

Inspection of MacIntyre School

Leighton Road, Wingrave, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 4PA

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils relish their time at MacIntyre School because it makes a positive and pivotal difference to their lives. Many have a history of negative experiences of education. However, from the moment pupils step through the school gates, they experience a nurturing and caring welcome. The supportive relationships that staff build with them means that, before they know it, they are flourishing. Pupils become confident and independent learners who feel loved and respected. They look forward to fulfilling their ambitions and aspirations with renewed hope and vigour.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievements. They spend time finding out pupils' interests and about what they do well. At times, pupils struggle to manage their behaviours, feelings and emotions. Skilled staff address pupils' anxieties and concerns with patience. Consequently, pupils learn to make the right choices, take risks safely and communicate their views confidently.

Through participation in voluntary work in places such as the village café, local garage and community garden, pupils learn to be responsible and thoughtful citizens. They take great delight in learning new hobbies, such as embroidery, gardening, rock climbing, horse riding and abseiling. Pupils develop confidence through showcasing their creative skills at the school talent show.

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

The school's motto, 'Achieve above and beyond', is an intrinsic part of everyday life. Pupils are well supported to overcome any barriers that may adversely affect their participation in education. For example, a range of bespoke interventions and therapies blends effectively into everyday routines. Specialist staff and therapists work alongside pupils in lessons and on a one-to-one basis. The curriculum planning for each pupil includes precise information on the equipment and resources that are best suited to their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils benefit wholeheartedly from all that school has to offer and they attend regularly.

Most parents and carers speak positively about the advice and resources provided by staff. These assist parents in helping their children embed the healthy habits and routines they learn at school at home. One parent said, 'This school is a lifeline for our child and the family.'

The school's curriculum is interesting and engaging. It sets out clearly the important knowledge pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. Staff carefully adapt the school's curriculum around each pupil's personal learning goals, their individual starting points and their education, health and care (EHC) plan targets. In the sixth form, students benefit from a personalised vocational curriculum that prepares them well for supported routes into employment and adulthood. They leave school with a range of suitable ASDAN awards.

Communication sits at the heart of the curriculum. Staff skilfully help pupils learn to use a range of helpful strategies and suitable devices that enable them to become effective communicators. Overall, teachers check what pupils have learned and, if necessary, they adapt resources so that pupils learn well. Staff routinely provide opportunities for pupils to recall and revisit previous learning. Sometimes, staff subject knowledge is not as strong as it needs to be. As a result, pupils do not always learn as well as they could from their individual starting points.

Pupils are polite and follow instructions without any fuss. They look forward to lessons and enjoy the different activities that adults provide. For example, they enjoy listening to the stories that staff read and share. Pupils demonstrate their love of reading through vocalisations and by clapping and smiling. Where suitable, a well-structured multi-sensory programme supports pupils who are learning to read using phonics. However, there are some inconsistencies in staff's knowledge of phonics. This means that sometimes, pupils do not embed their reading skills confidently and securely.

The school's personal development programme is first class. Staff encourage pupils to socialise and develop their confidence through activities such as visits to the local leisure centre, the swimming pool and the bowling alley. Pupils find out how to access essential service providers, such as dentists, doctors and the police, and this makes a valuable contribution to their preparation for adulthood. They learn about other religions through visiting places of worship, such as temples and mosques. Pupils show tremendous maturity when discussing topics such as disability, discrimination, gender identity and racism. They learn about healthy relationships and consent. Pupils understand the importance of mutual respect and individual liberty. One sixth-form student explained, 'We like each other for who we are, not for how we look.'

Careers education is central to the school's success. An impressive variety of well-considered work and enterprise opportunities is threaded through the curriculum at every opportunity. This includes access to independent advice and guidance. The notable careers curriculum extends to the sixth form. Students are supported to become increasingly independent as they start to prepare for adult life, for example by learning to manage money and to travel on public transport. In addition, pupils are earnestly preparing for their upcoming Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme expeditions.

Staff are proud to work at the school and enjoy being part of the team. They agree that the school is mindful of their workload. The proprietor body supports the school's work well. It makes sure that all the independent school standards are met securely. The school has a well-considered accessibility plan and meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Governors are equally skilled and knowledgeable. They have a robust oversight of key aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- There are some inconsistencies in staff subject knowledge, including in phonics. This means that the curriculum is not delivered as effectively as it could be in all subjects and phases. As a result, pupils do not always learn important knowledge and skills as securely as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff are well trained and have the depth of subject knowledge required to deliver the curriculum and the school's phonics programme effectively.

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	110564
DfE registration number	825/6011
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10299154
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	14
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	MacIntyre Charity
Chair of governors	Alan Devlin
Headteacher	Catherine Clifford (Head of Education)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£63,688 to £73,700
Telephone number	01296 681274
Website	www.macintyrecharity.org/for-children-and-young-people/macintyre-school/
Email address	wingrave@macintyrecharity.org
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 January 2020

Information about this school

- MacIntyre School is an independent school that provides on-site, all-year residential provision for pupils aged 10 to 19.
- The school caters for pupils with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties, many of whom have an autism and/or additional diagnoses. All the pupils have an EHC plan.
- Pupils are referred to the school by their local authority, which funds their place. Most pupils have missed a significant amount of time in school previously.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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.

- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, life skills, and human and social curriculum. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, and teaching and specialist therapist staff in the school. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair. She met separately with the chief executive officer and the head of operations. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone with an officer from one of the placing local authorities.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes and as pupils moved around the school.

- There were very few responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. The lead inspector spoke to some parents on the telephone. Inspectors also considered the views of staff during meetings with them.
- 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.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Gibson

Ofsted 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 2024