

# Inspection of Seven Hills School

Granville Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S2 2RJ

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Seven Hills School enjoy an education that prepares them well for their next steps. Pupils learn how to be independent from the start of Year 7. This learning increases in breadth and depth as they move through the school. In the sixth form, students learn about a range of careers. This helps them develop confidence and self-belief about what they can do next.

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils progress well with targeted support from expert staff. Pupils' attitudes to learning underpin this focus on academic progress. Pupils are respectful to staff and one another. Occasionally, bullying can happen, but pupils are confident that staff will resolve it. Pupils enjoy personalised interventions from a high-quality pastoral team. This includes one-to-one gym sessions that provide an opportunity to explore issues while exercising.

Pupils with the most complex needs develop positive routines and relationships. They learn to regulate their own behaviour. Staff thoughtfully create classroom environments that support and encourage good behaviour. Pupils thrive emotionally and socially in this stimulating and personalised setting.

Pupils enjoy a range of experiences designed to broaden their horizons. The school ensures these opportunities are fully inclusive. Pupils learn transferrable skills during outdoor activities, including rock climbing. They also enjoy clubs such as dance and football.

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

The school has focused on revising and improving its curriculum. Overall, it is meeting the needs of its diverse pupil population. The school builds on strong foundations for learning. This includes excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy their learning. The school brings the curriculum to life in a range of active ways. In key stage 3 English, pupils work in groups to recount and invent stories. This links to their class text of 'Iron Man'. Pupils explore their ideas in several ways. This includes writing on windows, building models and drawing. Well-trained staff ask effective questions to check pupils' understanding. This links to the personalised targets for improvement each pupil has. However, these approaches are not fully embedded across the school. The school does not have an in-depth understanding of how well the curriculum is working for its pupils.

Pupils with the most complex needs benefit from the school's new pathway of learning. Here, staff focus on intensive interaction and sensory experiences. Through non-verbal cues, pupils show high engagement in their learning about the garden. They explore a range of sensory materials and objects. Pupils distinguish between different parts of the garden. They also show which is their favourite. However, the school is yet to build on this high-quality work. Pupils do not progress as effectively in their academic learning. This is because the school has not developed a long-term

plan for learning that caters for their wide range of starting points. This includes for students in the sixth form.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Every learning pathway includes a central text, which changes each half term. These texts represent the distinct community in the school. A significant group of pupils in the school learn daily phonics. This helps them to become more confident and fluent readers. Pupils across the school also enjoy listening to staff read aloud. Pupils with profound difficulties delight in sensory stories. Skilled staff use focused touch to stimulate pupils' positive reactions. Students in the sixth form experience reading in a range of functional ways. For example, they enjoy reading recipes and shopping lists. This helps them prepare their lunch.

Pupils' understanding of risks in the wider world is well established. They recall ways to keep themselves safe online. Pupils also have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They are clear about the importance of consent. Alongside this, the school brings mental health and well-being into sharp focus. Pupils across the school enjoy 'Well-being Friday'. They appreciate being able to make choices about what they do. Pupils also enjoy mixing with peers from different classes. In the sixth form, the two separate sites come together. Students join in with activities that develop their well-being and physical health. Students suggest ideas for these activities. This leads to them running clubs for their peers.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing. They have a clear vision for the future. Governors have an in-depth understanding of the school's unique context. They use this knowledge to support the school well. Staff have experienced a period of change. Pupil numbers have grown over time, and the school is supporting a wider range of complex needs. Some staff comment on how this adds to their workload. However, staff are proud to work at the school. The majority feel supported by the school. Staff enjoy a range of professional development opportunities. These match well with priorities in the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The complex needs pathway is relatively new. The school has not developed a long-term plan for the curriculum, including for sixth-form students. This limits the progress they make academically. The school should continue its work to build a curriculum that is focused on ensuring pupils with complex needs make good progress in learning from their individual starting points.
- In some subjects and pathways, the school is not clear about which aspects of the curriculum will be assessed and when this will happen. In these areas, the

school does not understand how well the curriculum is meeting the needs of the pupils. The school should continue its work to match the curriculum to effective assessment procedures that help them monitor, evaluate and improve learning for pupils.

## **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.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135287
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10323017
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	223
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	57
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Hannah Dulieu and Rhona Dodds (co-chairs)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kerry Tute
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sevenhillslearning.co.uk">www.sevenhillslearning.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	28 and 29 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Seven Hills School is a secondary special school in Sheffield local authority.
- The school caters for pupils aged 11 to 19 with a wide range of needs, including physical disability, profound and multiple learning difficulty and autism.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- Sixth-form students are educated at two separate locations in Sheffield. One is called The Bridge. Seven Hills School shares this building with Talbot School. The other is based at Peaks College.
- The school does not use alternative providers of education for its pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships. This information is tailored to the context of the school.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the two co-chairs of the local governing body and one other governor. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from governor meetings.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following curriculum areas: English, mathematics, art and the complex needs pathway. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work where appropriate.
- The inspectors met with the leader responsible for sixth form. The inspectors also spent time in sixth-form lessons across both sixth-form sites.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for personal development.
- The lead inspector made a telephone call to the school improvement partner.
- 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 inspectors met with groups of pupils formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- A range of school documents were reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and parents and carers gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Christine Durand	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Millard	Ofsted Inspector

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