

Inspection of Penarth Group School

128 Reddish Road, South Reddish, Stockport, Cheshire SK5 7JG

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 April 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

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 are happy at Penarth Group School, and they enjoy spending time with the friends that they make there. When pupils join the school, staff help them to settle in quickly. Adults take care to get to know each pupil individually. Leaders help pupils to feel safe and comfortable in the school environment.

Pupils feel that there is an adult in school that they can speak with if they have any concerns. For example, when incidents of bullying are reported, leaders deal with these concerns swiftly and effectively.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They encourage and support pupils to achieve and behave well. Pupils are also encouraged to attend school regularly and to concentrate in their lessons. Typically, pupils learn well across the curriculum.

Pupils engage well with the extensive range of clubs on offer. Pupils benefit from the extremely well-designed opportunities that leaders provide to enhance their wider personal development. For example, pupils thrive in after-school activities, such as the hairdressing club, the book club and the wellness club.

Pupils appreciate the many leadership opportunities on offer. For example, they were keen to explain how the school council plays an important role in deciding on future enrichment opportunities and trips. Pupils were excited to find out who has been elected as head boy and head girl. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Overall, it is well thought out to meet the additional learning needs of the school's pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy learning the curriculum, which is presented to them in a logical order.

In most subjects, leaders have ensured that the essential building blocks of knowledge that pupils must learn are clearly identified. However, in a few subjects, leaders are still refining their curriculum thinking to ensure that pupils build up a secure body of subject knowledge over time. Nevertheless, leaders and staff ensure that pupils achieve well. For example, many pupils gain nationally recognised qualifications, including GCSEs and functional skills.

Teachers take care to revisit prior learning to help pupils to embed key topics and concepts. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Teachers are also skilful at using a variety of resources to help pupils to learn. They design activities that enable pupils to remember new information. Teachers keep a constant check on pupils in lessons to make sure that they understand what they are learning.

Leaders have put into place effective systems and processes to assess the additional needs of the school's pupils. Staff receive regular training. This helps them to identify and address the additional learning needs of the school's pupils in a timely manner. Staff are adept at adapting the delivery of the curriculum to help pupils to engage well in learning.

Reading is a high priority. Leaders make sure that those pupils who struggle to read are quickly identified. Staff provide those pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read with extra support and guidance. This helps these pupils to catch up.

When pupils first arrive at the school, their behaviour can be influenced by their previous experiences. Therefore, some pupils require additional adjustments to manage their behavioural needs. Leaders quickly develop supportive strategies which enable staff to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. As a result, most pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. They begin to regulate their own behaviour.

In most classes, pupils behave well and there is little low-level disruption. That said, some pupils do not find it easy to behave at times. In these instances, staff are skilled at encouraging pupils to focus on their learning again. Staff provide pupils with excellent pastoral support. Parents, carers and the pupils value this. Parents commented that the care that the pupils receive is 'phenomenal, so that pupils often leave this school with a smile on their face as they begin to experience success once again'.

Leaders place a huge amount of emphasis on pupils' wider personal development. Through the personal, social, health and economic education offer, pupils learn in depth about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about online safety and experience an extremely well-thought-out and age-appropriate programme of relationships and sex education.

Pupils also learn about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, and drug misuse. Staff carefully reinforce these messages in individual 'my time' sessions. Leaders prepare pupils exceedingly well for adulthood. From Year 7 onwards, pupils learn about opportunities for further education, training, and work. This helps pupils to understand the wide variety of options available to them when they leave school.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They told inspectors that leaders are supportive and approachable. Leaders are effective at looking after staff's well-being and helping them to manage their workload.

The proprietor body and governors have a secure knowledge of the quality of education that the school provides to pupils. They hold leaders to account for the school's performance. For example, they check information on pupils' attendance, behaviour and academic progress. Overall, the proprietor body and governors understand their roles and responsibilities and they fulfil them well.

The proprietor body and leaders have ensured that the school complies with the independent school standards ('the standards'). The school also complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a detailed and up-to-date safeguarding policy in place. They publish this on the school's website. They also provide staff with effective safeguarding training. Leaders have strong systems in place for reporting and recording any concerns that they may have about a pupil's welfare.

Staff know how to recognise the potential signs of abuse or neglect. They report these concerns to leaders in a timely manner. Staff have appropriate extra training to help them manage the additional needs of the pupils at the school.

Leaders are acutely aware of the risks that pupils may face in school and in the local area. They raise concerns promptly. Leaders involve outside agencies, such as social care, when required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a very small number of subjects, leaders are still refining their curriculum thinking. Occasionally, this hinders how well some pupils learn and achieve. Leaders should ensure that these remaining curriculums set out exactly what pupils must learn and in what order.

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	135526
DfE registration number	356/6031
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10267642
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Care Haven (UK) Ltd
Chair	Pat Swallow
Headteacher	Keri Tams
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,000 to £42,750
Telephone number	0161 483 1212
Website	www.penarthgroupschool.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@penarthgroup.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 to 14 March 2019

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection was on 12 to 14 March 2019. An emergency inspection was carried out on 1 October 2020. A material change inspection was conducted on 12 December 2022.
- The school is located at 128 Reddish Road, South Reddish, Stockport, Cheshire SK5 7JG.
- Care Haven (UK) Ltd is the proprietor body. Care Haven (UK) Ltd were appointed following the previous standard inspection.
- The school predominantly provides education for pupils with complex learning needs and communication difficulties.
- Leaders do not use any 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and a wide range of staff. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body. The chair of governors is also the proprietor.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation. This included information relating to the standards, the school's curriculum, leaders' improvement priorities, leaders' approach to safeguarding pupils and the checks that leaders carry out on newly appointed staff. Inspectors also spoke to staff to check how well they understand safeguarding procedures.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The lead inspector also spoke with some parents and carers to gather their views.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. However, inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning and experiences at school.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime, in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, art and design, and music. They met subject leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. They also considered the curriculum across some other subject areas and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents and information relating to the standards. She also had a tour of the school premises.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Phill Walmsley

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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