

# Inspection of Preston Bridge School

1 Lower Polsham Road, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2AF

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Inspection dates: 28 to 30 June 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

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?**

This school is helping pupils to re-engage with education. Most pupils have had difficult experiences of school in the past. They have a history of low attendance. These pupils now attend school regularly and are optimistic about their futures.

Leaders and staff show pupils what it means to respect one another as individuals who, together, form a positive and purposeful community. This helps pupils to form healthy working relationships and friendships of their own. Staff intervene effectively in any conflict between pupils. Bullying, although occasionally reported, is unusual.

Trips and off-site visits are a regular feature of the curriculum. Leaders make good use of the local environment, services and attractions. For example, pupils visit the local beaches, restaurants and museums. They keep physically active, going further afield for walks, using a local gym, going swimming and playing mini-golf. All of this helps pupils' social confidence.

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

Leaders, including members of the governance team, all agree on their vision for the school. They have designed a curriculum which first helps pupils to overcome some of the barriers to learning they face, before moving pupils on to more formal learning. The school began to admit pupils from October 2021. Although many pupils have only attended for a short time, they are increasingly able to focus on learning. Staff develop curriculum projects for pupils to pursue in the light of their interests and talents.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) has a high priority in the curriculum. Staff get to know the pupils well. They assess their social and emotional development and set appropriate targets. When pupils are admitted to the school, leaders work closely with their parents to understand pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and any additional vulnerabilities. As a result, teachers are sharply focused on the curriculum themes pupils need the most, such as developing healthy relationships.

Leaders recognise the important role of reading in pupils' ability to learn an ambitious curriculum. Pupils spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about authors and the books they enjoy reading. Teachers encourage pupils to read more by buying books by favourite authors, or similar. They teach pupils how to pick out necessary information when reading everyday texts such as receipts and product labels. There are arrangements in place to provide a phonics curriculum for pupils in the early stages of reading.

Pupils in key stage 4 can choose from a broad range of subjects and qualifications. Leaders listen carefully to pupils' aspirations and tailor the curriculum accordingly. However, in some subjects, leaders have not thought enough about how they can help pupils to build up their knowledge now, so that they can achieve their full

potential later. Teachers need more guidance in how to identify and sequence the knowledge of each subject in small, motivating steps. They do not always use assessment effectively. For some pupils, this can mean a delay before they start to learn what they need.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' attendance and behaviour. Pupils are rising to these because, increasingly, they see that they can be successful through school. Leaders organise pupils into small groups, each with a dedicated staff team and a 'base room'. This helps pupils to feel comfortable. They build positive relationships with one another and their key staff. There is little disruption to lessons. Where this happens, pupils are understanding of one another's different needs.

Staff engage pupils in discussions about their individual characteristics. They help pupils to think positively about the fulfilling lives they can go on to lead. Leaders value employability skills and are developing relationships with local businesses. Some pupils complete work experience placements, from which they draw confidence. Leaders have a great deal of expertise in careers education. They open pupils' eyes to the range of possibilities.

The proprietor has assembled a governance team with the appropriate knowledge and skills to perform the role effectively. The chair has an accurate understanding of the quality of education provided. The governance team provides valuable support and challenge to the school's senior leaders. Leaders have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards and complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders at all levels work with and develop staff, showing integrity and acting in the best interests of pupils. Staff morale is very high. They trust the leaders and confirm that they are mindful of their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' safeguarding practice is very strong. Adults working in the school are carefully vetted. There is a robust system for recording concerns. When there is a concern, leaders respond proactively. They advocate for pupils and their families, providing professional challenge to external agencies if necessary.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance among staff. Staff understand the increased vulnerability of pupils arising from their special educational needs. They are alert to the risks pupils face both online and offline. Staff respond quickly and effectively when they become aware of situations in which pupils could be at risk of harm.

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

- In some subjects, leaders have not broken down the curriculum into manageable chunks for pupils to learn. As a result, teachers are not always sure how to help pupils to build up their knowledge incrementally. Leaders should identify the small steps for pupils to take. This will help them to know and remember more.
- Teachers do not always identify what pupils do and do not know quickly enough. Sometimes this causes an unnecessary delay before pupils begin learning the right curriculum content. Leaders should ensure that accurate assessment information informs the curriculum that each pupil follows.

## **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>	148621
<b>DfE registration number</b>	880/6008
<b>Local authority</b>	Torbay
<b>Inspection number</b>	10230033
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	22
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	2
<b>Proprietor</b>	Spaghetti Bridge Ltd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Hughes
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£54,950
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 926555
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.prestonbridgeschool.co.uk">www.prestonbridgeschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@prestonbridgeschool.co.uk">admin@prestonbridgeschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school was registered by the Department for Education on 26 July 2021. This was the school's first standard inspection.
- Since the pre-registration inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The proprietor, Spaghetti Bridge Ltd, runs one other school.
- Although the school is registered for pupils of age six to 19, there are currently no pupils in the primary phase or in the sixth form.
- This is a specialist provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have education, health and care plans. Most placements are funded by Torbay or and Devon local authorities.
- The school uses no alternative providers.

## 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 the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and two curriculum coordinators. Inspectors also held discussions with the chair of the governance team and the chief executive officer and other leaders from the Spaghetti Bridge Ltd group.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, PSHE, physical education and computing. 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.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school, considered records of concerns and communications with safeguarding partners and spoke with a range of staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector considered documentation, including policies, leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement, minutes from meetings of the governance team and risk assessments. In addition, the lead inspector evaluated procedures

to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils and the maintenance of the premises.

- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. In addition, inspectors took into account responses to the surveys for pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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