

Inspection of Argyll House

201 Holt Road, Cromer NR27 9JN

Inspection dates: 29 November to 1 December 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Insufficient evidence
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Argyll House provides a calm and safe environment for pupils. Pupils who attend the school have often had negative experiences of education. Staff take time to build trusting relationships with pupils. This helps to rebuild pupils' resilience and to start learning successfully again.

Pupils behave well. They are respectful to each other, staff and visitors. Pupils settle quickly because routines and expectations are clear. Incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying, are rare. Pupils are confident that any adult would listen to them if they had any concerns.

Pupils know that leaders have high expectations of what they can achieve. They work hard in lessons. Pupils understand it is important to do well to prepare them for their next stages of education. Pupils are ambitious for their future and the careers that they may pursue.

Each morning, pupils reflect on their personal skills and learning. Pupils build their confidence by expressing their thoughts and opinions. This means that they start the day with positive attitudes to learning.

Parents who spoke to inspectors were full of praise for the school. They are happy that their children are successfully engaging in education.

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

Leaders and staff have worked successfully to make Argyll House a better school. Leaders' clear direction has ensured that the quality of education has improved. Leaders and staff share the same high aspirations for pupils. Staff work as a cohesive team to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils. Leaders know the school well. They use this knowledge effectively to provide the training staff need to work with pupils who attend this school. Pupils benefit from adults' expertise. This helps pupils to re-engage with their learning.

Most pupils are in key stage 4. Many are in Year 11. They have many gaps in their knowledge owing to long periods spent out of education. Leaders prioritise core subjects such as English and mathematics. This helps pupils learn successfully in other subjects and prepares pupils for their next stages of education.

Pupils have the opportunity to study a range of subjects such as science and personal, social, emotional and economic education (PSHE). Overall, the curriculum is well planned. Subject plans set out clearly what pupils need to know so that they build their knowledge step by step. In a few instances, subject plans are too broad. They do not identify the precise information to help teachers teach and check for all the things pupils need to know. This means pupils do not always build their knowledge and understanding effectively over time.

Teachers are flexible with their delivery of the curriculum. They make sure the strategies they use help pupils to be more confident and access the planned learning. For example, in an English lesson, teachers used pictorial images to support pupils to identify different features of the text. This knowledge was then applied by pupils.

Reading is an important part of pupils' learning. Leaders seek different ways to reignite pupils' love of reading. Teachers provide pupils with magazines or comics that appeal to their interests. At regular reading times, pupils read shared books, presented in ways that make these sessions enjoyable. For example, play scripts of novels encourage pupils to read different character parts.

The personal development of pupils is an important part of the school's provision. The curriculum for PSHE is well planned and taught. Leaders ensure that the PSHE curriculum meets pupils' individual needs. Pupils learn important information about relationships and keeping healthy. Quiet spaces in the school provide areas to reflect, such as the 'calm corner'. All pupils receive independent careers guidance. Leaders use pupils' interests to help them think about possible future careers. Pupils have lots of opportunities to visit local colleges that offer vocational courses, as well as different workplaces.

Pupils who attend the school behave well. Some pupils find it difficult to attend the school regularly. This continues to be a challenge for leaders. Staff make frequent visits to pupils' homes to check that they are safe and help build pupils' self-confidence. Pupils are provided with work to ensure they are receiving education. This process takes time and is slowly improving how well pupils engage with the school. However, there are some pupils whose attendance remains very low.

Leaders have built a strong staff team. Staff are proud to work at the school. They welcome the approachability of leaders and the support provided for their different roles. Leaders have ensured that the school meets all the requirements of the independent school standards. The school complies with the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor body has a secure understanding of the school's effectiveness. They use their knowledge to challenge and support the leaders appropriately. They keep the premises in a good state of repair. Classrooms are well resourced, neat and tidy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safety and well-being of pupils are at the core of the school's work. Leaders and staff all understand the importance of safeguarding. Daily briefings provide opportunities for staff to share any concerns. They are well trained and alert for any signs of concern. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to support pupils' welfare. Leaders act tenaciously to ensure vulnerable pupils receive the help that they need.

Leaders make all necessary employment checks on adults before they work at the school. Pupils understand how to report any concerns and know that caring staff will help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some subject plans have not been refined to include all the specific information pupils need to know. This does not support teachers to make sure that pupils know and remember important knowledge. Leaders should ensure that all their subject plans are fully developed so that teachers know what to teach and help pupils secure their understanding over time.
- Attendance remains a challenge for some pupils. Leaders undertake regular home visits to check that absent pupils are safe and encourage pupils to come to school. Some pupils who have had long periods out of education are taking time to reengage with their learning. Their attendance remains very low. Leaders must continue to find ways to work with these pupils and their parents so that they improve the time that these pupils spend in education.

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	146626
DfE registration number	926/6021
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10243310
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Ryes College Limited
Chair	Kate Yarbo
Headteacher	Cameron Phillips
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,284.50
Telephone number	01263514944
Website	www.theryescollege.org.uk
Email address	office@theryescollege.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 March 2020

Information about this school

- Since the school's last standard inspection in March 2020, the current headteacher was appointed in October 2020 and the current deputy headteacher in April 2022.
- At the time of the inspection, there were too few pupils attending the sixth form.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils who attend the school have social, emotional and mental health needs linked to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorder needs. Many pupils have experienced significant periods of time out of education.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

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.

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the school office manager and the proprietor body, including the chair. Inspectors also met with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors considered the school's curriculum information, visited lessons, spoke to staff and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about their wider experiences of school.
- Inspectors also looked at other curriculum documentation and spoke to leaders about their subject plans.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, risk assessments, attendance information and behaviour logs.
- Inspectors met with leaders and staff to discuss safeguarding. The lead inspector checked the school's single central record. Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding information, including staff training and procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors contacted some parents to discuss their experiences of the school. Inspectors considered six responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rachael Judd

Ofsted Inspector

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