

Inspection of Refocus

6 Knox Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 1HW

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 October 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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?

Staff know pupils and their backgrounds well. They recognise and treat each pupil as an individual. Staff are caring, encouraging and enthusiastic. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate what the school provides. Typically, a pupil commented, 'I love the staff here. We have a laugh. If we have a disagreement, we sort it out. It's a nice environment.'

Leaders set high learning expectations of pupils in academic and vocational subjects. Staff help pupils to improve and manage their behaviour. Pupils say there is no bullying. They are confident that staff would sort it out should it occur. Pupils are listened to and respected. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils say that they are safe in school.

Pupils enjoy a range of experiences, such as charity fundraising days, summer camps, boxing and BMX biking. They gain from a range of opportunities that support their personal development, for example creating a community garden, working with mentors and supporting a local primary school. Pupils develop self-confidence, independence and resilience. They are well prepared for their next steps. They gain qualifications that will help them be successful.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is relevant and ambitious for pupils. The school's values of 'Employable, Social, Ready' can be seen across the curriculum. Leaders are helping pupils who may have fallen behind or become disengaged with learning to catch up. The curriculum prepares pupils for adulthood and to be positive members of society.

Leaders ensure that subject curriculums are carefully planned. Subject leaders set out what they want pupils to learn and when. Staff have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teachers adapt these plans to meet pupils' needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They support pupils' learning appropriately. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Staff tap into pupils' interests, such as street art, rap music and motor racing. Teachers sequence learning to make sure that pupils build on what they have learned before. For example, in mathematics teachers identify the key knowledge and understanding they want pupils to learn. Pupils develop their mathematical knowledge of multiplying decimals. This builds on their previous learning about adding and subtracting decimals. Teachers check pupils' learning through effective questioning and recap sessions. Pupils are supported to know more and remember more over time.

Leaders understand the importance of reading. They have introduced weekly reading lessons to develop pupils' love of reading. Most pupils are supported to

develop their reading and comprehension knowledge and skills. However, staff do not support pupils who are at an early stage of reading well enough to become fluent readers. Leaders have secure plans in place to support these pupils in the near future.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. Staff use a consistent, calm and positive approach to managing behaviour. They support pupils who find managing their conduct more difficult. Leaders are focused on improving pupils' attendance. Pupils' attendance and behaviour improve when compared to that of their previous schools. However, too many pupils are regularly absent.

Leaders place pupils' personal development at the heart of the school's work. Leaders have planned a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum that includes age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education. Pupils learn about potential risks linked to online activity, alcohol, smoking, drugs, gangs and extremism. Pupils learn about different faiths, cultures, diversity and equality. Pupils learn to understand the importance of respect. Leaders ensure that pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps in education and training.

Directors and leaders work as an effective team. They are aspirational for the future of every pupil. Leaders ensure that teachers' professional development supports the school's ongoing improvement. Staff recognise that leaders are supportive. Leaders are considerate of staff well-being and workload.

The proprietor board securely and consistently meets the independent school standards. Directors know and understand their responsibilities. They meet their statutory duties, including the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders evaluate potential risks. They put appropriate control measures in place to reduce these risks. Directors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They are effective in supporting and challenging leaders to improve the school further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders have robust processes in place to support pupils' welfare. Staff are trained and understand their responsibilities. Staff believe that pupils are safe in school. They understand the potential risks that pupils may experience. Leaders identify pupils who may need help. They provide appropriate support. They work well with external agencies to provide additional help when needed.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding records are orderly and detailed. Careful checks are undertaken before adults start working with pupils. Directors fulfil their

responsibilities well. They regularly check on the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding systems.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have not ensured that all staff have the necessary expertise to teach reading consistently well, particularly for pupils who are at an early stage of reading. Some pupils do not improve their confidence and fluency in reading as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand how to teach reading effectively.
- Many pupils are regularly absent. These pupils do not benefit from the good quality of education the school provides. This limits these pupils' opportunities to learn well and be prepared for their next steps. Leaders should further support and challenge pupils and parents to improve attendance so that all pupils benefit fully from the school's provision.

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

Unique reference number	148756
DfE registration number	940/6000
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10232347
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Refocus Ltd
Chair	James Alcock
Headteacher	Paula Tucker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£158 per day
Telephone number	01933 391660
Website	www.refocus.school
Email address	paula@refocus.school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Refocus opened as a Department for Education registered independent school in September 2021. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school receives referrals from local authorities and secondary schools. The school offers qualifications in a variety of subjects, including English, mathematics and vocational subjects.
- The school provides full-time or part-time education for pupils aged 14 to 16 years. Full-time pupils are registered at the school. Currently, no pupils attend on a part-time basis. Pupils who attend on a part-time basis would be dual registered with a partner school.
- The school operates from a site based in Wellingborough, North Northamptonshire. This site has equipped workshops for construction and mechanics.
- The school does not use the services of any 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the proprietor board, including the chair and the leader with responsibility for health and safety.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, PSHE, construction and personal social development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including policies and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. They considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaire. Inspectors met with several groups of pupils.

- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding related policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and met with the safeguarding leader.
- Inspectors considered relevant documentation and reviewed the school facilities, to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Liz Moore

Ofsted Inspector

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