

Inspection of Seven Hills

80b Kenn Road, Clevedon, North Somerset BS21 6EX

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Seven Hills is a haven for its pupils. Pupils have complex needs linked to their social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) needs. Many come to the school following challenging experiences of education and so can be reluctant to engage. However, staff skilfully establish positive, trusting relationships. Pupils feel safe and understood. They re-engage with and develop a love of learning.

Staff share high expectations. They prioritise helping pupils be ready for their future. Pupils benefit because they are helped to understand their own needs. Discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated. All pupils are treated as equals. As a result, pupils' behaviour improves rapidly.

The school's curriculum has removing pupils' barriers to learning as its foundation. Every subject has a carefully planned curriculum. Staff adapt these plans to allow pupils to study personalised programmes. Pupils learn increasingly well because of the tailored provision they receive.

Everyone agrees Seven Hills is harmonious and a good place to be. Pupils appreciate the voice they have and their ability to contribute to their school experiences. Parents are very positive about the difference the school makes for their children. Many say it has transformed their children's opportunities for the future.

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

The school has a compelling rationale for its curriculum. The aim is to provide pupils with the skills to manage their own challenges, as well as secure the knowledge they need to succeed. Leaders are clear that each child needs exactly the right curriculum for them. Nevertheless, they have rightly focused on developing a core planned curriculum in each subject. Subject leadership is effective. Subject planning is broad and ambitious. Each subject's planning covers the scope of the national curriculum. Staff adapt this planning effectively to allow pupils to make progress. Pupils achieve well. They go on to secure useful qualifications and follow clear pathways into future education, employment and training.

Every pupil has their own unique needs and experience of education. This means that staff need to adapt planning to meet pupils' individual needs. To manage this, the school has ensured the curriculum is underpinned by a range of robust assessments. These are skilfully undertaken by staff. Barriers to, and gaps in, learning are identified precisely. Approaches to learning are adapted so that pupils have the best chance to fill the gaps in what they know or can do. However, due to variations in pupils' knowledge, these plans can be overly ambitious. Occasionally, pupils are asked to learn too much at the same time. Planning does not make clear what the critical and most important knowledge is that pupils should learn. This means that sometimes pupils struggle to retain what they are taught because there is too much to remember.

The school rightly prioritises reading. There are a range of strategies to develop pupils' appreciation and love of books. Pupils' reading ability is carefully assessed. Appropriate programmes of study allow pupils to fill any gaps they have in their phonetic knowledge. Staff support pupils skilfully to build resilience. They use texts to help pupils explore character and understand social issues. As a result, pupils' reading and interest in books improve.

Pupils' personal development is promoted and provided for exceptionally well. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop beyond the academic. Regular trips and visits help pupils to extend their understanding of the world beyond their immediate experience. Each pupil has a clear identified pathway. This includes purposeful work experience and access to appropriate, independent careers advice.

Leaders have a deep understanding of attachment and the impact of trauma on pupils' needs. Staff help pupils understand themselves better so that they can manage their anxieties independently. Extracurricular activities enrich pupils' experiences and allow them to build on interests and talents, such as horse-riding, swimming or gymnastics. Pupils learn about fundamental British values, including the importance of tolerance, and the protected characteristics. Pupils work together and develop leadership skills as ambassadors or by contributing to national policy development. Consequently, pupils learn to be self-aware, positive contributors and how to keep themselves safe.

The school has established a clear set of aims that are underpinned by their values. These align closely with the shared values of the proprietor. Governance arrangements are effective. The proprietor knows the school exceptionally well. It provides robust support and challenge to the school. The proprietor has supported the school successfully to address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Collectively, they engage well with staff and the families the school serves. Staff say they are very well supported. Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met in full. The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some planning is overly ambitious and looks to help pupils remember too much at the same time. This can hinder pupils' learning. The school should build on and strengthen planning and the implementation of the curriculum to focus on the key knowledge it wants pupils to remember and when. This will help ensure that pupils remember key knowledge and apply what they know across subjects and have a secure foundation for lifelong learning.

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

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| Unique reference number | 148418 |
| DfE registration number | 802/6011 |
| Local authority | North Somerset |
| Inspection number | 10286479 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent special school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Girls |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 7 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Hexagon Care Services Ltd |
| Headteacher | Robert Kemp |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £47,000 to £67,000 |
| Telephone number | 0333 600 6600 |
| Website | www.hexagoncare.com |
| Email address | sevenhills.headteacher@hexagoncare.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 8 to 10 March 2022 |

Information about this school

- All pupils at Seven Hills have a special educational need and/or disability, an education, health and care plan and a primary need of SEMH.
- The last standard inspection of the school was 8 to 10 March 2022.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is registered to admit up to 12 pupils.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher. They also spoke to a range of staff.
- Inspectors met with the head of education, who is also chair of the education board, and the deputy head of education from Hexagon Care, who also provides governance to the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, personal, social and health education and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The lead inspector also heard a selection of pupils read.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and free-text responses.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations, the school improvement plan, monitoring information carried out by the company, documentation linked to the independent school standards and information about the school's curriculum.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gill Hickling

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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