

Inspection of Our Place School

The Orchard, Bransford, Worcester, Worcestershire WR6 5JE

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 March 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Good**

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?

Our Place School makes a real difference to the lives of the pupils and their families. Pupils thrive here. Many pupils join the school after significant periods of absence and with negative opinions of education. Leaders break down these barriers and quickly help pupils to feel safe and happy. As a result, pupils love attending and rarely miss a day of school.

Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. In the past, pupils have struggled to manage their behaviours, feelings and emotions. Staff build positive relationships with pupils from the moment they start. Staff ensure that they know and understand pupils' needs and put in place effective strategies to support them. Behaviour is expertly managed by all staff, which results in a calm and purposeful environment.

Most pupils arrive at school with significant gaps in their knowledge. Staff recognise this and create an ambitious curriculum that is bespoke to each of the pupils. Pupils rise to these high expectations and often achieve more than they thought they could. This is successfully re-engaging them in education.

The school helps to prepare pupils for their next stage of education well. They develop their independence through activities such as shopping for ingredients and then preparing meals.

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

The school values of 'opportunity, potential and safety' come through all aspects of school life. Pupils are well supported to overcome any barriers that may impact their engagement in education. The curriculum has undergone a period of development. It carefully balances academic ambition with support for pupils' social and emotional needs. Pupils follow one of two curriculum pathways: 'core' and 'applied'. These pathways are well organised to meet the pupils' diverse range of needs and abilities.

The school's curriculum is broad and engaging. As teachers know the pupils well, they ensure that they plan learning that piques the pupils' interests. However, staff's subject knowledge across the curriculum is variable. This means that planned learning activities do not always relate well enough to what the teachers want the pupils to learn, and therefore pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

The school prioritises communication and language. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Specialist speech and language therapists work with all pupils to ensure they are supported to communicate in the most appropriate way. Staff are skilled in communicating with pupils using a range of different strategies and devices. This supports pupils to become effective communicators.

Learning to read is a priority in the school. Staff engage pupils in reading in a variety of ways. For example, staff read to pupils at regular times throughout the day and in different locations around the school. The school has mapped out texts that they want pupils to know as they progress through school. Leaders are developing the school's approach to teaching phonics. Some staff have received training on teaching phonics, and leaders are extending this to all staff.

The management of behaviour is exceptional. Many pupils have had significant difficulties managing their behaviour in previous settings. Leaders are forensic in their approach to monitoring and understanding pupils' behaviour. All staff quickly get to know all pupils, and as a result, have a clear understanding of potential triggers and de-escalation techniques that work for each pupil. Individual pupil risk assessments are updated regularly to ensure they reflect the pupils' current behaviour and risks. Pupils are taught how to manage their own behaviour, and as a result, their behaviour improves significantly over their time in school.

Staff encourage pupils to be responsible and respectful citizens. Pupils enjoy opportunities to volunteer and engage with their local community, for example volunteering at the local food bank. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, as well as alternative views to their own. The personal, social, health and economic education is well planned and ensures pupils learn about healthy relationships, personal safety and keeping physically and mentally healthy.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many parents commented on the positive impact the school has had on their children. As one parent said, 'Since my child started Our Place our lives have changed for the best. She is happy and the staff are amazing and supportive.' Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued and appreciate the consideration and care that leaders give to their workload and well-being.

Leaders have revised systems of leadership across the school. The proprietor is continuing to further develop roles and responsibilities that support the management of subjects as the school grows.

The proprietor ensures that there are effective systems in place to ensure leaders are held to account. The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are consistently met. The school complies 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)

- Staff's subject knowledge is variable and they do not consistently match learning

to pupils' needs well enough. As a result, pupils do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders should develop staff's subject knowledge, including in phonics, so that staff have the knowledge to be able to plan learning that closely matches pupils' needs to help them to progress further.

- Leaders do not always have the capacity to monitor the impact of their work on the pupils. This means they do not know the impact the recent changes to the curriculum are having on pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that leaders at all levels have the capacity and direction to monitor and evaluate the recent changes to the curriculum.

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	136260
DfE registration number	885/6039
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10299214
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Proprietor	Sean Maguinness
Headteacher	Lauren Tallis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£88,710.01
Telephone number	01886 833378
Website	www.ourplacegroup.com
Email address	contactus@ourplaceschools.com
Date of previous inspection	29 June to 1 July 2021

Information about this school

- Our Place is an independent special school in Worcestershire, set in extensive grounds.
- The school caters for pupils between the ages of eight and 18 with a range of SEND in the areas of communication and interaction, including autism, cognition and learning, social emotional and mental health, and sensory impairment. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- 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 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 headteacher, two deputy headteachers and the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: language and communication, mathematics, personal, social and health education and physical development. They discussed the curriculum with leaders, teachers and pupils. They visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mary Maybank

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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