

Inspection of Quorn Hall School

Meynell Road, Quorn, Leicestershire LE12 8QG

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils like coming to this school. They comment positively about the trusting relationships they have with staff. They appreciate the time staff take in getting to know them. They know that staff will support them, even when they make a mistake. These positive interactions mean that many pupils improve their attendance and engage with education more often than they have done previously.

Wraparound therapy care helps pupils to understand their emotions and feelings. Some pupils use this support effectively to help them regulate. However, others struggle to behave well. These pupils do not always treat each other, the staff or the premises with respect. Bullying is not usually an issue. However, when it does happen, pupils say that it is not always resolved promptly.

Pupils appreciate studying subjects they enjoy and that prepare them for their next steps. Post-16 students value learning in the community and taking part in work placements. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not planned or implemented consistently well. Staff do not always take pupils' needs into account.

Pupils like singing, doing artwork and playing table tennis. They enjoy the company of Basil, the therapy dog, or tending to the school's pet snails. However, opportunities to learn about people with backgrounds different from their own are limited.

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

Leaders have improved the breadth and ambition of the curriculum. New subjects and courses provide pupils with more opportunities to gain qualifications and accreditation in things that interest them. An increased range of enrichment activities gives pupils the chance to learn outdoors more often. The addition of health and well-being lessons builds pupils' confidence and develops their social skills. These recent curriculum changes have enhanced pupils' learning experiences.

In some subjects, the curriculum has been thought through carefully. It is clear what pupils need to learn and when. However, the curriculum is not planned well enough in other subjects, particularly in the primary-phase provision. When this is the case, the emphasis is often on the activities that pupils will do, rather than what pupils need to learn. Too little attention has been given to ensuring that the curriculum progresses seamlessly from one key stage to the next.

Some staff use their detailed subject knowledge well to teach the curriculum. Their choice of resources and their focused questions help pupils to deepen their learning. However, other staff are not as skilled. They do not take pupils' particular needs into account carefully enough. The way in which they deliver new subject content does not always help pupils secure their knowledge. These staff sometimes lack ambition for what pupils can achieve.

Pupils in the early stages of learning to read do not always receive consistent and well-focused support. Routines for pupils to learn phonics are not well established. Some staff are not knowledgeable enough about how to teach phonics. They do not check the letters and sounds that pupils know in a timely manner. This means that what staff teach pupils and the books pupils read do not always match with what pupils need to know.

Strategies to encourage pupils to read widely and often are in the early stages of being implemented. New books in the school's library have been chosen to meet pupils' interests. However, some pupils do not take advantage of the time set aside for them to read. Support for secondary-age pupils who struggle to read has only been introduced recently.

The school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour is not consistent. Staff expectations as to how pupils should behave are not always high enough. Some staff do not feel well supported in helping pupils to regulate their own behaviour. The team of staff to help pupils with their behaviour has changed significantly. It has taken time for the new team to forge trusting relationships with the pupils. As a result, disruption and a lack of engagement from pupils are quite common. However, the number of incidents requiring restraint has reduced significantly.

There have been recent improvements to the programme to support pupils' personal development. However, there is more work for leaders to do. Support from the therapy team helps build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils benefit from visits to the local supermarket and a café to develop their social skills. Some pupils enjoyed serving tea at a nearby home for the elderly, where they also read to the residents. Pupils learn about the law. They understand different forms of discrimination. However, their knowledge of different faiths and cultures is limited. Work to support pupils' next-steps planning is effective. Most pupils move on to a suitable education or training placement when they leave the school.

Staff enjoy being at the school and working with the pupils. However, they do not always feel well supported in their roles. Issues with workload and their concerns about managing pupils' behaviour have a negative impact on the morale of some staff.

The proprietor supports leaders well and holds them to account. They share leaders' vision and ambition for the school and the pupils it serves. However, until recently, the challenge of securing a stable workforce has hindered efforts to improve the school. The proprietor has not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards (the standards) relating to the curriculum, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, and their behaviour.

