

Inspection of Maple Hayes Hall School

Abnalls Lane, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 8BL

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 October 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Maple Hayes Hall School makes a significant difference to the lives of pupils who have previously struggled to learn in the past. The school has high expectations of all pupils. This starts with their highly successful approach to teaching literacy. Pupils who attend this school quickly grow in confidence. For the first time, many pupils quickly succeed in learning to read and write, and they begin to have ambitions for the future and determination to succeed.

Parents and carers say that this school has changed their children's lives and the lives of their families because their children want to go to school and are no longer frustrated. Pupils develop their independence and resilience through the trips that the school organises. For example, they enjoy the reward trips to a local climbing centre and the overnight stays at an activity centre.

The relationships between staff and pupils is exceptionally positive. Pupils respect each other and the staff. As a result, pupils love coming to this school. Pupils say everyone follows the school rules and this means the classes are quiet. This helps them to concentrate and learn more. Behaviour in this school is a strength.

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

The school, including the proprietor, has a clear vision that all pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and an education, health and care (EHC) plan, will learn the literacy and independence skills that they require to be able to achieve well in a range of GCSEs. This ambition is consistently achieved. Pupils leave school at 16 and enter mainstream education with the skills and qualifications they need.

The school is making some significant changes to strengthen leadership, including governance. Staff are very positive about the school. They say that leaders are very conscious of their workload. Staff feel empowered by the school to make improvements.

The school has recently identified the areas that it needs to improve and has put plans in place to achieve these improvements. The proprietor ensures that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. They check that the school meets the independent school standards, but they are not as rigorous and systematic as they could be in checking some of these standards. As a result, the school does not always have the information that it needs to prioritise its decision-making.

Pupils study a wide range of curriculum subjects. Subject leaders have the subject knowledge they need to lead their curriculum areas. They have developed well-structured curriculums for each subject. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn and when. This helps pupils to remember more. However, the school does not check each subject well enough to gain an accurate view of what is going well

and what areas need improvement. The school delivers some staff training to support staff development, but this training rarely focuses on the skills staff need to deliver specific curriculum subjects.

Reading and writing is of the utmost importance in this school. There is a well-developed and unique literacy curriculum. This literacy curriculum helps pupils to read who previously could not read. Through literacy lessons, pupils build a wide and varied vocabulary. This helps them to make sense of vocabulary in other subjects too. Teaching cursive handwriting and spelling patterns is a fundamental element of this approach. Pupils' handwriting and spelling are of a very high standard, as a result.

The school checks each pupils' reading and spelling knowledge when they start school to identify the exact support that they need. This specific support helps pupils to make rapid progress in their reading, spelling and handwriting. However, the school has not yet decided how it will use ongoing checks to understand how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum in all subjects. This means that teachers do not always have the information they need to know about what pupils remember in some subjects.

The curriculum provides pupils with the information that they need to make informed decisions in the future. For example, pupils learn about the different types of relationships. They learn about their responsibilities and rights within these relationships. Careers advice and guidance start in Year 9. Pupils learn about different types of careers and attend careers fairs. The school arranges for people from different places of work to come and talk to the pupils. Pupils gain a useful understanding of the different qualifications they may need.

Learning activities and assemblies broaden pupils' understanding of a range of cultures. This helps pupils to learn the importance of respecting each other. As a result, pupils show a deep empathy for each other in school. Staff are confident in addressing and challenging misconceptions or inappropriate use of vocabulary, for example language that is homophobic. Pupils know what bullying is and what to do if it happens to them. They value how the staff spot any signs of bullying and are quick to act to stop it from escalating any further. Pupils develop exemplary attitudes to their learning. They are attentive in lessons and keen to do well. Many pupils say that this school has changed their lives for the better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school does not rigorously check and monitor some aspects of its work, including some health and safety checks, and the implementation of some risk assessments. This means that the school does not always have the information it needs to prioritise their decisions. The school should decide how it will ensure that all checks are completed in a timely way and how it ensures that it takes swift action to resolve any actions that may arise.
- The school has not ensured that the impact of the curriculum is consistently checked. This means it is difficult to gain an accurate view of what is going well, what needs further improvement and what continued professional development the staff may need. The school should provide subject leaders with the skills and time to enable them to monitor, report and plan development opportunities for their subject areas.
- The school has not yet decided how it will assess the pupils progress against the curriculum. This means that teachers do not always have a clear picture of what pupils know and can do. The school should establish an agreed assessment process for monitoring how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum and use this to inform its decisions.

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 | 124488 |
| DfE registration number | 860/6022 |
| Local authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 10342015 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 118 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Dr EN Brown |
| Principal | Dr EN Brown and Dr Daryl Brown (Co-Principals) |
| Headteacher | David Lowe |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £16,740 for pupils aged under 13 £22,350 for pupils aged 13 and over |
| Telephone number | 01543 264387 |
| Website | www.dyslexia.school |
| Email address | office@dyslexia.school |
| Dates of previous inspection | 1 to 3 March 2022 |

Information about this school

- Maple Hayes Hall is a school for pupils who have specific difficulties with reading, writing and spelling (dyslexia). It uses a unique approach to teaching literacy skills that has been created by a proprietor. This approach focuses on helping pupils to read using the meaning of words.
- Almost all pupils have EHC plans and are funded by local authorities.
- The most recent standard inspection was in March 2022. The school met all of the independent school standards and was judged to be good.
- 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.

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 any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the proprietors, the co-principal, the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English; science; geography; and personal, social, health and economic 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. Inspectors also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, attendance information and governors' minutes.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff survey and spoke to a number of parents.

Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mary Maybank

Ofsted Inspector

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