

Inspection of Horizon School

Saturn Close, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4TD

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Amnesty granted

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who come to Horizon are re-engaged in education and learn how to behave in the classroom. Most pupils successfully return to mainstream schools after their time in the school. They benefit from comprehensive liaison with their schools, supporting staff to know how to help them behave.

Pupils at the Dragonfly unit are well supported to continue with their secondary or post-16 education. Pupils feel welcomed and valued. They enjoy coming to the education unit. Pupils successfully continue learning, including sitting the GCSEs that they would have been doing in their mainstream school.

Pupils learn core content in English and mathematics to fill gaps they have in previous learning. The curriculum includes other subjects, such as science, but the way that pupils learn about different cultures or ways of life is not as well planned out. Pupils on the secondary site currently have limited access to physical education due to site limitations.

Pupils are mostly well behaved. There are a very small number of pupils who still struggle to control their behaviour. However, behaviour is much improved from in the past. The number of suspensions has dropped substantially. Pupils are in class and learning.

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

Since opening, the school has been through a period of turbulence in terms of pupil behaviour and site changes. Leaders have acted decisively and put in place appropriate long-term plans to improve the school. However, these are still a work in progress and there remains a lot to do for the school to be completely effective.

On entry to the school, staff check pupils' abilities in English and mathematics. Staff deliver lessons to address any gaps in learning in these subjects. There are curriculum plans in place for some subjects. For some, these are detailed and clear about what leaders expect pupils to learn and when. However, these are not in place for all subjects, nor do they take account of the fact that some pupils stay in the school for longer than a year. Leaders' chosen curriculum does not fully address the need to teach pupils about the wider world and different cultures, or provide experiences beyond the core subjects.

Pupils read high-quality books, with challenging themes, for example addressing mental health challenges and racism. Teachers focus well on comprehension and vocabulary in these sessions. Pupils enjoy sharing texts in these lessons. However, the provision for phonics teaching and/or catch-up reading tuition is at an earlier stage. Staff do not have the skills they need to teach phonics well.

Staff in key stages 1 and 2 do not develop pupils' independence as well as they could. They do not always encourage pupils to learn to do work for themselves. However, behaviour overall is good. Most pupils learn to identify when they need time out or access to toys and other tools that help them calm down and re-focus. The school works very closely with parents, and this has helped attendance to rapidly improve over the last few terms.

Although the way that pupils learn about different cultures is not well planned out, pupils do take part in interesting and engaging projects. The whole school has designed butterfly masks to wear as part of a local festival. Those unable to participate on the day have made butterfly origami for others to give out. Pupils enjoy visits from a therapy dog. They are keen to look after the welfare of their pet snail. These activities develop pupils' caring and nurture skills.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their individual plans are comprehensive, making it clear what their academic skills are. These detail what individual support pupils need to succeed with behaviour or their mental health. Pupils work with staff to come up with plans to understand what steps they might take to enter their chosen place of study or work later in life.

Staff feel well supported in their individual sites, although they do not yet feel like one school. Professional development opportunities for some teachers have been limited until very recently, which means that they have not had the opportunity to refresh their teaching skills.

The members of the management committee closely support the work of senior leaders. They have made sure that the right priorities are being addressed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained. They know what may indicate that a pupil is at risk. They make rapid referrals as and when needed.

Leaders work closely with children's services and youth offending services to ensure pupils get the help they need. Leaders in the Dragonfly unit have established closer working practices with health staff to make sure that the way they support pupils is more consistent between education and nursing staff.

The management committee has ensured that all appropriate checks are made on staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The planned curriculum varies in quality between subjects and sections of the school. It does not ensure that all pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum in their time at the school. It does not allow for pupils who spend a longer period at the school than the standard timeframe. This means that pupils do not all receive a good-quality education. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is complete, and that staff have the skills to deliver it.
- Staff are not trained in delivering a phonics programme. This means that pupils experience weak modelling of phonics and there is not a high-quality catch-up programme for older pupils who are at the early stages of reading. Leaders need to ensure that the new phonics programme is fully embedded, and that staff are adequately trained in its delivery.
- Some members of staff are too quick to help pupils with their work. Some pupils are not developing their ability to work independently without an adult as well as they should. Leaders need to make sure that staff teach pupils the strategies to begin to complete work with less help.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140121
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10254993
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	
Headteacher	Joanna Lawrence
Website	www.horizonschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 December 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was not present for the duration of the inspection.
- The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher, who is normally the deputy headteacher, in the absence of the headteacher.
- The school opened in September 2021. It was created as a merger of four pupil referral units: Harbour, First Base, Old Warren House and The Attic. The school has retained the registration number of The Attic.
- The school is based on three sites, the registered address, the Dragonfly site at St Peters Rd, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 8AG, and the secondary provision at Hillside Road East, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 1JS.
- The secondary provision is relocating in July 2023 to the registered address.
- The school provides up to 40 primary and 50 secondary places. These are primarily for two-term programmes, aimed at re-integrating pupils to mainstream education. The school also provides short-term placements for pupils who have been permanently excluded. The school is currently operating well under pupil capacity.

- The Dragonfly site is linked to an NHS in-patient, adolescent mental health ward. It provides up to 12 places.
- Most pupils are dual-registered with another school.
- There were fewer than five sixth-form pupils on roll, so inspectors made no judgement about the sixth-form provision.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The leadership team has been restructured for September 2023 to enable the school to operate more as one school, rather than three.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 met with the acting headteacher and other members of the leadership team. They met with members of staff. Inspectors also spoke with members of the management committee and local authority representatives.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and personal, social and health education. For each subject, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, examined pupils' work, and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors also visited a range of other subject lessons and spoke to pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding files. Inspectors spoke to leaders, including the designated safeguarding leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the one response to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They considered the 28 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- There are only pupils in key stage 5 at the Dragonfly site and this number is fewer than five, so no judgement has been made on sixth-form provision.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Hannah Stoten

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023