

Inspection of Light Years School

Building A, Tewkesbury Avenue, Fareham, Hampshire PO15 6LL

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

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?

Pupils flourish at this school. They are extremely well supported by the caring and skilled staff. The mantra of 'start small, grow tall' permeates through every aspect of school life and sets pupils up for personal and academic success.

There are high expectations for pupils to engage with their learning and be kind and respectful to others. Pupils concentrate in their lessons, work hard, and take pride in their achievements. Those who need additional help with their learning, behaviour and emotional regulation receive it in a highly effective, yet unobtrusive way. This means that pupils do not have their learning disrupted by others and achieve very well academically.

Every moment of every school day provides a meaningful opportunity for learning. At break and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy well designed activities which allow them to build their confidence and resilience.

Staff capture pupils' achievements and celebrate them across the school and with parents and carers. Pupils support and applaud each other because they follow this strong example set by staff. Families are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the difference it makes to their children's lives. One parent summed up the view of many when they said: 'Any child who is lucky enough to have a place here will absolutely thrive.'

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

Inclusion is at the heart of this school, where a multi-sensory teaching approach benefits all pupils. There is absolute precision in every decision made, with pupils supported in a highly personalised way.

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious and carefully shaped around pupils' needs and interests. A focus on holistic development does not detract from the broad and detailed subject curriculum that pupils experience. In every subject, there is clarity about what pupils need to learn. The school checks carefully how well pupils learn and make progress towards achieving their individual targets. As well as meeting pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs extremely well, there is a clear focus on the academic, which prepares pupils successfully for their secondary education, either in a mainstream or specialist setting.

Across the curriculum, reading is given high priority. All staff are well trained at teaching pupils to read, using a phonics-based approach. Pupils appreciate many reading opportunities to explore and share books, as well as listening to stories. This inspires pupils to read with increasing fluency and enjoyment. Engagement with literature is a deliberate theme running through the planning and teaching of other subjects. The texts that pupils experience are chosen carefully and support their wider learning very well.

The impact of the school's training and development opportunities for staff is highly evident. Teaching staff have excellent knowledge, both of subjects and of how to meet pupils' wider needs. In lessons, frequent recaps mean that pupils make strong links between current and prior learning and, as a result, apply their previously learned knowledge and skills. Pupils have access to a multitude of resources which support their learning very effectively.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary because staff know pupils extremely well and build strong relationships, firmly rooted in care and kindness. Staff use their extensive knowledge to anticipate when pupils need help and then skilfully help them to feel safe, make the right choices and return to their learning when ready. Pupils are also supported with being able to make these decisions for themselves and recognise and regulate their own emotions. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' oracy in the way staff model and promote conversation. This successfully helps pupils to develop their independence through being able to reflect on and articulate their feelings.

Parents and carers are actively involved in understanding how the school is supporting their child's emotional development and learning. They receive an abundance of information about how well their child is getting on at school. Regular invitations allow them to visit the school and witness this for themselves. This recently included an opportunity to attend the school and find out about the revamped school website. This created an opportunity for pupils to confidently share the website with their parents, show them their school environment and feel a sense of pride in their achievements. The school also skilfully used this as a way of gathering and responding to parental feedback.

Many pupils join Light Years having missed significant amounts of time in school. They are well supported to make up the learning they have lost. High expectations for school attendance are promoted successfully, while also being appropriately shaped around pupils' needs. Those new to the school benefit from a well-managed transition programme and a personalised attendance plan, which prepares them to be at school full time. Most pupils now have very high levels of attendance, despite having previously found attending school to be challenging.

Pupils benefit from an exceptional programme for their personal development. It makes the most of their interests and sparks their wider curiosity. Visitors, such as police officers and the school nursing dental team, are invited to the school to act as role models for pupils, as well as providing them with valuable information about how to look after themselves. The school is determined that pupils will have successful and meaningful experiences on school trips. The recent trip to Winchester Science Museum absolutely highlighted this, with pupils feeling such a sense of inclusion at being part of it.

The proprietor has strong knowledge of the independent school standards and ensures they are consistently met. Governance of the school is highly effective. Leaders at all levels ensure that nothing is left to chance. Consequently, in a short

space of time, the school has established high standards of education that have pupils at the heart of everything.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	149906
DfE registration number	850/6112
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10322083
Type of school	Special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Light Years Education Ltd
Chair	Dan Tresman
Headteacher	Sarah Alden
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000 to £83,000
Telephone number	01329 760 955
Website	www.lightyearseducation.co.uk
Email address	admin@lightyearseducation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first standard inspection of this school following its registration with the Department for Education in August 2023.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The current headteacher was appointed in April 2024.

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.

- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body and the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and personal, social and health 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. The inspection team also visited a range of other lessons and looked at pupils' work in other subject areas.
- 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 inspection team took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, policies and external reports on the school. They also considered evidence of how the proprietor body ensures that the independent school standards are met consistently.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Keeling

His Majesty's Inspector

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