

Inspection of Somerset Progressive School

Bath House Farm, West Hatch, Taunton, Somerset TA3 5RH

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 June 2024

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
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| The quality of education | Good |
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| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
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| Personal development | Good |
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| Leadership and management | Good |
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| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |
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| Does the school meet the independent school standards? | Yes |
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Somerset Progressive School (SPS) have had negative experiences of education in the past. Many have had significant periods when they did not attend school at all. Pupils' attendance improves dramatically once they start at the school because they trust that staff will help them.

Warm relationships underpin the calm, friendly atmosphere. Pupils are polite and considerate. Pupils learn without interruption because the curriculum is appropriate, and staff know how to support them. Pupils learn to identify and manage their feelings, using strategies that are bespoke for their individual needs. Pupils are safe and happy at school.

Pupils achieve well. They gain a range of qualifications that help them secure future education and employment. All pupils move on to college places that meet their needs and future aspirations.

Opportunities for wider development are extensive. Pupils enjoy looking after the donkey, goats, chinchillas and other animals that are on site. They enjoy the sporting and adventurous activities that they take part in. An increasing number of pupils complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils are supported to develop their talents and interests. For instance, they can learn a variety of new musical instruments and try a range of different sports.

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

All pupils at SPS have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum and school environment are well designed to meet these needs. The curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils.

Teachers have the subject expertise they need to explain new knowledge clearly. Lessons include opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning so that they remember more and build on what they know. Teachers check what pupils have learned. However, they do not always know precisely what knowledge pupils need to acquire at each stage and in every subject.

The school prioritises reading, both for learning and for pleasure. Reading is part of the daily routine, so all pupils read widely or often. Staff find reading materials that spark pupils' interests. Pupils take on the role of reading buddies and share books with one another. This helps to develop a love of reading. Pupils who are at an early stage of reading get the extra help they need to catch up.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next steps in education and for adult life. For instance, all pupils learn how to stay healthy as part of the physical education curriculum. The school nurtures individual pupils' sporting interests so that they want to continue with physical activities once they leave SPS. Pupils receive helpful

information and guidance about careers and further education. This helps them to make informed choices.

Topics such as maintaining healthy relationships and understanding consent are delivered sensitively. The school's work to develop and support pupils' understanding of mental health is a particular strength. Pupils are developing their sense of citizenship through participation in the pupil council and the many opportunities they have to volunteer at local events and organisations.

Pupils show tolerance and respect in the way they treat one another. They enjoy discussing age-appropriate contemporary issues. However, they do not learn enough about the range of different faiths and cultures that they are likely to encounter in modern Britain.

The proprietor and governors have clear structures and processes that enable them to have a thorough understanding of the school. All parties involved in leading the school understand their roles and have the expertise they need to fulfil them. The school is held to account for the education that they provide. The proprietor ensures that they provide the resources needed for the school to succeed.

Leaders engage well with staff. They ensure that there is excellent communication between staff, in order to best support pupils. The training and support that staff receive means that they can fulfil their roles with confidence and sufficient expertise. Consequently, most pupils achieve well.

There is very strong communication with pupils, parents and carers. Regular phone calls between home and school help ensure that the daily transition for pupils is smooth. Families are welcomed into school to share experiences with their child.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Policies are up to date and reflect the latest statutory guidance. The safeguarding, relationships and sex education and health education policies are available on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Sometimes staff are not sufficiently aware of precisely what learning gaps pupils need to close. Consequently, these gaps persist and pupils do not learn all that they could. The school needs to ensure that all staff know what knowledge, skills and understanding pupils need in order to progress through the curriculum.
- The school's oversight of the impact of aspects of its provision is not always secure. This means there is variability in how well actions taken are implemented and the extent to which pupils benefit from them. The school must ensure it has

an accurate view of all of the school's strengths and of where improvements are needed.

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

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| Unique reference number | 133527 |
| DfE registration number | 933/6203 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 10322162 |
| Type of school | Other Independent Special School |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 62 |
| Proprietor | Keys Group Progressive Care & Education Limited |
| Headteacher | Karl Templeman |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £72,880 |
| Telephone number | 01823 481902 |
| Website | education.keyschildren.co.uk |
| Email address | admin.somersetschool@keys-group.co.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 29 June to 1 July 2021 |

Information about this school

- All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses six unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school operates at two sites. The additional site is located at The Old Vicarage, Hambridge TA10 0BG.
- Since the last standard inspection of this school, there was a material change inspection in September 2022.
- The school is registered to admit up to 65 pupils.

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.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education and physical education.
- For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- An inspector met with a governor and with the proprietor.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff in meetings and around both sites on which the school operates.
- The lead inspector contacted a sample of the alternative provisions used by the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents and contacted local authorities and virtual schools who commission places at the school.

- The executive headteacher was not present on the final day of the inspection.
- An inspector visited one of the three leisure centres that the school uses for physical education and personal development activities. Pupils from the school were at the leisure centre at the time of the inspector's visit.

Inspection team

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Lakmini Harkus His Majesty's Inspector

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