

Inspection of Venture Learning

19A Forester Street, Netherfield, Nottingham NG4 2LJ

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 November 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?

Leaders, teachers and mentors have high expectations of pupils. Staff live out the school's motto daily by 'putting the student at the forefront of their vision'.

Staff know, understand and care for each pupil very well. Staff build trusting and respectful relationships with pupils. Staff support pupils to become self-regulating, resilient and independent. Pupils apply themselves well. They appreciate that work is adjusted to their additional needs. They learn well. Pupils take pride in their work and achievements.

Pupils feel safe. They are confident to share any worries they may have. They know that staff listen and help. Pupils say there is no bullying. They know that staff would sort it out if there was any.

Pupils enjoy their time at school. They are proud to be part of this school. Pupils value the opportunities that they receive. They like having the school dog, Rufus, around.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school, especially the pastoral care. Typically, a parent commented, 'The school has supported my child beyond my expectation. My child would not have been able to continue his education if it were not for this school. The staff never give up on him.'

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. They place a strong focus on English and mathematics. Leaders have developed subject curriculum plans that focus on what knowledge they want pupils to learn and when. Leaders have ensured that subject curriculums are ambitious and well sequenced in almost all subjects. For example, pupils build their knowledge and skills very well in art and photography. They are creative and precise in developing their own artwork based on the analysis of various artists and photographers.

Leaders have recently reviewed the science curriculum and made some changes in the way it is delivered. They have introduced STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) as a new subject. They have made this change to encourage pupils to engage further with their learning in science and technology. Leaders have yet to identify fully the key knowledge pupils should learn and when. This is in its early stages of development.

Leaders identify pupils' specific additional needs, including the needs of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They seek external help when needed. Staff have high learning expectations of pupils. They are mindful of pupils' additional needs. Staff adapt the learning by breaking it down into manageable steps. Pupils appreciate this and respond well. Staff check what pupils know and can do. They identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Staff make

sure that pupils recall previous learning and carefully build new knowledge and develop skills very well. Pupils apply their mathematical number facts to solve problems. For instance, they apply their number knowledge when calculating currency exchange rates.

Teachers ensure that pupils develop their reading skills well. Pupils learn to understand different texts. However, leaders are yet to embed approaches to develop pupils' love of reading.

Pupils understand the school's high expectations of behaviour. Leaders' approach to improving behaviour is effective. Most pupils' attitudes and behaviour improve during their time at the school. Pupils who attend on a part-time basis successfully increase their hours at school. Pupils' attendance also improves over time. Many pupils' attendance improves when compared with their high absence in their previous schools.

Leaders place pupils' welfare and personal development at the heart of the school's work. Staff focus on pupils' character development. Leaders have developed a well-thought-out personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. They ensure that pupils receive age-appropriate relationships and sex education. Pupils learn about consent as well as healthy and unhealthy relationships. Pupils gain from a range of opportunities that support their social and moral development. They learn about right and wrong. They learn to understand potential risks. However, leaders do not fully support younger pupils to deepen their understanding of diversity and equality.

Leaders provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to understand the world of work. Leaders help pupils explore various options when considering their futures. Staff support pupils with transition to post-16 provisions. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education or training.

Leaders have a strong understanding of the independent school standards. They meet these securely and consistently. The premises are well maintained. Risk assessments reflect the school's policy. Leaders make sure they comply with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. They ensure that policies and key information are available on the school's website, including the school's safeguarding policy.

The proprietor has a strong vision for the school. The chair leads with a strong moral purpose. Leaders share a common purpose. They have high expectations of staff and pupils. Leaders provide staff with opportunities to develop their teaching and pastoral skills. Staff feel very well supported by leaders. All staff enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. They know pupils' backgrounds very well. Staff are well trained and know their responsibilities. They quickly spot any concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to provide extra support when needed. Safeguarding records are well maintained.

Leaders complete all pre-employment checks before an adult starts working with pupils.

The school's safeguarding policy is comprehensive and reflects statutory guidance. Pupils learn about potential risks, for example knife crime and when online.

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

- Leaders have recently introduced STEM as a new subject. They have done this as part of their review of the science curriculum, and how well pupils engage with this subject. Leaders have yet to identify fully the key knowledge pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge as securely as they should. Leaders are rightly addressing this as the course continues to embed. They should ensure that there is the necessary clarification as to the knowledge pupils should learn and when, so that pupils build their understanding over time.
- Leaders help pupils develop their reading skills well. However, they have not embedded a secure culture that develops pupils' love of reading. Pupils do not relish opportunities to read. Leaders should ensure that pupils understand the value and benefits of reading.
- Leaders have not ensured that younger pupils have sufficient opportunities to deepen their understanding of equality and diversity. As a result, these pupils are not as well prepared for life in Britain as they could be. Leaders need to make sure that pupils have improved opportunities to deepen their learning about different faiths and religions, and the protected characteristics.

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	147949
DfE registration number	891/6043
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10204919
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Venture Learning Ltd
Chair	Rhys Griffiths
Headteacher	Richard Hill
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,800
Telephone number	01159 876 621
Website	www.venturelearning.co.uk
Email address	rhys.griffiths@venturelearning.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Venture Learning opened as a new school in October 2020.
- The school provides education for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years. Pupils may have a range of learning difficulties, including behavioural, social and emotional needs. Many have not been successful in their previous schools.
- Pupils' places are commissioned by local authority agencies and schools.
- The deputy headteacher became the school's headteacher in September 2022. The previous headteacher is also the chair of the proprietor body. He continues to work as a senior leader at the school.
- The school does not use the services of an alternative provider.
- This was the school's first standard inspection.

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 met with the headteacher. They met with senior leaders, including the chair of proprietors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics; PSHE; art and photography; and STEM. For each deep dive, inspectors met with teachers and curriculum leaders, visited lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors looked a range of other subjects, including English, physical education, sports science and childcare. They visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke to pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed the school's provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with safeguarding leaders and reviewed safeguarding policies and records. They scrutinised the single central record.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally.

- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. They looked at the school’s website and published information about the school’s provision. These included policies relating to health and safety, curriculum and complaints.
- The lead inspector checked the suitability of the school’s premises.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They reviewed responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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