

# Inspection of Overley Hall School

Wellington, Telford, Shropshire TF6 5HE

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Inspection dates: 28 February to 2 March 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

For many pupils attending Overley Hall School, it is a life-changing experience. Staff give pupils another chance to succeed in education after previous negative experiences. Leaders ensure that thorough initial assessments identify pupils' needs. Staff also ensure they find out what interests and motivates each pupil. Leaders and staff use this information to develop a tailored curriculum. The aim of the curriculum is for all pupils to achieve their potential. However, for a small group of pupils, the academic curriculum is not always as challenging as it could be.

Pupils' personal development is the driving force of the curriculum offer. Staff build up pupils' ability to regulate their emotions. Pupils appreciate therapies such as 'Brad time'. This, in turn, enables pupils to access learning. Pupils receive high-quality input to develop their communication skills. This ensures that their voice is heard throughout the learning process.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to these expectations. When some pupils find situations challenging, staff are skilful in supporting pupils to manage their emotions and anxieties. This helps pupils to feel safe. They say that bullying does not happen. When leaders perceive that it might be happening, they respond quickly.

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

There is an ambitious vision for pupils at this school. Leaders, including the proprietor, aim to ensure that pupils have the best opportunities to develop personally and academically. This happens for the majority of pupils, who develop knowledge and skills to prepare them well for a suitable next step in life.

Leaders have developed a curriculum which builds pupils' knowledge and skills. A range of subjects are taught through a chosen theme. Staff use clear targets for pupils to achieve in subjects such as English and mathematics. This helps staff to plan for pupils' progress from the outset and to have a clear vision of what success should look like. Staff regularly assess pupils. They focus on pupils' levels of engagement, need for prompts and their ability to generalise knowledge. This information is then used to decide if pupils need any additional support or a change of approach. In many areas of the curriculum, particularly in independent life and living skills in the sixth form, students and pupils know and remember more of the curriculum and achieve the targets set. In some other areas of the curriculum, such as geography, the skills are clearly mapped and there are agreed themes to follow. However, the most important knowledge for each theme is for teachers to decide. They base this on their knowledge of the individual pupils and what they have studied in other areas.

Developing pupils' communication skills is a high priority throughout the school. Leaders provide pupils with a range of communication aids to support their learning in all lessons. This helps pupils to develop their ability to communicate. For some

pupils, this includes learning to read. Staff have had training to deliver a new phonics programme. They introduce phonics into a range of lessons throughout the day. This helps pupils to know and remember the letter sounds.

In some subjects, such as mathematics, the curriculum maps identify the knowledge and skills pupils will learn. Pupils work towards targets which they revisit over time. This is to enable pupils to secure their knowledge and to generalise it. However, sometimes the work pupils complete is not the most appropriate next step. For a small number of pupils, on occasion, the work does not build on what they already know and can do. This work gives opportunities to consolidate learning, but it does not help pupils to progress through the curriculum as well as they could.

Leaders' work to support pupils' behaviour establishes long-lasting changes. Staff analyse all incidents. This helps to identify where a pupil needs a change of approach or further support to self-regulate. In lessons, pupils engage well in their learning. This is because skilled staff modify and adjust their teaching to keep pupils engaged. Over time, many pupils' behaviour is transformed.

There is a carefully planned programme for careers which includes opportunities for work experience for those students in the sixth form. Leaders ensure they consider pupils' and students' interests as well as introduce them to a wider range of possibilities. Pupils and students benefit greatly from the programme which has even led to offers of paid employment for some students.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of all work in the school. All students in the sixth form work towards a qualification in independent life and living skills. An independent living suite has been created to enable students to learn to cook and clean. Opportunities to grow their own food and work in the farm shop also develop these skills. Regular trips within the local community ensure that students can manage a shopping trip. For some students, there is also a focus on managing money which contributes to developing their independence.

Leaders aim to give pupils every possible opportunity to explore their interests and talents. Opportunities to go horse-riding or study film animation are features on some pupils' timetables. Theme days and visits are also a planned part of the curriculum. These support pupils' understanding of both fundamental British values and the protected characteristics. Trips to places of worship from different faiths also enhance this aspect of the curriculum.

Leaders work closely with staff. Most staff feel well supported by leaders. Most staff say that their workload and well-being are considered.

The proprietor, in collaboration with the scrutiny board, is well informed about leaders' work to keep pupils safe. Together, they have a good understanding of the progress pupils make. They ensure they make spending decisions in pupils' best interests. There are high-quality resources and facilities throughout the school. Investment in staff development is a priority. Leaders, including the proprietor, have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority at this school. Leaders ensure all staff have a wide range of safeguarding training. Staff are knowledgeable about the signs a pupil might be at risk of harm. There are several strategies used to communicate regularly with pupils. Staff know how to report a concern, and leaders act swiftly when they do. Staff provide effective support to pupils and their families to ensure that pupils are both safe and happy.

Through the curriculum offer, pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe both online and when out in the community.

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

- In some subjects, learning for a small number of pupils does not always build on what they already know. This means that these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff's subject knowledge of the sequence of progression in these subjects is secure so that all pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.
- In some subjects, the specific knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn is not explicit. Leaders rely to some extent on staff identifying what is relevant and is most appropriate for the pupils individually. This risks pupils not learning what is most important in that subject area. Leaders should ensure there is a clear agreement on the knowledge pupils should learn for each subject.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123621
<b>DfE registration number</b>	894/6003
<b>Local authority</b>	Telford & Wrekin
<b>Inspection number</b>	10260392
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	21
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	11
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Anita Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Beverley Doran
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£86,232 to £104,266.14
<b>Telephone number</b>	01952740262
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.overleyhall.com">www.overleyhall.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:bevdoran@overleyhall.com">bevdoran@overleyhall.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	9 to 11 July 2019

## Information about this school

- Overley Hall School is an independent special school for pupils aged from 8 to 19 years. The school offers places for up to 24 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder and complex needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities, including Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.
- Leaders use one registered 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.

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 senior leaders, including the headteacher and assistant headteachers. They also met the proprietor and the chair of the scrutiny board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography and personal, social, health and economic education. In these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to staff and pupils.
- Inspectors also visited lessons for physical education and careers.
- The lead inspector toured the premises with the leaders to ensure that the school provides an appropriate environment for pupils. The lead inspector examined health and safety documentation.
- Inspectors examined several policies, schemes of work and plans, as well as documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during the inspection and considered the responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and considered the responses to the staff survey.
- The lead inspector spoke to some parents and carers and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

## **Inspection team**

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

Sarah Ashley

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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