

Inspection of Chapel Bridge School

99 Craigie Drive, Stonehouse, Plymouth PL1 3JL

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 June 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils engage with learning and the wider world well at Chapel Bridge School. Prior to joining the school, many pupils have missed a lot of education. However, the school has established an effective transition process that enables pupils to adapt well. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) compounded by some behavioural difficulties. The school prioritises supporting pupils to manage their emotional responses to the world around them. Through personalised approaches, pupils are enabled to behave in socially appropriate ways. Consequently, the school is a calm, welcoming and harmonious learning environment.

Through the curriculum, pupils' social and emotional well-being is prioritised. Staff and pupils form strong, trusting relationships. Overcoming the barriers that have hindered pupils in their previous settings is addressed well. As a result, pupils' social and emotional obstacles to learning are diminished and pupils embrace learning.

Pupils have a breadth of opportunities to learn about the wider world around them. For example, pupils visit local parks to develop their social skills as well as their physical fitness. Pupils develop a sense of belonging to the area in which they live through visits to places of natural, cultural and historical importance.

Throughout the school, pupils develop their understanding of consent, free speech, democracy and inclusion. Pupils participate in decision-making processes about their learning. Pupils' voices are respected and their views are celebrated. The school council is made up of pupils who have been elected by their peers and their thoughts about the school are valued.

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

The school's vision to enable and support pupils to succeed socially, emotionally and academically is shared by all members of staff. A well-structured transition programme supports pupils to engage with school life and learning. The school uses the information in pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plan) well to inform bespoke approaches to teaching the curriculum. Leaders are very knowledgeable about the needs of pupils with SEND. They focus on ensuring that pupils' interests are hooked by the breadth of subjects provided. Consequently, many pupils are enthused by the subjects that they learn. For example, some pupils relish learning music through playing and composing in a band. However, the school has not outlined with precision the knowledge that pupils must learn before moving on to more complex concepts in some areas of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not build their knowledge well in some subjects.

Reading is a priority across the school. Pupils' reading knowledge is assessed on entry to the school and personalised support is put in place. A very small number of pupils learn phonics, and this is taught well. Pupils have planned and informal opportunities to read and listen to reading daily. They develop their oral language

well. Through strong relationships with staff, pupils learn to use language that is appropriate for different social settings. They also explore the subjects that they are learning through well-structured talk. This supports pupils in developing their writing skills as they extend their vocabulary and knowledge of how to craft language for different purposes and audiences.

Pupils have routine opportunities to apply their learning in the 'enterprise projects' which they help to devise and lead. Pupils develop pride in their work. However, the checks on what pupils know and do not know are not used well enough to ensure that pupils are secure in their understanding before moving on to new topics. The information about pupils' knowledge is not used with precision to support adaptations to the curriculum so that gaps in pupils' knowledge are addressed.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is a strength of the school. Pupils learn how to use the internet safely. They learn about the importance of forming healthy relationships and how to keep safe in the world beyond school. Pupils learn to be resilient, resourceful learners. The careers programme is well structured enabling pupils to learn about the worlds of further education, apprenticeships and work through experts in these fields. This prepares pupils well for their next steps.

The school is supported well by the proprietors and governors. They have established a robust system that enables them to check on the work of the school. The school meets all of the independent school standards. The proprietor ensures that 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 appropriate authority)

- The school has not identified and sequenced precisely the knowledge that pupils should learn and remember in some areas of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not build on their prior learning well in some subject areas. The school should ensure that pupils learn a well-sequenced curriculum that enables them to build incrementally more complex knowledge in all areas of the curriculum.
- Assessment is not used effectively to check what pupils know and do not know. This results in pupils not developing a strong understanding and recalling prior knowledge to help them learn new concepts. The school should ensure that assessment is used to identify what pupils know and gaps in their knowledge so that they can support their learning more 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	149593
DfE registration number	879/6011
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10322167
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	6 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Proprietor	Spaghetti Bridge Ltd
Chair	Stephen Bradshaw
Headteacher	Matthew Hughes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£61,155.
Telephone number	01752 746333
Website	www.chapelbridgeschool.co.uk
Email address	matthew.hughes@chapelbridgeschool.co.uk

Information about this school

- Chapel Bridge School was registered by the Department of Education on 24 May 2023. This was the school's first standard inspection.
- The proprietor, Spaghetti Bridge, runs seven other schools.
- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, predominantly autism and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. Most placements are funded by Plymouth and Devon local authorities.
- 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.

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 discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with the chief executive officer and the chair of the proprietor board of Spaghetti Bridge Ltd.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, early reading, PSHE, mathematics and art and design. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**
- The proprietor has applied for a material change to increase the maximum number of pupils from 62 to 100 on the same site. The site has been extended significantly and is appropriate for use as part of the school. It has been refurbished with clear consideration for the learning needs of pupils. Therefore, all aspects of the requirements of the independent school standards are likely to be met if the proposed changes are approved.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Gentile

His Majesty's 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 children looked after, 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