

Inspection of High Grange School

Hospital Lane, Mickleover, Derbyshire DE3 0DR

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have often missed large periods of education before starting here. They have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, High Grange School gives them another chance. The pupils take this chance and they flourish.

Pupils often leave with a broad suite of qualifications. These include A levels, GCSEs and functional skills awards. Pupils receive effective preparation for adulthood lessons. Consequently, they are primed and ready for their next steps.

Leaders and staff know every pupil exceptionally well. Together, they provide each pupil with a precise, bespoke package. These packages meet pupils' individual needs. The expert multi-disciplinary team underpins these packages. The team provides vital on-site support. This includes speech and language, occupational therapy and psychology support.

Pupils make the most of a wide and rich set of activities. These experiences include: themed weeks and specialist days, charity work, visits and visitors to the school, competitions and a multitude of clubs.

Leaders and staff have high expectations. Consequently, pupils listen and contribute fully in lessons. They work hard and behave very well. Pupils say that they are happy and feel safe. A pupil summed up the relationships between the pupils and adults by saying, 'The staff are devoted to us.'

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

Leaders have ensured that there is a highly ambitious and well-designed curriculum. Teachers are crystal clear about the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn and when they should learn them. In key stages 1 and 2, there is rightly some degree of flexibility with some content. This is to consider pupils' previous educational experiences and their vastly different starting points.

Subject specialists ensure that staff have very good subject knowledge. They help teachers to plan effective lessons that ensure pupils are thoroughly engaged. Staff are skilled in modifying their lessons when necessary, for example by allowing movement breaks or adding extra resources.

Leaders have introduced an effective assessment system. Teachers pinpoint exactly where pupils' gaps in knowledge are. They then use this information to plan for pupils' next steps. Consequently, pupils are progressing very well through the curriculum. This includes the students in the sixth form.

The overwhelming majority of pupils can read confidently and fluently. A small number struggle to read aloud due to their low self-esteem and confidence. However, leaders have effective strategies for these pupils and for those who may find reading more of a challenge. For example, the multi-disciplinary team provides

specific extra phonics sessions and additional specialist dyslexia and dyscalculia support. Staff provide a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to practise reading. There is a good selection of books from which the pupils can choose.

Pupils and sixth-form students show consistently high levels of respect for each other, staff and visitors. Instances of bullying or low-level disruption are not tolerated. They are, therefore, extremely rare. Pupils show resilience and commitment to their education. They work hard. Pupils show major improvements in their behaviour, attitude and attendance when compared to their previous school or setting.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is exceptional. The curriculum is carefully considered so that it meets pupils' individual needs. Leaders and staff are adept at providing specific guidance and support for pupils at exactly the right time. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of sexuality, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues and the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse. Pupils have opportunities to become sports leaders and to take part in the Prince's Trust and Duke of Edinburgh's Award programmes. Pupils receive independent and highly appropriate careers information advice and guidance. They can attend appropriate work experience placements. Staff tailor this support for each pupil, accompanying them on college visits and transition days whenever necessary.

Staff go above and beyond to provide a myriad of opportunities for pupils to channel their talents and interests. The work is anchored through the 'ACE' ethos of adaptive thinking, communication and the promotion of pupils' emotional well-being. This helps to promote pupils' independence. It is preparing pupils, and students in the sixth form, extremely well for their next steps and for life in modern Britain.

Sixth-form students achieve equally as well as the pupils in the rest of the school. Teachers ensure that the key stage 5 curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced. Teachers use innovative ways to help students with their learning, for example by joining laptops together to share screens.

Leaders are skilled, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They are determined that all pupils, and students in the sixth form, will succeed. There are no barriers or excuses here. There is a forensic level of detail in many aspects of their work. Transition work is carefully and considerably thought through. This is, again, bespoke and perfectly fits the needs of the individual pupils.

The vast majority of parents are full of praise for the school. One comment, typical of many, was, 'This school has been transformative for my child. A wonderful school with excellent staff.'

The proprietor has ensured that the independent school standards are consistently met. The buildings, classrooms, sports hall and swimming pool are maintained to a very high standard. There are showers and appropriate outdoor areas for physical education and recreation. Rigorous checks are carried out to help ensure the health and safety of staff and pupils.

The principal provides the governing body with detailed reports. The members of the governing body visit the school frequently and find out things for themselves. They hold weekly leadership team meetings to discuss the key areas of the school. This work is then fed back to the proprietor. Consequently, the proprietor has a good understanding of the school and its multitude of strengths. Leaders are aware of their statutory duties and ensure that they are being met. This includes compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The safeguarding policy is available on the school website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have received up-to-date safeguarding training. They know about the dangers of involuntary celibates and of pupils who witness domestic violence, for example. They are vigilant to the potential signs of abuse or neglect.

Leaders keep detailed safeguarding records. They are tenacious in chasing up outside agencies when a pupil or family needs extra support. Leaders and staff know what to do should they be concerned about the behaviour of an adult at the school.

Leaders have rigorous recruitment procedures in place. Adults do not start to work at the school until all the necessary employment checks have taken place.

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	136954
DfE registration number	830/6003
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10254661
Type of school	Other Independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Proprietor	Surjit Rai
Chair	Surjit Rai
Principal	Gavin Spicer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£79,512 to £104,500
Telephone number	01332 412777
Website	www.highgrangeschool.co.uk
Email address	admission@highgrangeschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27–29 November 2018

Information about this school

- The school is registered to provide education for up to 75 pupils aged five to 19. There are currently 75 pupils on roll.
- The school caters for pupils with complex SEND. Many pupils have autism spectrum disorder, pathological demand avoidance and a range of language, social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many pupils have missed large periods of their education prior to joining the school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school's previous standard inspection was from 27 to 29 November 2018. The school was judged to be good overall.
- The school underwent a successful material change inspection in September 2019 to increase the age range from 5 to 19 years. This included new key stage 1 premises and an increase of pupils on roll to 55.
- The school underwent a successful material change inspection in October 2021 to increase the number of pupils on roll to 75 and to add additional premises to the school site.
- The school uses the services of four unregistered providers.

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 held various meetings with the principal and other school leaders. A meeting was held with the governing body and the proprietor. A telephone call was held with the school improvement partner. Other meetings were held with a selection of staff and pupils from all key stages.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, geography and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documents, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Curriculum documents and examples of pupils' work were scrutinised in some other subjects.

- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector checked the single central record and scrutinised safeguarding records. Checks were made on staff training and staff's knowledge of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's staff, parent and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Lowther

Ofsted Inspector

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