

Inspection of Denby Grange School

Off Stocksmoor Rd, Midgley, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 4JG

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	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 long periods of education before starting at Denby Grange School. Many have been excluded from previous schools or have persistently failed to attend school. This school gives them another chance to access education. The pupils take this excellent offer, and they thrive.

Pupils receive effective preparation to support them in taking ambitious next steps in life. They leave with a broad suite of qualifications. These include secondary school leaving qualifications such as BTEC National Diplomas, GCSEs and functional skills awards. The majority of pupils are ready for this move to exciting new destinations.

Leaders and staff know their pupils exceptionally well. Together, they provide each pupil with a well-considered, ambitious educational and pastoral journey. These are carefully designed to get the very best out of pupils. Pupils' access to an expert multi-disciplinary team is a valuable part of building each pupil's journey. This team provides high-quality, vital on-site support which includes both speech and language expertise and therapeutic support.

Pupils make the most of a wide and rich set of activities. These experiences include cultural experiences which support pupils to understand their own community as well as the experiences of others, access to local sports teams and clubs, opportunities to undertake charitable work, carefully planned visits and visitors, entry to various competitions and a wealth of pupil-initiated clubs.

Leaders have high expectations of both pupils and staff. They are committed to creating an environment of positive change. Pupils listen and contribute fully in lessons. They work hard and behave very well. Pupils are happy and feel safe. Staff build outstanding relationships with pupils. These are particularly notable during pupils' social times, where they are characterised by humorous exchanges and light banter which are a pleasure to see.

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

Leaders' expectation is that all pupils will receive a high-quality education. Leaders in school are determined to remove any barriers pupils may face to ensure that this is the case. Staff, including the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) and pastoral and therapeutic staff, precisely identify barriers to learning. They work with pupils to address these.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Pupils who find reading tricky are supported through interventions such as regular one-to-one phonics sessions. Pupils read books and other materials which match the sounds that they are learning. All pupils read regularly for pleasure. They enjoy listening to a range of stories chosen by their teachers. However, there is still some work to do to improve the teaching of reading for those at the earliest stages of their reading journey. Leaders have not sufficiently refined their assessments to inform pupils' immediate next steps in

learning to read effectively. Gaps in some pupils' knowledge are not filled as promptly as they could be.

Staff understand the needs of pupils well. Teachers adapt pupils' learning so that it is personalised. Subject leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn and consider how it needs to be sequenced. New assessment systems, while still at an early stage, identify pupils' starting points. Any gaps in knowledge are addressed well. The SENDCo and wider team of professionals meet regularly to share individual pupils' successes and areas for development. Staff value this approach, and pupils benefit from it.

Leaders' curriculum planning is innovative. Leaders have assured themselves, through carefully considered and innovative curriculum design principles, that teachers deliver well-sequenced units of work. These demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs of the school's mixed-age classes. Pupils build on prior knowledge and deepen their knowledge and skills. For instance, in history, pupils shared a depth of understanding of concepts such as revolution, through studies of 18th-century France and 20th-century Russia.

Pupils show consistently high levels of respect for each other, staff and visitors. Leaders' records show that the rare instances of bullying or low-level disruption are dealt with sensitively and effectively. Pupils show resilience. They work hard. Leaders can demonstrate highly significant improvements in pupils' behaviour, attitudes and attendance when compared to previous settings.

Leaders' work to support pupils' personal development is exceptional. This sits at the heart of the school's work. The personal, social and health education programme teaches pupils about a range of highly relevant topics, including positive relationships and personal safety. This learning is embedded effectively into the wider curriculum. Leaders organise guest speakers who talk about issues such as knife crime and gangs. Pupils learn to work together and feel part of a community, such as by supporting a nearby village's litter pick and promoting awareness of their school at local scarecrow competitions. Most pupils do not live near the school. Leaders ensure that pupils are introduced to opportunities in their individual home localities. This widens pupils' horizons. For instance, pupils are able to become familiar with sports and recreation facilities closer to home.

Staff value the excellent support they receive. They feel that the proprietor and leaders are extremely considerate of their workload. Leaders are an integral part of the strong and carefully planned routines and processes in place across all aspects of the school. Staff told inspectors, 'We are a family, and we look out for everybody and trust one another like a family.' The proprietor ensures that the school meets all the independent school standards. Together with school leaders, the proprietor ensures that regular health and safety checks are completed to maintain the premises to a good standard. School policies reflect the latest statutory guidance. The safeguarding policy and the relationships and sex education and health education policy are available on the school's website. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand up-to-date requirements for safeguarding and ensure that staff are alert to any indication that pupils might be at risk. The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and her deputies ensure that staff are well trained and understand the risks that pupils might face. The DSL actively engages with external professionals such as local authority safeguarding boards. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.

Staff know the processes to follow if they have any safeguarding concerns. They have confidence that leaders will take their concerns further. Leaders provide pupils with information and guidance on how to keep safe. This includes engaging with local and national professionals such as West Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Shortly after starting school, pupils' abilities in reading, including in phonics, are assessed. While staff carry out these assessments with accuracy, these are not sufficiently considered when devising pupils' individual phonics interventions. As such, gaps in pupils' phonological knowledge are not remedied in a systematic manner. Leaders should re-evaluate their assessment systems and the resources used to support pupils to learn to read fluently.

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	131136
DfE registration number	384/6120
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10267615
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Keys Care Limited
Chair	David Manson
Headteacher	Jennie Allport
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,505 to £85,605
Telephone number	01924 830096
Website	https://education.keyschildren.co.uk/school/denby-grange-school/
Email address	jennieallport@keys-group.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 January 2019

Information about this school

- Denby Grange is situated in a rural setting, between Wakefield and Huddersfield, and is a small day school for pupils aged from 11 to 18 years who have complex social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school opened in 2000, and its last standard inspection was in January 2019. It is registered for up to 50 pupils and there are currently 50 pupils aged 11 to 17 years on roll.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by their local authority. Most have been excluded from previous schools or have persistently failed to attend and may have had long periods without any education. The school currently works with seven local authorities.
- The school is part of Keys Care Limited.

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.

- This inspection was carried out over three days.
- The lead inspector took a tour of the centre's site to specifically check the facilities against part 5 of the independent school standards. These relate to the premises and accommodation at the school.
- The inspectors observed learning taking place in a variety of lessons. The observations were carried out jointly with leaders. Lessons observed included the teaching of reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education and physical education.
- The lead inspector held meetings with senior leaders, the designated safeguarding lead, the lead for behaviour and attendance and the centre's therapeutic lead.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing board. This included the chair of governors who acted as the proprietor's representative.
- An extensive range of documentation was scrutinised, including policies,

curriculum plans, information provided to governors, documents relating to staff training and information about pupil progress, behaviour and attendance, the quality of teaching, safeguarding and complaints against the school.

- The lead inspector looked at the school's single central record of employment checks.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at social times, in classrooms and when they moved around school.
- The inspectors took into account the views expressed using Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and those expressed by staff in Ofsted's staff survey. Inspectors took every opportunity to meet and speak with pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Marcus Newby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tricia Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

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