

Inspection of Fairfield House School

57-59 Warburton Lane, Partington, Manchester M31 4NL

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 April 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Typically, they start the school day excited and positive about the day's new learning experiences. Pupils new to the school settle in quickly and form close relationships with their peers. Pupils develop strong and trusting bonds with staff.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning. Pupils progress well in most areas of the curriculum. That said, in some subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they should as staff lack the subject-specific expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Pupils are respectful. They behave well and enjoy learning. Staff help pupils to become well-rounded, tolerant, caring and active citizens. Pupils regularly volunteer their services in a local café. They raise funds for different worthy causes, including children's charities and a community food bank.

Pupils enjoy caring for the small animals, including chickens and rabbits, on the nearby farm. They take part in a wealth of sporting activities, including cycling, swimming and trampolining. Pupils value their trips such as to museums. Pupils are encouraged to develop their hobbies and interests, for instance woodland walks, reading and baking.

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

The school has recently revised its curriculum. This is logically ordered and carefully constructed. This new curriculum is designed to meet the individual learning needs of pupils. A small number of pupils access a curriculum which matches the ambition of the national curriculum. Most pupils access a specialist curriculum which focuses on the development of these pupils' speech, language and communication skills.

The curriculum is delivered with varied success. In some subjects, pupils learn well. In these subjects, well-trained and knowledgeable staff deliver the curriculum successfully. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in other areas of the curriculum. This is because the school has not ensured that staff have the experience and expertise to deliver these subject curriculums well.

The school has developed a system for checking how well pupils are learning. However, this system has not been implemented effectively. It is not used consistently well by all staff. Moreover, it does not accurately capture the small, but significant, steps of progress that pupils make across the curriculum. This means that staff do not have the information that they need to pinpoint the next steps in learning for pupils.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils enjoy the work of popular children's authors. They have access to a wide range of reading materials. Pupils enjoy poetry and have

a strong appreciation of the different literary devices used to make poetry interesting and memorable.

The school supports those pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. For example, staff use different signs, symbols and pictures to help these pupils learn to recognise the different letters of the alphabet. The school has identified a suitable phonics programme for pupils who are ready to develop their phonics knowledge. However, it has not ensured that staff have had the training and support that they need to deliver this programme effectively. This hinders how well some pupils learn to read.

The school has a clear understanding of each pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities. It works closely with parents and carers, and a wide range of specialist external partners, to make sure that pupils receive the support that they need. Pupils benefit from a range of support such as speech and language and occupational therapies.

The school ensures that staff implement the behaviour policy consistently and fairly. Staff use effective strategies to support pupils to successfully manage their own behaviour. Disruption in lessons is rare. Typically, pupils engage well in lessons. When needed, pupils make use of the sensory room, or take a walk around the school grounds, to manage their emotions. Pupils attend school regularly.

The school's personal development programme is designed to enhance pupils' life skills. They develop their social interaction skills through welcoming visitors, talking to local residents and ordering meals in restaurants. Pupils have opportunities to develop leadership skills as senior students and pupil ambassadors. Pupils learn about safe and appropriate personal relationships. They understand fundamental British values. Pupils also learn about different world religions and celebrate many events, such as Chinese New Year and Black History Month.

Pupils benefit from independent careers advice and school-based careers support and guidance. The school provides pupils with opportunities to develop independent living skills, such as shopping, as well as to learn about the world of work.

The proprietor and governors have not ensured that the school's curriculum has been delivered consistently well. They have not made sure that staff have the knowledge and skills needed to teach the different subject curriculums effectively. This has impacted on the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff morale is high. They feel that leaders and the proprietor are mindful of their workload and well-being.

Parents are satisfied with their children's social development and engagement in learning. They appreciate the information that they receive about their child's progress.

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards (the standards) are met consistently and securely. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school's policies, including an up-to-date safeguarding policy and a relationships and sex education policy, are made available to parents on the school's website and also on request.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school has not ensured that staff deliver the phonics programme consistently well. As a result, pupils are not developing their reading accuracy and fluency as quickly as they should. The school should remedy this by making sure that staff get the training and support that they need so that pupils learn to read successfully.
- The school does not have an accurate understanding of what pupils know and can do. This hinders staff in identifying the next steps that pupils should make in their learning. The school should support staff to use assessment strategies to check on pupils' learning and inform teaching.
- In some subjects, staff do not have the knowledge that they need to implement the curriculum effectively. This hampers pupils' learning in these areas. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise that they need to deliver the curriculum well.

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	136239
DfE registration number	358/6019
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10322498
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Samual Cope
Headteacher	Neil Winrow
Annual fees (day pupils)	£63,375 to £91,455
Telephone number	0161 7762827
Website	www.fairfieldgroup.uk
Email address	education@fairfieldresidential.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 to 27 February 2020

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection was 25 to 27 February 2020.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- Fairfield House School is located at 57-59 Warburton Lane, Partington, Manchester M31 4NL.
- The headteacher has been in post for 18 months. The chair of governors is new to the school.
- This is a special school that caters for up to 12 pupils between the ages of eight and 25 years with autism, severe learning difficulties, complex health needs and challenging behaviours. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics and personal, social, health and citizenship education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector discussed reading with pupils. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector met with parents and reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's

pupil and staff surveys to consider.

- 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.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school premises with the headteacher.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tim Sherriff

Ofsted Inspector

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