

# Inspection of Esland Grantham School

Newton Chambers, Isaac Newton Way, Grantham NG31 9RT

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Inspection dates: 13 to 15 September 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy attending this small school. They have time to settle in and gradually increase their time spent at the school. Due to the support they receive, over time, pupils attend school more than they did at their previous setting. One parent stated, 'My child has achieved so much since being at the school after moving from mainstream and is on track to gain qualifications.'

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils know staff will look after them and keep them safe. Staff help pupils manage their emotions. They are very effective at recognising when pupils are becoming distressed. On such occasions, staff provide support to help pupils stay calm.

Most pupils engage well with their learning. Lessons are sometimes disrupted, but staff respond quickly to restore a calm atmosphere. Records show that bullying rarely happens. Most pupils are certain that if bullying did happen, staff would deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils say they feel safe.

Leaders have an ambitious vision to prepare pupils for their future. However, they do not have a sharp enough view of the quality of the education delivered and of the opportunities they provide to promote pupils' personal development.

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

Leaders are starting to develop a clearer overview of the school curriculum. Previously, they had not considered exactly what pupils needed to know and be able to do before they left the school. As a result, teachers' lessons did not build towards preparing pupils for their next steps in learning. However, more recently, leaders have supported teachers to think carefully about what they teach and the order in which they teach it.

Leaders have recognised that some pupils need a very different curriculum. They have recently introduced a nurture-based 'stepping-stones' curriculum to support these pupils. This curriculum has been very effective for any pupils the school educates at home. It is too early to see the impact this curriculum is having on pupils who complete their studies on the school site.

Leaders have increased the therapeutic support for pupils. This is in its very early days. There is evidence that this input is helping staff and pupils recognise and respond to sensory and communication needs.

Leaders are developing a reading curriculum. Some pupils do not see themselves as readers. Leaders are keen to challenge this. Leaders have begun to review their curriculum for teaching phonics. Staff are beginning to check which sounds pupils do not recall confidently. However, there is not yet a consistent approach to making sure that all staff know precisely what pupils need to learn to become fluent

readers. For example, not all staff have had the training they need to teach pupils at the early stages of learning to read.

Until recently, teachers' assessment of the gaps in pupils' learning has lacked the necessary reliability and accuracy. Leaders are addressing this. They have introduced new ways of finding out what pupils do and do not know from their previous learning. This will allow teachers to provide appropriate support to help fill gaps in pupils' knowledge.

At present, the targets written in pupils' individual education plans are not precise enough. They do not break down targets from pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plan) into small steps, with clear timescales for achievement. Therefore, teachers do not have the detailed information they need to provide the most appropriate support for pupils. This reduces the progress pupils make towards their EHC plan targets.

Leaders and teachers have focused on understanding and providing effective support for pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs. Each pupil has a detailed behaviour support plan. These plans provide clear strategies that help pupils manage their emotions so that they can engage with their learning. All staff are aware of these plans. Staff apply a consistent approach to each pupil. As a result, pupils are able to manage their behaviour better over time.

The programme to support pupils' personal development is not fully developed. Leaders have not carefully planned a programme that considers what pupils need to know and be able to do to be fully prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils benefit from personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. They also work towards completing an employability qualification, which includes some careers guidance. Teachers ensure that pupils learn to respect other people who are different to them. Leaders provide some opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of moral, social and cultural issues through different 'event days'. However, there are limited opportunities at the school for pupils to learn about different faiths or to develop their interests and talents.

Leaders provide well for pupils' physical health. Pupils enjoy their physical education (PE) lessons. Pupils benefit from regular cooking lessons.

Leaders have improved some aspects of the curriculum. However, they have not provided the proprietor with accurate information about the quality of education at the school. This has prevented the proprietor from being able to hold leaders at all levels to account for the quality of education provided.

Staff value the support leaders give them. They say that leaders care about their well-being and are considerate of their workload.

The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that the school's site promotes pupils' welfare, health and safety. Leaders identify any issues with the building and are quick to rectify them.

Leaders have made sure that effective policies and procedures are in place. This ensures that staff take a consistent approach to caring for and educating pupils. Leaders have created accurate risk assessments for individual pupils. They also risk assess effectively any activities in which pupils engage.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Leaders responsible for safeguarding are knowledgeable about pupils' individual needs and particular vulnerabilities. Close working relationships between school leaders, care home staff, social workers and other professionals mean any early indicators of concern are identified quickly. Staff are well trained to recognise any signs that might cause concern about pupils' welfare.

Safeguarding records are accurate. Leaders act on any concerns in a timely manner. Leaders have appropriate procedures in place to manage any allegations. Staff work with pupils to ensure that they understand how to keep themselves safe, including when working online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Leaders' oversight of the quality of education and pupils' personal development is not yet strong enough. As a result, they do not have a sufficiently precise understanding of the quality of these aspects of the provision. Leaders, including the proprietor, should ensure that their oversight of all aspects of the provision enables them to identify and address promptly where the provision is not yet good.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is a coherently planned curriculum in place that identifies the key knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn across all areas of learning. As a result, the curriculum does not always suit pupils' starting points and build towards clear goals. Leaders need to ensure that there is an ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum in each area of learning that meets pupils' needs, including those needs identified in EHC plans.
- The reading curriculum does not yet ensure that all pupils receive the precise help they need to become fluent readers. Not all staff have had the training that they need to provide a consistent approach to teaching pupils at the early stages of learning to read. As a result, pupils are not becoming confident readers as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that the reading curriculum provides the

precise support that pupils require to enable them to become confident, fluent readers.

- There has not been a clear and consistent approach towards the planning and delivery of a personal development programme. As a result, pupils have had variable experiences of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and careers guidance. Leaders are at the early stages of addressing these issues. They should ensure that the personal development curriculum fully prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

## **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147703
<b>DfE registration number</b>	925/6055
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204914
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	18
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	3
<b>Proprietor</b>	Esland North Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Jill Palmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzanne Harvey
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£53,625
<b>Telephone number</b>	01476 855604
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.eslandcare.co.uk/our-schools/esland-grantham-school">www.eslandcare.co.uk/our-schools/esland-grantham-school</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:granthamschool@eslandcare.co.uk">granthamschool@eslandcare.co.uk</a>

## Information about this school

- Esland Grantham School is an independent special school that provides education to pupils aged seven to 18 with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The primary area of need for most pupils is social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils also have moderate learning difficulties and/or a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. There is also provision for pupils with a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and those who have had adverse childhood experiences. Most pupils have EHC plans.
- Most of the pupils are children looked after.
- Pupils who are above the compulsory school age study a curriculum that is appropriate to their stage of education.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- The proprietor also operates an education outreach team that delivers education to pupils who are registered at the school but who receive their education off site.

## 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the PSHE and PE curriculum with leaders and visited tutor sessions and a PE lesson.
- Inspectors also looked at individual pupils' EHC plans and checked these against the school's provision.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school self-evaluation and school development plan.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Ofsted Parent View and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors met with small groups of pupils to gather their views.

- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and met with the safeguarding team. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered relevant documentation and reviewed the school facilities, to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

### **Inspection team**

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Hazel Henson

His Majesty's Inspector



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