

Inspection of The Retreat

Hobart House, Oakwater Avenue, Cheadle Royal Business Park, Cheadle SK8 3SR

Inspection dates: 29 November to 1 December 2022

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	Good
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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?

This is a school that feels like a family. Pupils enjoy their learning and feel safe because staff look after them. Staff know the pupils inside and out. They understand the complexity of pupils' needs. As one pupil commented, 'They just get me.' As a result, staff get the best out of pupils.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils and want every one of them to be the best they can be. When pupils join the school, many have failed at their previous setting and have been out of education for some time. Pupils are often switched off from learning. Staff work tirelessly with pupils to re-engage them with their studies.

Staff support pupils to manage their behaviour well by tailoring their approach to the individual needs of each pupil. Pupils respond to this. They take a real pride in their work and achieve well. Pupils are pleased when their classmates succeed and are proud of each other's achievements. Staff help pupils to understand what appropriate behaviour looks like in preparation for life after school.

Everyone is confident that there is no bullying in the school. Pupils are closely supervised so any fallouts between individuals are quickly sorted.

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

Leaders organise a range of baseline checks on pupils' abilities and learning behaviours when they join the school. This helps staff to understand pupils' starting points. Staff use the outcomes of these checks to set specific learning outcomes for pupils. If required, pupils have access to a range of therapeutic services, such as counselling, to support their social, emotional and mental health needs.

In a range of subjects, including mathematics and history, there is appropriate coverage of the national curriculum and examination board syllabuses. Pupils work towards a range of qualifications, including GCSEs and functional skills. In many subjects, leaders have mapped out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils will learn within and across year groups. As a result, teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. However, in some subjects, there are parts of the curriculum where leaders have not considered the order of learning.

Staff teach pupils on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups of two or three. Staff personalise the curriculum and tailor learning activities to meet the individual needs of pupils. Staff explain new learning clearly in a logical order. They use questioning well to promote discussion and debate. Staff make regular checks on pupils' understanding and adapt the learning activity if required. Staff step in and support pupils if they require extra help. However, they recognise the importance of helping pupils to develop as independent learners and so do not over support.

As a result of a personalised approach, pupils make secure progress through the curriculum and achieve well. This is evident in the high-quality work that pupils produce. Pupils take a real pride in their work. This is reflected in the impressive level of handwriting and presentation in their workbooks.

There are no pupils currently at the early stages of reading. However, leaders have put systems in place to identify and support pupils who have gaps in their phonic knowledge.

Leaders provide all pupils with a wide range of experiences to support their personal development. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their trip to a local theme park and the recent challenge of an assault course. They also appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities. These include cheerleading and horse riding. Pupils are knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles. They know how to spot signs that a person may be experiencing difficulties with their mental health. Pupils know how to stay safe when working online and understand the associated dangers of the internet. They have a well-informed understanding of healthy relationships, including issues such as consent. They also have a secure understanding of the different types of families that exist in society. This includes single-parent families, same-sex couples and children who are in care.

Leaders prioritise careers information and guidance because they want to give pupils the best possible start to their career journey. Staff guide pupils to consider their personal interests and abilities when considering future career choices. Leaders ensure that pupils follow the relevant curriculum pathway and work towards the required qualifications. Leaders organise appropriate work experience for all Year 11 girls. In addition, they point out the range of education and training options available to pupils at the end of Year 11. Many pupils are clear about the next steps in their education and training, as well as their preferred career choices.

The proprietor body has a clear vision for pupils to achieve their full potential in their academic studies and future careers. The proprietor body has established a multi-layered leadership structure. This allows it to monitor the independent school standards and the quality of education within the school. The proprietor body is aware of the school's strengths. However, it is not complacent and identifies areas that can improve even further.

Staff have secure subject knowledge in a range of curriculum areas. However, they would appreciate subject-specific training to support them when teaching outside of their areas of specialism. Staff enjoy working at the school. They value the support they get from the headteacher and the help that they get from each other.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 as a suitable accessibility plan is in place.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff understand the increased vulnerability of pupils in the school. The proprietor body has made sure that staff are well trained, to the level of a safeguarding leader. Consequently, staff are alert to any signs of potential or actual abuse. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. Leaders organise training updates linked to government guidance as well as specific aspects, such as child sexual exploitation. Leaders check staff's suitability to work with young people before they start to work in the school.

The safeguarding policy meets current government guidance and is available on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, there are parts of the curriculum where leaders have not considered the sequence of learning. In these instances, it is unclear how pupils' knowledge, skills and vocabulary will build over time. Leaders should map out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils will learn in these areas of the curriculum.
- Staff's subject knowledge when teaching outside of their areas of specialism is not secure. In these instances, staff are not delivering the curriculum as well as they could. Leaders should support staff to improve their subject knowledge in areas of the curriculum that are not their specialist subjects.

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	144404
DfE registration number	894/6009
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10238162
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Your Chapter Ltd
Chair	Virginia Perkins
Headteacher	Sam Thomas
Annual fees (day pupils)	£31,200
Telephone number	0161 483 1505
Website	www.educ8.org.uk
Email address	Sam.Thomas@Educ8.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 to 5 July 2018

Information about this school

- The Retreat is an independent day school for up to four pupils aged 11 to 18. The school provides education for girls who have been the victims of trauma. The school is situated in a rural location.
- The school is part of the Educ8 group, which is the operational name for the education services of Your Chapter Ltd. The address on the front page of this report is the address of the Educ8 group's head office.
- Planned admissions to the school may include pupils who have an education, health and care plan. A range of local authorities place pupils in the school.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The school's last full inspection was in July 2018. The school was judged to be good.
- Since the previous inspection, the name of the proprietor body has changed. The Department for Education is aware of this change.

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 school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and the chief executive officer, who is the proprietor body's representative. He also met with the director of education and the regional headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders to discuss safeguarding, provision for pupils with SEND, pupils' behaviour and attendance, and personal development.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the curriculum leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school.

- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors were unable to consider responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, due to the small number of responses received, but they considered the free-text response received during the inspection. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a parent during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records and attendance records.
- The inspectors looked at information published on the school's website.
- As there are only four pupils in the school and none of them are of sixth-form age, no separate section for the sixth form has been included in this report.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kirsty Foulkes

His Majesty's Inspector

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