

Inspection of Elizabeth House School

Wentworth Close, Middleton, Manchester M24 4BD

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is because staff help them to overcome the difficulties which they experienced before they joined Elizabeth House School. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They said that members of staff are always on hand to help them if they have any worries.

Pupils understand that school leaders expect them to do their best in their learning. During their time at the school, pupils improve their attitudes to education. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils know that leaders have high expectations of their behaviour. Sometimes pupils misbehave, although serious incidents are very rare. Teachers are effective in dealing with any misbehaviour and helping pupils to get back to their learning. Leaders have an effective approach to managing bullying.

Pupils take part in a range of activities that support their wider development. For example, they broaden their understanding of different faiths by visiting various places of worship. They learn how to be good citizens. For example, pupils bake cakes which they sell to raise funds for charities.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum which meets the requirements of the independent school standards ('the standards'). It is broad and ambitious. The curriculum meets the needs, aptitudes and interests of the pupils at this school. In most subjects, leaders have thought carefully about the important knowledge that pupils should learn. Pupils achieve well in these subjects. However, in a few subjects the curriculums are not as well thought out. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils do not build up their knowledge as securely as they should.

Leaders ensure that staff have the subject-specialist knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum well. Where teachers do not have this expert knowledge, leaders ensure that these teachers access training and support from specialist staff in the wider school group. Teachers confidently and competently deliver the different subject curriculums.

Many pupils have considerable gaps in their learning as a result of their disrupted education prior to joining the school. Leaders assess pupils' academic starting points when they join the school. They identify any gaps in pupils' learning effectively. Teachers design suitable lesson activities that build on what pupils already know and can do. Most pupils achieve qualifications which support them in taking the next steps in education, employment or training.

Leaders encourage pupils to read. They have provided a small library area with a variety of high-quality books that pupils can borrow. There are also opportunities in

lessons for pupils to practise reading. When pupils join the school, leaders assess their reading knowledge. However, leaders do not check precisely enough the extent to which a small number of pupils have gaps in phonics knowledge. This is because leaders and staff have not had the training that they require. This means that these pupils do not receive the support that they need to learn to read fluently and accurately.

Leaders' systems for identifying the needs of pupils with SEND are effective. Leaders provide these pupils with appropriate and timely support. Leaders work well with a range of internal and external support services, such as mental health agencies. Leaders ensure that pupils access these specialist services as required. The support which these pupils receive helps them to achieve well.

Leaders have effective strategies in place to equip staff to manage pupils' behaviour well. Pupils' past experiences and difficulties mean that they often struggle to manage their behaviour when they are new to the school. Teachers are adept at helping pupils to improve their behaviour over time and to develop more positive attitudes to learning. This minimises disruption to lessons.

Pupils learn to respect people with different backgrounds and characteristics. Some pupils are encouraged to develop their talents, such as playing the piano. Pupils receive useful careers advice and guidance that take account of their interests and aptitudes. This helps pupils make well-informed choices about their next steps. That said, the range of clubs and activities available to pupils is narrow. This limits pupils' opportunities to develop hobbies and interests.

Staff told inspectors that leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. They explained that leaders listen to and respond helpfully to any concerns that they have.

The proprietor body has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The chair and members of the proprietor body know the strengths and areas for development of the school well. They understand and carry out their statutory duties. They are effective in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 by having a suitable action plan in place to support pupils with disabilities who may attend the school.

Leaders have a scheme of work and a policy in place about relationships and sex education which follows the government's guidance. The scheme of work covers important themes, including consent and healthy relationships.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have suitable and up-to-date policies to guide the safeguarding procedures in the school. The proprietor body makes these policies available to parents and carers on request.

Leaders and other staff are well trained in safeguarding matters. They know the processes for reporting and recording any concerns. Leaders respond promptly to any issues. They make sure that pupils access the help that they need. Leaders know that they can call on external services, such as the local authority children's social care team, when required.

Leaders inform pupils about how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils find out about how to maintain healthy relationships and how to avoid harm when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a very few subjects, leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking to identify the knowledge that pupils need to know. This hinders some pupils in building on their prior knowledge as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that they clarify the knowledge that pupils need to know in each subject, so that pupils' learning builds securely over time.
- Some leaders and staff have not had the training that they require to identify and address gaps in some pupils' phonic knowledge. This hinders how well these pupils learn to read. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the training and support that they need in phonics and early reading.

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	145170
DfE registration number	354/6038
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10254681
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Hexagon Care Services
Chair	Caroline Ashdown
Headteacher	Stuart Thornley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,000
Telephone number	0161 823 8173
Website	None
Email address	elizabeth.headteacher@hexagoncare.com
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 October 2018

Information about this school

- The school's current headteacher was appointed in September 2020.
- The school's previous standard inspection was on 9 and 10 October 2018.
- The school operates from premises at Wentworth Close, Middleton, Manchester M24 4BD.
- The school caters for up to six boys who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many of these boys have been involved with the justice system. Some of the pupils also have specific learning difficulties.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- There are currently no students at the school who are over 16 years of age.

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 spoke with the chair of the proprietor body, the proprietor body's deputy head of education and the headteacher.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: English, including reading, science and history. In each subject, inspectors met with the subject leader and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading in a class reading session. He also examined the curriculum in all other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding policy, along with other policies and documentation related to pupils' welfare and their education. They talked with staff and pupils about safeguarding, pupils' personal development and pupils' behaviour and attitudes. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The lead inspector carried out a tour of the school premises to check for compliance against the relevant standards.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, as well as for Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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