Recent investment in the premises and resources has had a positive impact. The site is well maintained and provides a suitable environment for learning. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Policies are up to date and reflect the latest statutory guidance. The safeguarding policy and the

relationships and sex education and health education policies are available on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school does not have a consistent approach to teaching pupils how to read. Not all staff know how to support pupils to develop their reading skills. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read do not always get the help they need. They do not become accurate and fluent readers quickly enough. The school must ensure that there is a well-planned reading programme in place that is matched closely to pupils' needs.
- The curriculum is not well developed in some subjects, particularly in the primary-phase provision. It is not always clear what pupils need to know and when in these subjects. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum in each subject is planned and sequenced precisely, starting in the primary-phase provision, so that pupils build on their previous knowledge.
- Some staff do not have a secure knowledge of the subject they are teaching. They sometimes choose unsuitable methods to deliver new subject content. They struggle to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs, as outlined on pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. As a result, pupils cannot always remember what they have learned. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to implement the curriculum effectively.
- Expectations of how pupils should behave are not commonly understood or consistently realised by all staff. Staff do not always feel well supported when pupils dysregulate, and this lowers staff morale. As a consequence, some pupils do not learn how to manage their emotions and feelings as well as they should. The school must ensure that staff have the confidence and skills necessary to help pupils learn how to manage their own behaviour.
- Some aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are not promoted well. Pupils' knowledge of different cultures and religions is limited. The school should ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop an understanding of, and respect for, those of different faiths and cultures.
- There have been many staff changes at the school. As a result, planned strategic improvements have sometimes been delayed or have not been implemented as effectively as intended. The proprietor needs to ensure that the school has a stable body of staff who have the knowledge and resources they need in order to fulfil their roles.
- The proprietor has not ensured that all the standards are met. Some aspects of the curriculum are not of a consistently good quality or implemented effectively.

The school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour is inconsistent. The proprietor must ensure that they have a robust oversight of all the standards, so that these standards are met consistently and securely over time.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 135530 |
| DfE registration number | 855/6041 |
| Local authority | Leicestershire |
| Inspection number | 10254656 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 6 to 17 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 70 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 8 |
| Proprietor | Cavendish Education Limited |
| Chair | Aatif Hassan |
| Headteacher | Antonia Jackson |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £73,144 to £96,921 |
| Telephone number | 01509 414338 |
| Website | www.quornhallschool.com |
| Email address | info@quornhallschool.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 29 to 31 January 2019 |

Information about this school

- Quorn Hall School is registered to provide education for up to 85 pupils aged six to 17 years. There are currently 70 pupils on roll.
- The school offers specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils have a diagnosis of autism. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 29 to 31 January 2019. An emergency inspection of the school took place in March 2020.
- Cavendish Education Limited became the proprietor of the school on 31 January 2020. The school is one of four schools overseen by Newcome Education. This organisation is a sub-group of Cavendish Education Limited.
- The school changed its name from Gryphon School to Quorn Hall School in July 2020.
- The headteacher was appointed to the position in February 2021. There have been many other staff changes since the previous standard inspection.
- Pupils at the school come from several local authorities.
- The school uses the services of one unregistered alternative provision as well as two unregistered off-site provisions.
- Pupils who are above the compulsory age for education pursue a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs, including preparing them for adulthood.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the executive principal and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with two members of the proprietorial board.
- The lead inspector met with safeguarding leaders to examine safeguarding records, the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central record. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, humanities, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors visited lessons, met with teachers of the subject to discuss the curriculum, looked at evidence of pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work in other subjects, including science, food and art.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during social times and spoke with pupils about their experiences. Adults were sometimes present when inspectors spoke with pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans, a variety of policies, information about pupils' attendance and behaviour, examples of pupils' EHC plans and individual risk assessments for pupils.
- Inspectors took into account responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also noted responses to the staff and the pupil surveys.
- To check the school's compliance with the standards, inspectors considered relevant documentation and reviewed facilities at the school's site.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rakesh Patel

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress; and
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
 - 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which–

- 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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