

Inspection of The Nook School

Knotts Lane, Colne, Lancashire BB8 8HH

Inspection dates: 30 January and 31 January 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **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 feel valued at this calm and welcoming school. They receive a high level of care from the staff. The comprehensive transition programme ensures that pupils settle in quickly and make a strong start to their time at the school. Staff know the pupils well. Pupils benefit from the positive relationships that they have with staff. Pupils are happy.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They respond positively to the high aspirations that the school has of their achievement and behaviour. They learn to take pride in doing well at school. Pupils develop positive attitudes to their learning and achieve well.

The school prioritises the development of pupils' social skills and resilience. Pupils learn to understand and manage their emotions well. The school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. This includes visits to local amenities and places of interest such as museums, leisure facilities and the library.

Pupils take an active role in shaping their own education. For example, they request books and equipment to support their learning in areas of interest like cooking and science. They become independent young people.

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

The school has established a broad and ambitious suite of subject curriculums. It has thought in detail about the key information that pupils should know. Most pupils, including those in the sixth form, are fully prepared for each stage of their education. This includes readiness for further education, apprenticeships or employment with training.

Pupils work towards and achieve a wide range of qualifications. These are matched carefully to pupils' interests and abilities. They are well prepared to tackle the demands of increasingly challenging courses. Pupils learn to succeed where they may have found learning difficult in the past.

Staff use their strong subject knowledge to make regular checks on what pupils know and remember. This helps staff to identify and address any gaps or misconceptions that pupils may have about their learning. Pupils build their knowledge securely over time.

The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils. Staff devise activities skilfully so that pupils can successfully access the curriculum that the school has designed for them.

Pupils are well supported to develop their enjoyment of reading. The books that pupils read help them to broaden their understanding of the wider world. For

example, they read books with themes such as relationships and gender, as well as some texts that are set in different cultures.

A small number of pupils do not receive the support that they need to develop their phonics knowledge. This is because the school has not set out its approach to the teaching of early reading. As a result, these pupils do not catch up quickly with the phonics knowledge that they need to become confident and fluent readers.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils learn without interruption. The school provides effective support to a small number of pupils that need help to improve their behaviour. Pupils attend school regularly.

The school's personal development programme provides pupils with an impressive range of powerful experiences. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. Pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They value the differences that exist between people. This is demonstrated in their respectful conduct towards others. The school provides a personalised programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance to all pupils. This helps them to pursue their ambitions at carefully matched destinations once they have left the school.

The proprietor has a detailed oversight of the school's work. It is committed to providing the best educational experience to pupils. The proprietor has robust systems in place to ensure that the independent school standards ('the standards') are met consistently and securely. It has also ensured that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff welcome the care and consideration that the school has for their workload. For example, a comprehensive programme of training provides the support that staff need to carry out their roles effectively. Parents have a positive view of the school. They appreciate the information that they receive which keeps them up to date about their child's achievements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school is at the early stages of developing its approach to teaching early reading. Consequently, some pupils do not receive the support that they need to securely develop their phonics knowledge. The school should embed its approach to the teaching of phonics so that these pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers.

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	146030
DfE registration number	888/6115
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10299244
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Proprietor	Hexagon Care Services
Chair	Caroline Ashdown
Headteacher	Jillian Devlin
Annual fees (day pupils)	£47,000 to £67,000
Telephone number	0333 6006600
Website	www.hexagoncare.com
Email address	headoffice@hexagoncare.com
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 May 2019

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection was 14 and 15 May 2019.
- A material change inspection took place on 2 February 2021. The Department for Education (DfE) approved the school's request to increase the age range of pupils to 11 to 18 years. In addition, the DfE approved the school's request to increase the number of pupils.
- The school is located in premises at Knotts Lane, Colne, Lancashire BB8 8HH.
- The proprietor body is Hexagon Care Services. The proprietor body runs 10 schools across the country.
- The school is registered for up to 12 pupils.
- The school does not have a website but produces a prospectus and makes this and all necessary safeguarding and policy information available on request. The school does not publish direct contact details. Any correspondence or contact with the school is directed through the company's head office.
- The school has one full-time teacher and a headteacher. All other staff, including those that provide one-to-one specialist teaching and pupil support, are also full time.
- A very small number of sixth-form students were on the school roll at the time of the inspection.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- The school provides for pupils with complex needs including social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education and health care plan. They are placed at the school by a range of local authorities.
- 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 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 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English and reading, science and PSHE. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the chair of the proprietor body.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with representatives from local authorities that have placed pupils at the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, the curriculum, assessment, pupils' behaviour and the provision for pupils' wider development.
- There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The lead inspector spoke to a small number of parents to seek their views about the school.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- 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 spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspectors reviewed documentation and other evidence to check the school's compliance with the standards and other statutory requirements. The lead inspector made a tour of the school premises.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kevin Sexton

Ofsted Inspector

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