

# APTCOO – A Place to Call Our Own

Unit 15, Botany Commercial Park, Botany Avenue, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 5NF

**Inspection date**

1 February 2024

**Overall outcome**

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2, (2)(h), 2(2)(i), 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(f) and 5(b)(vi)*

- At the previous standard inspection, leaders had not ensured that there was a structured personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum in place for all pupils. Leaders had not ensured that all pupils learned about the protected characteristics.
- The weaknesses in the curriculum meant that pupils did not have the opportunity to learn and make progress. They were not prepared well enough for their next steps.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have planned a new, more coherent PSHE and RSE curriculum. They have adopted a commercial scheme that covers all of the statutory guidance. Leaders have mapped out the PSHE and RSE coverage for each year group in long-term plans. These plans have been in implementation since September 2023.
- Leaders have planned a curriculum that enables pupils to learn about topics including diversity, relationships and friendships, being safe when online and the protected characteristics.
- Pupils recall learning about positive and negative feelings and relationships, among other aspects of their PSHE and RSE studies.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is coherently structured and has been successfully developed and embedded for all year groups.
- These requirements of the independent school standards (the standards) in these paragraphs are now met.

*Paragraphs 2(2)(e) to 2(2)(e)(iii)*

- At the previous standard inspection, leaders had not ensured that all pupils received high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance.

- Leaders have developed a structured approach to careers education. They deliver this careers provision in the PSHE curriculum. Pupils learn about employability skills and the world of work. Leaders recently arranged for pupils to visit a careers fair. Pupils met with people from a range of employment sectors and professions. Pupils now have access to individual careers advice to help them explore various options available to them when they leave school.
- Staff know each pupil extremely well and ensure that the careers guidance for each pupil is aligned with their individual interests and aspirations.
- The requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are now met.

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

*Paragraphs 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v) and 5(b)(vii)*

- At the previous standard inspection, inspectors found that leaders were not planning and delivering enough opportunities around pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This included learning about different cultures and religions, diversity and equality, fundamental British values and how the country is run.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced a new PSHE curriculum that all pupils now learn. The planned curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn and understand different aspects of fundamental British values.
- Pupils now receive regular opportunities to learn about different cultures and faiths. They do so through their subject studies, as well as through daily discussions. Pupils have learned about different faiths and festivals as part of their art curriculum: pupils were able to select a specific religious festival to research and then to create an art piece linked to that festival. Pupils recall learning about Diwali, Hanukkah and the Day of the Dead.
- Leaders have introduced daily opportunities for pupils to watch and discuss age-appropriate news broadcasts in the mornings. This enables pupils to gain more understanding of the world around them.
- The requirements of the standards in this part are now met.

## Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b), and paragraphs 32(1) and 32(1)(c) in part 6*

- The proprietor ensures that the school's safeguarding arrangements are secure. Leaders have maintained a strong culture of safeguarding.
- Safeguarding leaders make sure that staff are trained well. Staff know and understand their responsibilities.
- Leaders work closely with a range of professionals who are external to the school so that pupils receive appropriate and timely support.
- Staff know pupils well. They are alert to any changes that might indicate that pupils need help. Leaders act swiftly to ensure that the necessary support is put in place.

- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. It reflects the latest statutory guidance.
- The requirements of these standards continue to be met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- At the previous standard inspection, inspectors identified that leaders did not have a sufficiently secure understanding of the standards to ensure that the school consistently met them all. Inspectors judged that some of the requirements of the standards that relate to the quality of education and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development were unmet.
- The proprietor has ensured that leaders have acted effectively to improve the provision in relation to pupils' personal development. The previously unmet requirements are now met.
- Inspectors found qualitative weaknesses in the provision related to reading, the curriculum around project-based learning and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders had begun at the previous inspection to prioritise reading. However, this was at the early stages of being developed. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read were not well enough supported to become fluent readers. Leaders did not have high enough expectations around project-based learning opportunities. The curriculum did not identify what pupils should learn and when. The curriculum was not effectively planned to be progressive or sequenced. Inspectors identified that there was insufficient structured support and therapy to meet some pupils' needs. Leaders needed to put in place appropriate systems to identify and cater for the additional needs that pupils may have.
- Leaders now regularly assess how well pupils can read. Pupils identified as being at an early stage of reading receive support to help them become confident readers. When appropriate, suitably trained staff provide support to develop pupils' phonics knowledge. The proprietor is keen to develop this provision further, along with the reading resources available for pupils, to support the development of pupils' love of reading.
- Leaders have developed a progressive and sequenced curriculum for all project-based learning. The schemes of work identify the key knowledge and skills that learners will learn.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has appointed a deputy SEND coordinator (SENDCo) to work alongside the SENDCo.
- Leaders have engaged with the local authority and external providers and made links with another school to enable them to offer appropriate specialist support for their pupils with SEND.
- Leaders have engaged with specialist SEND training to enable specialist needs to be identified and timely support provided.
- The requirements of the standards that were checked in this part are now met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school now meets 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.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
  - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which-
    - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school's aim and ethos; and
    - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act;
  - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
    - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
    - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
    - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
  - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
  - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
  - 2A(1)(a) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with primary education at the school is provided with relationships education,
  - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2),

- 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools,
- 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).

## **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)(ii) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
    - 5(b)(iv) enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
    - 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;
    - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act; and
    - 5(b)(vii) encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

## **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;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

## School details

Unique reference number	145949
DfE registration number	891/6039
Inspection number	10320156

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	APTCOO – A Place to Call Our Own
Chair	Matthew Abdy
Headteacher	Michaela Ledsham
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,800 to £51,300
Telephone number	01623 629902
Website	<a href="http://www.aptcoo.co.uk">www.aptcoo.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@aptcoo.org">enquiries@aptcoo.org</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	4 to 6 July 2023

## Information about this school

- APTCOO provides education for pupils with SEND. These pupils' additional needs include autism, and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is currently registered to admit 20 pupils. There are 17 pupils on roll, all of whom have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has four sites. These are at: Botany Avenue, Mansfield NG18 5NF; Sandy Lane, Mansfield NG18 2LT; Chameleon Lodge, Thoresby, Newark NG22 9EW; and North Farm House, Budby, Newark NG22 9EX.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.

- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 4 to 6 July 2023.

## **Information about this inspection**

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- Following the most recent standard inspection in July 2023 at which the school was judged to not comply with the standards, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to prepare an action plan.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection. In line with the commission, the inspection took place without notice.
- The DfE required the school to submit an action plan. Ofsted evaluated this action plan on 13 November 2023.
- The DfE accepted the school's action plan on 17 November 2023.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer, the chair of the proprietor body, the headteacher and other leaders.
- Inspector spoke with groups of pupils and staff.
- The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website and a range of documents. They considered a wide range of documents related to the school's curriculum. The inspector reviewed the school's policies and related information.
- The inspection also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers.

## **Inspection team**

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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