

Inspection of Peak Education – Cannock

Longford Road, Cannock WS11 0LD

Inspection dates: 30 January to 1 February 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 do well at this school. Leaders are ambitious and strive for the best for their pupils.

The majority of the curriculum is well planned and taught. Pupils improve their basic skills and knowledge in English and mathematics. Most pupils enjoy reading and engage well. In a few areas of the curriculum that are less well planned, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils are safe. They are well looked after by staff who care about them. The vast majority of pupils attend regularly. When pupils struggle to attend, the school uses strategies to support them back into learning.

Leaders set high expectations around behaviour, and pupils respond to these. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that teachers resolve issues quickly. Pupils say that there is always someone to talk to if they are feeling unhappy.

The school's work to support pupils' personal growth is exceptional. Leaders make sure that pupils access far-reaching opportunities alongside the taught curriculum to develop social skills and resilience. These experiences have considerable impact on pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Careers education is taught well. Pupils learn about and experience employment opportunities through the school's strong vocational provision. They are well prepared for their future choices.

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

Leaders and all staff want their pupils to experience success. Positive relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to settle into the routines of school. The curriculum promotes basic skills in English and mathematics, alongside vocational learning opportunities to develop employment skills for the future and resilience. Pupils across the school, including those in the sixth form, achieve well. However, a few areas of the curriculum are less developed, and in these subjects, pupils do not study content in sufficient depth. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Teachers are knowledgeable. They carefully consider what pupils need to learn and when. The curriculum is taught in a logical order so that pupils build on their prior learning. This is particularly strong in English, where pupils learn to write for a variety of purposes, applying a range of language features. In mathematics, pupils revise key learning regularly so that they are able to solve more complex problems with confidence.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and they all have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Teachers support pupils well. They understand pupils' needs and adapt learning to make sure that it is accessible.

The vocational curriculum is a key strength of the school. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, enjoy this learning and participate well in practical opportunities in construction, hair and beauty, and cookery. They engage well in work experience. Pupils are well supported by a comprehensive careers education programme. They are prepared well for their next steps.

Reading is prioritised. Many of the pupils are reluctant to read. The school's newly developed strategy encourages pupils to access weekly reading activities and library visits. The majority of pupils are engaging well and starting to read with fluency and confidence, but a small number of pupils are reluctant to read.

The work to develop pupils' character is exemplary. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well planned. Pupils learn about appropriate relationships and how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They learn about and celebrate differences in culture.

The school's work extends beyond the curriculum to support previously disengaged pupils back into learning. This is carefully considered and well planned. Leaders take into account pupils' previous experiences, their SEND and their aspirations. They ensure that opportunities are purposeful and relevant.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences alongside the taught curriculum that develop their character and social and emotional well-being. They speak highly of opportunities to engage in outdoor education, water sports, archery and rock-climbing. These activities help them to form trusting relationships with staff and their peers, as well as building their resilience.

Pupils who arrive at the school are often disengaged, having experienced gaps in their learning. All staff work hard to support pupils' behaviour. On occasion, when pupils struggle to engage, the pastoral team helps them to settle back into learning quickly.

The proprietor and governors have sharp oversight of all aspects of the school's performance. They make sure that the school complies with the Equality Act 2010 through the implementation of a robust accessibility plan. Frequent checks on compliance ensure that the school consistently meets the requirements of the independent school standards.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A small number of pupils are reluctant to read. This means that they do not experience the enjoyment of reading. The school should continue to maintain the strong focus on reading to ensure that all pupils are engaging in activities that promote a love of reading so that pupils are able to read with confidence and fluency and access the whole curriculum.
- In a few areas of the curriculum, the plans and work given do not enable pupils to gain cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning. This means that pupils cannot readily recall what they have been taught. The school should ensure that pupils are learning key content of the curriculum in sufficient depth so that they learn and remember more.

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	146806
DfE registration number	860/6049
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10299251
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Keys Group
Chair	David Manson
Headteacher	Sharon Cliff
Annual fees (day pupils)	£78,975
Telephone number	01543 662461
Website	www.education.keyschildren.co.uk/school/cannock-school
Email address	sharon.cliff@keys-group.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 to 8 July 2021

Information about this school

- Peak Education – Cannock is an independent day school. It offers places to pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

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 judgment about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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, the deputy headteacher, the regional manager and the chief executive officer, who is also the chair of the proprietorial body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, PSHE and vocational studies. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- 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 reviewed a number of documents and policies relating to admissions, attendance, behaviour, complaints, health and safety, and first aid. The lead inspector toured the premises to check for compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Mary Maybank Ofsted Inspector

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