

Inspection of Ashcroft School

54 Hayes Lane, Exhall, Coventry, Warwickshire CV7 9BP

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school that is ambitious and passionate about improving pupils' life chances. Their aim is for Ashcroft School to be 'every pupil's forever school'. Nearly all the pupils have social, emotional and behavioural needs and have previously faced exclusion or extended periods out of education. However, after some time in the school, the pupils re-engage in learning.

Pupils start enjoying school again and begin attending more regularly. Pupils settle well and build strong positive relationships with staff. This is because the school is a nurturing and safe place for them. As a result, pupils' behaviour improves. Staff deal swiftly and effectively with any incidents that may occur.

The school places emphasis on life skills and providing pupils with many varying opportunities to further their personal development. The many opportunities pupils have to develop their character ensure that they gain confidence and self-esteem and learn to take responsibility for their actions.

Staff quickly get to know their pupils. All staff know every pupil and their individual challenges. Relationships and interactions between staff and pupils are usually positive. Staff use the information about pupils to ensure they have experiences in a range of possible future career paths. For example, some pupils complete motor mechanics or bricklaying courses. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

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

The school places great emphasis on re-engaging all pupils in education. They know that all pupils join the school having missed large chunks of their learning. Consequently, pupils have many gaps in their knowledge. The school has effective plans in place to address the main priorities first: reading, writing and mathematical fluency. This, paired with the life skills such as cooking and the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, allows pupils to overcome many barriers. Leaders aim to meet pupils' very specific special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and behavioural needs. Generally, this is successful. The academic curriculum in other subjects is not yet as well developed. In some subjects, the precise knowledge pupils should learn is not always clear or ordered in a logical way. This means that staff do not always know what to teach or when to teach it.

Staff have good subject knowledge. Leaders choose teachers carefully to ensure they have the expertise to support pupils with SEND. However, some teachers lack specific pedagogical knowledge. This means that, at times, they do not always deliver the curriculum as well as they could. As a result, some teaching is not as effective as it should be in order to support pupils' learning.

Staff generally use assessment well. They regularly assess what pupils understand and can do. Additional adults provide extra support for every pupil to ensure they can access their learning. While this works well, it is not yet consistent. At times, staff intervene too quickly or complete the work for pupils. Consequently, pupils do not understand the content and their learning slows.

Reading is a priority. There are daily reading sessions and all pupils have access to the well-stocked library. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading are well supported. They receive targeted support with their literacy skills. As a result, many improve their reading skills and gain confidence.

Almost all pupils join the school with behavioural difficulties. Staff quickly get to know every pupil and use this information to spot if a pupil becomes distressed. They then act quickly to deescalate the situation and provide a safe and calm space for that pupil. As a result, poor behaviour incidents become less frequent and pupils' behaviour improves.

The school emphasises its provision for pupils' personal and character development. The clear focus here is on preparing pupils for adult life and independent living. Pupils have endless opportunities to learn outside of the classroom, and to go on trips and visits, for example to the theatre. PSHE lessons equip pupils with the knowledge they need to be active and healthy citizens in modern Britain.

The school's career education supports pupils well in choosing their future paths in education or employment. Where the school is not able to provide courses to meet pupils' interests, they seek external support. As a result of this work, pupils complete a range of vocational courses linked to their future career interests. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met. They have ensured that the school meets the requirements 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)

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not clearly identify the precise knowledge and skills staff should teach and in what order. This means that staff are not always clear about the precise knowledge pupils should gain. The school should ensure that all staff are clear about what to teach and when.
- Some staff lack the pedagogical knowledge to implement the curriculum. This means that they do not always deliver the curriculum as well as they could to support pupils' learning. The school should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively.

- Some staff do not consistently support pupils' learning. At times, staff intervene too quickly or complete pupils' work for them. Consequently, pupils' learning slows. The school should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and expertise to support pupils' learning effectively.

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	149577
DfE registration number	937/6044
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10322617
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Number of part-time pupils	6
Proprietor	Hexagon Care Services Ltd
Chair	Caroline Ashdown
Headteacher	John Williams
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,760 to £72,360
Telephone number	07971 367 758
Website	Does not have a website
Email address	caroline.ashdown@hexagoncare.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a small independent day school registered for up to 24 pupils between the ages of 11 to 16. It opened in September 2023. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- All pupils attending have a range of SEND, mainly social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Almost all have an education and health care plan and have been out of education for prolonged periods of time before joining this school.
- Pupils are referred to the school by local authorities and residential care homes.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other senior leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting with the proprietor. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PSHE and food technology. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes and spoke to pupils during 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and staff survey.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gail Brindley

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024