

Inspection of Redbourn Park School

Grovehill Youth Centre, Stevenage Rise, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 6BH

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They trust that staff will care and look after them. Pupils re-engage with learning because the school provides them with a safe and positive environment. Every morning adults greet pupils as they arrive. Pupils receive support and reassurance so that they are ready to learn.

Pupils experience opportunities to learn a variety of subjects. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because the curriculum is not designed or taught consistently well across the school.

Pupils are generally happy with the friendships that they make at school. Pupils enjoy the small size of the school. It helps them get along together and bullying is rare. Occasionally, some pupils' behaviour becomes boisterous in situations that do not go their way. When this happens, pupils' behaviour is not always managed effectively by staff. Expectations are not always high enough.

Pupils work hard to achieve special rewards. After each lesson they think about how successfully they have worked, along with the effort they have put into their learning. Pupils collect points that they exchange for rewards. This helps pupils to understand about the importance of having positive learning attitudes. However, the curriculum does not fully promote all aspects of pupils' personal development consistently well.

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

Leaders' programmes for the curriculum are not fully developed. Leaders have developed 'pathways' for each subject of the curriculum. These plans identify the important things pupils need to know and remember. However, not all staff who teach have the necessary subject knowledge to be able to deliver subject-specific vocabulary and concepts effectively. Many pupils have been out of school for long periods of time. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge across different subjects. Some teachers do not have the skills or understanding to plan or teach key knowledge as smaller steps. This means that pupils do not learn effectively. They are not secure in the things they need to know.

Where teachers' subject knowledge is stronger, pupils learn well. Teachers make good use of resources and promote discussion between pupils, who use accurate terms and vocabulary. For example, in science, pupils identified insulators and conductors as they investigated circuits. Staff make careful checks on what pupils know and understand. This helps teachers to identify what pupils need to learn next. Leaders understand the importance of re-engaging pupils into reading. Staff promote pupils' love of reading well. The school library provides a range of different text types that appeal to pupils. Daily quiet reading sessions provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their reading confidence. Staff teach phonics systematically for pupils who find reading challenging. However, books are not well matched for

those pupils who are early to reading, to practise their phonics and develop their accuracy and fluency.

Leaders support staff to develop individual learning plans for each pupil. These plans link together pupils' academic and personal needs. Leaders provide different therapeutic strategies that meet each pupil's social and emotional needs well.

Some pupils' behaviour is challenging. They find it difficult to engage in learning and to work with staff. A few pupils struggle to control their emotions during lessons. Some staff do not carry out the school's behaviour policy effectively. Staff do not have consistent expectations about what pupils need to do and when. Too many pupils disengage from their learning and do not sustain their concentration.

Pupils reflect on the importance of respect and cooperation through discussions and debate. Pupils participate in regular trips, such as horse riding, to promote their confidence and resilience. Pupils have roles, such as school councillors, to develop an understanding of community. However, the curriculum to support pupils' personal development is not fully understood by staff. Some teachers do not have a secure grasp of the content of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Pupils do not build their knowledge well enough.

The proprietor body is involved in all aspects of school life. The chair of the proprietor body visits the school regularly and was formerly both the headteacher and the sole proprietor of the school. The governing body is developing but does not yet have a clear understanding of how they will hold leaders to account. Staff welcome the support they receive from the proprietor body for their well-being. All staff are highly positive about working at the school. Staff morale is high and there is a strong team ethic.

The proprietor body has not ensured that all independent standards are met. The planned curriculum is not fully in place. It is not being taught as leaders intend. Staff do not have sufficient knowledge across the curriculum to implement it consistently. The behaviour of pupils is not always managed effectively. Inspectors had no concerns regarding the health and safety of the school building or site. The premises are well maintained.

The school website provides the required information that parents need. This includes the safeguarding policy. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff work together well to keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure that all required checks are made when new staff are employed at the school. Staff are appropriately trained. They know how to pass on and record any concerns that they

may have about a pupil's safety and well-being. Leaders ensure that they act on any identified issues in a timely way.

Leaders' chosen system for recording any safeguarding concerns is not used as rigorously as it should be. This means that leaders do not have a full or clear oversight of all the information in order to evaluate the support that they provide to pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders do not have an accurate and secure oversight of all the safeguarding information and actions they have taken to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders are not able to fully check the impact of the support that they are providing to pupils. Leaders should ensure that effective use is made of their chosen systems for recording safeguarding information so that they can check and evaluate the impact of their actions.
- Some staff do not have a consistent secure subject knowledge to teach effectively across the curriculum. They do not understand how to build pupils' progress consistently through the curriculum. This means pupils do not build their knowledge securely over time. Leaders should ensure that staff receive the training they need to teach the curriculum well.
- Teachers do not make sure that pupils who are at the early stages of reading, read books that are matched to the phonics that they know. This means that pupils are not developing their early reading skills quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that pupils read books that help them to learn to read accurately and fluently.
- Leaders have not made sure that their expectations for managing pupils' behaviour are known and understood by all staff. Staff do not manage pupils' behaviour consistently. They do not support pupils to develop consistent positive attitudes to learning. Leaders need to ensure that staff understand how to help pupils modify their behaviour so that all pupils learn successfully throughout the school day.

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	148472
DfE registration number	919/6018
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10238517
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Redbourn Park Independent School Limited
Chair	Richard McCabe
Headteacher	Caroline Tully
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	01442 601252
Website	www.redbournpark.co.uk
Email address	richard.mccabe@redbournpark.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school's registration with the Department of Education was approved in May 2021. It opened as an independent special school in September 2021. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- All the pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan. Pupils who attend the school have social, emotional and mental health needs linked to communication difficulties and autism spectrum disorder needs. Many pupils have experienced significant periods of time out of education.
- The number on roll has doubled since the start of this academic year.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of 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, deputy headteacher and other members of staff, including teachers and additional adults. A phone call was held with the school's therapies leader. Inspectors also spoke with the chair of governors, who is also a member of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, PSHE education and science. They met with the curriculum leader, who is also the headteacher, and with staff and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' records of work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils with adults present to find out what it is like to attend their school. Inspectors observed pupils at lunchtime and breaktimes.
- Inspectors looked at a range of safeguarding documentation. They reviewed the single central record and recruitment checks and scrutinised safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors reviewed eight responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online survey for parents, including seven free-text responses. Inspectors also considered 11

responses to the survey for staff. There were no responses to the online pupil survey.

The school's proposed change to the age range and maximum number of pupils

- The school has applied to the DfE to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.
- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **The school is unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school is implemented.**

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Cox

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught; and
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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