

Inspection of Pollyteach Limited

First Floor Unit, Rear of 18–20 Diamond Avenue, Kirkby in Ashfield NG17 7GR

Inspection dates: 20 to 22 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Outstanding
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of every decision that is taken at this school. Leaders and staff know pupils exceedingly well. They know what motivates them and what switches them off. Leaders use this knowledge to provide a bespoke curriculum for each individual. As a result, over time, pupils do well.

All staff and pupils understand and consistently apply the school's core values. Everyone is expected to be charitable, open minded, resilient and aware of their environment. Pupils know why these values are important.

From their individual starting points, pupils learn to conduct themselves positively. Individual achievements are recognised, shared and celebrated. Pupils value the many positive messages and reward points that are shared in school and with parents and carers. When pupils need help to regulate their behaviour, staff provide well-tailored support. As one pupil told an inspector: 'If things go wrong, staff find out why. They help everyone to move on.' The use of physical intervention is exceptionally rare.

The school's 'preparing for adulthood' programme helps pupils to understand their potential and to be well prepared for their next stages. As a result, all pupils go on to destinations that are well tailored to their needs and interests.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is well planned and structured. It sets out what pupils are expected to achieve across all subjects and vocational studies, at each stage of their educational journey. The curriculum is implemented effectively. Teachers tailor lessons to pupils' individual needs. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum is not fully sequenced. In these subjects, the curriculum sets out the end points pupils should achieve. However, it does not make clear what pupils are expected to learn and master at each stage of their education.

The school has prioritised reading. Reading is taught regularly. Guided reading sessions ensure that pupils learn about a wide range of texts and genres over time. Those that need help to improve their reading skills receive extra help and support.

Leaders have ensured that the broad, long-term aims in pupils' individual education, health and care (EHC) plans are broken down into manageable, shorter-term targets. All staff know and understand these targets. They use these to help plan lessons. Leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) carry out regular checks to make sure that the support pupils receive is working effectively. Changes are made quickly when needed.

Pupils' personal development is exceptionally well catered for. Pupils join the school with significant and often complex needs. By the time they leave, they are fully

engaged in appropriate education, training or employment. Staff ensure that the curriculum takes full account of pupils' interest and talents. This leads to many pupils following their interests in school, in further education and the workplace. For example, pupils pursue their interests in music, sports, information technology and equestrianism. Leaders are relentless in ensuring that all pupils have a suitable destination when leaving the school. To this end, they provide highly effective careers information and guidance.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is meticulously planned and sequenced. It is adapted quickly to respond to emerging issues and events. 'Talking wall' lessons are both topical and engaging.

Leaders have built a culture where pupils come first. Daily, they 'roll up their sleeves and muck in'. Their vision for everyone to be able to access education is both constant and uncompromising. They have built a talented team of staff who share their drive, vision and determination. Leaders are considerate of pupils' and staff well-being. Leaders carry out a wide range of quality assurance activities. However, they do not always use information from these checks systematically to identify issues, trends or patterns over time. This means that leaders cannot use this information to hold all staff fully to account.

The proprietors know the school well. They have ensured that the school consistently meets the independent school standards. They have made sure, for example, that the premises are suited to the nature of the provision, including those areas where pupils complete vocational courses. Risk assessment procedures are appropriate and understood and acted on by all staff. The proprietors have ensured that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and that the school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website.

The proprietors have put in place effective checks and governance systems to make sure that the leaders are suitably challenged and supported. The work of those responsible for governance is systematic and well organised. They have a broad skill set. The school has good capacity for continued improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that their procedures for keeping pupils safe are implemented consistently. Regular training, reminders and prompts have resulted in a positive safeguarding culture among staff.

Staff are astutely aware of pupils' vulnerabilities. They take appropriate steps to accommodate and manage these. Safeguarding records are meticulous. Leaders act decisively on any concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders share information quickly with those that need to know it, including professionals external to the school.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They know that they can approach their key worker for help, support and guidance. They know how to access a range of services beyond the school.

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

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum is not fully sequenced. It does not make clear what pupils are expected to learn and master at each stage of their education. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is fully planned and sequenced across all subjects and key stages.
- Leaders carry out a wide range of quality assurance activities. However, they do not always use information from these checks systematically to identify issues, trends or patterns over time. This means that leaders are unable to hold all staff, including other leaders, to account. Leaders should ensure that they know how to use the information they gain from their checks on the quality of the provision, to identify issues, trends and patterns over time, and so strategically plan appropriate actions in response.

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	145546
DfE registration number	891/6038
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10267688
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Polly Teach Limited
Chair	Mark Dale and Ian Cowin
Headteacher	Catherine Brown
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,500
Telephone number	01623 401835
Website	www.pollyteach.com
Email address	office@pollyteach.com
Dates of previous inspection	4 to 6 December 2018

Information about this school

- Pollyteach is an independent special school which is registered to admit up to 75 pupils in the age range of eight to 18 years. There are currently 12 pupils on roll, none of whom are above the compulsory school age.
- All pupils who attend the school are pupils with SEND. They all have EHC plans. Many pupils have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The school aims to be a 'specialist provider for students with difficulty engaging in mainstream education'.
- The proprietor of the school is Pollyteach Ltd. Pollyteach Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Portland College.
- The school currently operates from three sites. These are: The Loft, 18–20 Diamond Avenue, Kirkby in Ashfield NG17 7GR; The Hub, Forest Street, Kirkby in Ashfield NG17 7DT; and The Elms, Portland College, Mansfield NG18 4TJ.
- The Hub and the Loft currently cater for pupils in key stage 4. The Elms caters for pupils in key stage 3.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in December 2018. The school received an additional inspection in September 2021 to consider an application to increase the number permitted on roll and the age range catered for. The school received a second additional inspection in September 2022, to consider a further application to increase the permitted number on roll.
- The proprietor also runs an unregistered alternative provision across its three sites.
- The school uses two other, unregistered alternative education 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 visited all the sites from which the school operates. They held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the school's assistant principal, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs and/disabilities coordinators and groups of staff.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: mathematics, PSHE, biology and history. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. Inspectors also spoke to leaders, looked at curriculum documentation and spoke with pupils about a range of other subjects, including reading, computing and geography.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietors and representatives of those responsible for governance, including the chair.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and staff surveys.
- Inspectors met with safeguarding leaders. They reviewed school documents, including those relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' plans for improvement and their assessment of the school's effectiveness.

Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steven Barnes

Ofsted Inspector

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