

Inspection of Marchant Holliday School

North Cheriton, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 0AH

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Marchant Holliday School. Positive relationships, built on mutual respect and trust, help staff nurture pupils' self-esteem, talents and interests. Skilled staff teach a highly personalised and ambitious curriculum to meet pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) exceptionally well. Pupils benefit from an excellent education.

The school supports pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans to realise their full potential. Pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are accurately identified and precisely understood by staff. Pupils describe the school as a happy and safe place that helps them learn. Parents and carers recognise the significant impact the school makes on their child's academic, social and emotional growth.

Daily routines such as 'elevenses' and shared lunch are well-established. Pupils learn and practise the social skills needed to interact with peers and adults successfully. Over time, pupils learn how to communicate their likes and dislikes and respond to others appropriately. Pupils leave this school, able to recognise and manage their feelings.

Pupils are eager to learn. They talk confidently about the wide range of opportunities available to them. Pupils know that the school listens and responds to their views. Pupils achieve exceptionally well. They leave this school very well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

The proprietary body, staff, parents and the school community have a shared vision of excellence. The school has consistently high aspirations for pupils. The proprietor invests much time and resource to equip pupils with the skills and attitudes necessary to learn. In doing so, it provides pupils with an exemplary education.

The school's curriculum, teaching and use of assessment information are extremely effective. A rich, varied and well sequenced curriculum makes clear the important knowledge that pupils should know and remember. The curriculum is routinely adapted to meet the precise needs of pupils. Staff present new learning clearly. Pupils successfully build their knowledge and learn exceptionally well over time.

Teachers work with in-house and external professionals to accurately identify pupils' starting points. They check pupils' understanding and tackle any misconceptions swiftly. Staff use assessment information to develop appropriate support plans for individual pupils. The school's EHC plan annual review documentation shows staff know pupils very well.

On entry to school, initial assessments frequently show that many pupils have gaps in their use and understanding of everyday language. Therefore, the school concentrates on improving pupils' listening, speaking and language skills. This provides pupils with the vocabulary to build subject knowledge and the ability to express themselves effectively.

All pupils learn phonics. Some pupils need additional help to learn to read. This highly specific support from knowledgeable staff ensures all pupils learn to read successfully. The school identifies and shares high-quality texts. Staff regularly share their passion for books and reading in class. Pupils develop their reading comprehension skills and broaden their vocabulary effectively.

The school's behaviour and personal development curriculum is exemplary. When pupils join the school, they have often missed years of education. Therefore, pupils hold negative views of school and themselves. Comprehensive staff training continually improves the learning experience for pupils. For example, the school's therapy team supports teaching staff to develop the skills and knowledge they need to meet the SEMH needs of pupils precisely. As a result, pupils reach the school's very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The number of times pupils need support to manage their emotions and behaviour decreases substantially over time.

Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They understand fundamental British values and how to be an active citizen. Pupils explore people's lives different from their own and learn to appreciate these differences. Through the school's extensive enrichment offer, pupils develop positive mental and physical health. They grow in confidence and develop firm friendships with their classmates.

The school places a high importance on pupils' regular attendance at school. The school works closely with families and external agencies to ensure that every pupil has the best opportunity to attend school frequently. This work is extremely successful.

Leaders' school improvement decisions, including those made by the governing body, are well-informed and carefully planned. Subsequent actions taken by leaders are impactful and well-embedded in school practice. The school is compliant with the independent school standards, such as the publication of its safeguarding report on the school's website and the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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| Unique reference number | 123920 |
| DfE registration number | 933/6089 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 10299171 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent residential special school |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 12 |
| Gender of pupils | Boys |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 50 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Marchant-Holliday School Ltd |
| Chair | Anthony Palmer |
| Headteacher | Sarah Sellick |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £75,000 |
| Telephone number | 01963 33234 |
| Website | www.marchant-holliday.co.uk |
| Email address | k.fbrown@marchant-holliday.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 28 to 30 January 2020 |

Information about this school

- The Marchant-Holliday School offers weekly boarding and day places to boys aged 5-12 years old. All pupils have an EHC plan for social, emotional and mental health needs and co-existing SEND.
- The school is a registered charity and has a board of governors who are the trustees. The chair of governors was appointed in April 2023.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- The school does not use 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, leaders, staff, pupils and trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, history and PSHE. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 sampled pupils' mathematics, religious education and science. This evidence contributed towards parts 1 and 2 of the independent school standards.
- The inspectors also observed pupils during social times, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development and pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for parts 3 and 7 of the independent school standards. Together, they considered policies, registers and key documents such as checks and risk assessments.
- 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. This evidence contributed towards parts 4 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- The lead inspector conducted a detailed tour of the site and premises to consider part 5 of the independent school standards.

- The lead inspector evaluated the school website, policies and specific documents to determine how well the school meets parts 6 and 7 of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ben Jordan

His Majesty's Inspector

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