it means to be a considerate citizen in modern Britain. Through the relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum, pupils are also introduced to a variety of topics in a sensitive and age-appropriate way.

Leaders engage with several alternative providers. These placements are well thought out and linked to pupils' future aspirations. Pupils receive impartial careers advice and benefit from work-related experiences, for example being part of a painting and decorating team for the local community centre.

Although the proprietor and the governing body understand the requirements of the independent school standards, they have not ensured that all standards are consistently met. They fulfil their statutory duties and ensure that the school is a safe place. Risk assessments are in place for the range of activities provided. They have ensured that the school's accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Governors regularly check whether school leaders have put in place measures to address those aspects that are not yet secure. However, they have not challenged leaders about the rate of suspensions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training and are well-versed in the risks that pupils face. They are alert to possible signs of abuse and changes in pupils' behaviour. Staff report concerns promptly so that leaders can take effective and timely action to keep pupils safe.

Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies to protect pupils. Records are well-organised, which enables clear communication about individual cases. Leaders make sure that pupils and their families get the support and help that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some subjects are not coherently planned. Sometimes pupils will learn topics out of sequence because they have not attended school. This means pupils' learning is disconnected. Leaders need to make sure that teachers deliver the curriculum effectively, considering what pupils already know and can do, and building pupils' subject knowledge step-by-step.
- Provision for the learning of phonics and independent reading is underdeveloped. This is hampering some pupils' access to the curriculum as they are struggling to read. Pupils are not developing a rich body of knowledge and vocabulary over time as they are not reading enough. Leaders should implement their plans for further improvement so that all pupils benefit from a reading culture that is at the heart of the curriculum.
- Not all staff are following the new behaviour policy and making full use of their recent training. This means that pupils become confused from the different and inconsistent approaches used by staff, leading to heightened behaviour. Leaders need to ensure that all staff consistently implement the new behaviour policy and significantly reduce the rate of suspensions.
- The independent school standards are not consistently met. While the proprietor and governors undertake checks and ask questions of leaders, they are not challenging school leaders' decisions rigorously, for example excluding pupils when the school is the specialist provision. Governors need to improve the rigour with which they hold school leaders to account.

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	135859
DfE registration number	926/6160
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10230311
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	The Nr5 Project
Chair	Daniel Childerhouse
Headteacher	Deborah Edwards
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,672.31
Telephone number	01603 251310
Website	www.futureeducation.org.uk
Email address	office@futureeducation.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 21 March 2019

Information about this school

- Future Education is an independent special school registered to provide education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The proprietor is The Nr5 Project, known as Future Projects. The Nr5 Project is a registered charity.
- The school opened in 2009. The current headteacher became substantive headteacher in July 2021.
- Leaders use five providers of alternative provision, of which three are unregistered.

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.

- Inspectors met with the proprietor, members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and staff. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of Norfolk and Suffolk local authorities.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, art and PSHE. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans for RSE and the beliefs and values curriculum. Inspectors spoke to leaders about other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leads. They spoke to a range of staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records, including those related to risk assessments, health and safety checks and the safer recruitment of staff.
- Inspectors held telephone calls with a few parents. Inspectors considered the five free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View. They considered the views of staff through conversations and scrutiny of the 16 responses to the Ofsted online staff survey. Inspectors spoke to pupils in class and around the school and held meetings with groups of pupils. No pupils responded to the Ofsted online pupil survey.
- Inspectors toured the school premises on both sites, checked the school's website, scrutinised the admissions and attendance registers and a range of other

documentation to check that the school complies with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Russell Ayling

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught; and
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.

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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