

# Inspection of Act Fast NL Ltd

Kieradan Park, North Moor Lane, Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire DN17 3PS

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Inspection dates: 20 to 22 February 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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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?**

Act Fast provides a calm and nurturing yet stimulating and ambitious environment for pupils to learn. Pupils feel safe and valued by staff. They enjoy the school's vast grounds and facilities, which provide them with the space and opportunity to undertake meaningful learning that results in desirable academic and vocational qualifications.

All staff want pupils to receive the best. They know their pupils and their families. They understand and accommodate their interests and needs well. Pupils quickly settle at the school and most pupils attend well; often far outstripping their previous attendance outcomes. Leaders prioritise making sure that pupils are ready to learn. Pupils then want to know more and are ready to be challenged. Once this happens, pupils make rapid progress and they are empowered to soar both personally and in their learning.

Pupils behave well. They show respect to their peers and members of staff. Bullying is not a feature in this school. However, if it should happen pupils are confident that staff will deal with any issues promptly and effectively. Leaders are focused on maintaining and extending the ambitious core academic curriculum they have established. Their recently refined vocational offer is highly valuable. It prepares pupils well for their exciting next steps.

Many of the school's pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They receive high-quality specialist support. Knowledgeable staff provide mentoring and therapy sessions which are precisely matched to pupils' needs.

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

Leaders know the school's strengths and vulnerabilities well. Pupils' feelings of safety and acceptance are rightly prioritised as they start at the school. Pupils' social, emotional and mental health remains of the highest priority as pupils continue their journey through the school. This academic year, leaders have recognised that this is the time to enhance the quality of their academic and vocational curriculum plans further. The school has established detailed action plans to support them in their work to improve the educational offer that pupils receive further.

Pupils receive an appropriately broad curriculum. This includes both academic and vocational offers. The curriculum is well sequenced, so pupils develop a range of knowledge and skills. Teachers identify any gaps that pupils have in their learning when they arrive at the school. They then work hard to address these so that pupils can make sense of new learning. However, some subject teams are earlier on in this journey. They have not had sufficient time to evaluate and refine their learning journey for all pupils precisely.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils and staff understand that reading is important. At the same time, every day, each pupil has a structured reading activity. The school

reinforces the importance of wider reading through a carefully considered reading programme. Older pupils access ambitious texts in their English programmes, for instance studying Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men'. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading enjoy regular phonics sessions. Trained staff teach phonics well and support pupils to become independent readers. Leaders are in the process of embedding the school's reading programmes across the whole staff team. Leaders know that ensuring a consistent approach for all pupils' skills in phonics and comprehension truly opens doors to learning.

The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is powerful. Pupils benefit from an innovative curriculum which develops pupils' strength of character, empathy and respect. Leaders orchestrate this learning with natural skill, using the expertise and support of pastoral and mentoring teams across the school to co-deliver these important aspects. Activity days, which are often centred around the school's welcoming studio space, promote aspects such as equality and diversity.

The relationships and sex education and health education curriculum adheres to current Department for Education guidance. It has been fully implemented. Teachers ensure that work is age appropriate. Staff teach pupils about healthy relationships, consent and different types of families. There is an impressive open culture in the school, and pupils feel highly supported. The delivery model is exemplary.

Careers guidance is expertly interwoven into the PSHE curriculum. Pupils explore future vocations and the qualifications and skills that they may need to achieve their ambitions. Staff are empowered to ensure that pupils each enjoy considerable bespoke, one-to-one careers mentoring. This develops in pupils a strong understanding of 'self' in preparation for their individual life journey. The young person's voice is central to this work. Moreover, leaders' decisions to equip pupils with industry-valued qualifications ensure that pupils start life with solid prospects.

Leaders have made sure that the school's policies are fit for purpose. The complaints policy, for example, sets out how to make a complaint and what to do at each stage of the process. The school buildings offer impressive accommodation and a wide range of facilities. These include specially designed and purpose-built construction, painting and decorating and horticulture areas. The jewel in the crown is the school's motorcycle workshops and the 1600m motor cross track where pupils gain the skills and confidence to apply their vocational learning.

The school's website includes all the information that is required. Attendance and admissions registers are kept correctly. In all cases, pupils' attendance since starting at Act Fast has increased dramatically. In those cases where leaders have concerns about pupils' attendance, they act promptly and sensitively to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs to ensure continued learning.

The proprietor's decision-making is guided by pupils' needs, while also being mindful of the welfare and workload of staff. Staff say that they feel well supported and that Act Fast is a very special family.

The proprietor has ensured the school meets the independent school standards and that it has a suitable accessibility plan. Leaders comply 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)**

- Leaders prioritise reading throughout school. They know that a small number of pupils who join the school, and who are still at the early stage of reading, are not gaining phonics knowledge consistently. Equally, some pupils who are independent readers are not developing their comprehension skills as well as they might. The school should ensure that its plan to introduce cross-school reading champions who are empowered to support their staff teams in this vital area of the school's work is implemented swiftly.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145462
<b>DfE registration number</b>	813/6006
<b>Local authority</b>	North Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10299239
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 25
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	25
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Peter Sembiante & Cheryl Sembiante
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Sembiante
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£54,320 to £78,586
<b>Telephone number</b>	01742 856868
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.actfast-nl.co.uk">www.actfast-nl.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@actfast-nl.co.uk">info@actfast-nl.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 June 2022

## Information about this school

- This school was last inspected on 15 June 2022.
- This inspection was an announced standard inspection carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- Places at this school are commissioned through three routes:
  - full-time placements commissioned by neighbouring local authorities,
  - a service level agreement as an alternative provision provider for North Lincolnshire local authority,
  - placements brokered directly with schools.
- All pupils on the school's roll have education, health and care plans (EHC plan) for a range of special educational needs.
- Pupils on the local authority's virtual school roll do not have EHC plans.
- Pupils whose places are brokered directly with schools may have EHC plans.
- Act Fast provides its pupils with an academic and specialist vocational offer. Opportunities for pupils to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme are integral to the school's offer.
- The school does not use any 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.

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 proprietor, senior staff and the school's special educational needs and disabilities coordinators. An inspector met with a member of the school's accountability and standards board.
- To evaluate safeguarding arrangements, inspectors checked the school's processes for the safe recruitment of staff; reviewed the school's systems for acting on safeguarding concerns; talked to a range of staff about safeguarding matters; met with groups of pupils; reviewed a range of health and safety-related information and reviewed safeguarding documentation.

- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PSHE and the vocational subjects of construction and motorcycle mechanics. Deep dives included meetings with subject leaders, visits to lessons, work scrutiny and discussions with pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors took into account responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaires for staff and parents, including several free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Marcus Newby, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Patricia Head

Ofsted Inspector

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