

Inspection of The Grange School

18 - 21 Church Gate, Thatcham, Berkshire RG19 3PN

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 November 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils excel at this school. The school is determined to provide pupils with an educational experience that meets their specific needs. Highly effective support enables pupils to re-engage with education swiftly. Pupils love coming to school. They want to learn. Pupils work hard in lessons and strive to be successful.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. Strong, respectful relationships permeate the school. Pupils treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect both in lessons and at social times. Pupils feel safe. They trust adults implicitly to help them with any worries or concerns.

The school's strong therapeutic provision is hugely beneficial for pupils. This threads through all aspects of school life, providing thoughtful and highly effective support for pupils' social, emotional and mental health. High-quality therapies ensure that pupils have the tools that they need to communicate and interact well with other people. These have a highly positive impact on individuals and enable them to engage well in their learning and to be successful.

Weekly educational visits enrich and enhance pupils' learning. For example, a trip to Stonehenge supported pupils' learning about pre-history and a visit to Windsor Castle enhanced pupils' learning about many aspects of modern British society.

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

The school has designed an ambitious and well-structured curriculum. This identifies the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn at each stage of their education in all subjects. Staff use this information very well to identify pupils' precise gaps in understanding when they join the school. This ensures that pupils receive a bespoke learning package, tailored to their individual needs and linked closely to the targets in their education and health care (EHC) plans.

Making sure that pupils can read well is an absolute priority. Pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read, learn phonics using a well-structured programme. Expert staff check pupils' phonic knowledge regularly and provide swift interventions when necessary. The school also ensures that pupils build a wide vocabulary so that they can understand what they are reading. Most pupils study many of the same texts as their peers in mainstream schools. For example, pupils in Year 9 study a gothic novel and a Shakespeare play. This helps them to gain the knowledge and skills that they need to study for qualifications at key stage 4.

In all subjects, teachers present new information clearly, using highly effective strategies. This helps pupils to make exceptional progress from their starting points. Pupils are supported very well to develop and deepen their understanding over time. This approach ensures that even the smallest gap in understanding is identified and addressed swiftly. Furthermore, when needed, pupils have access to appropriate

tools and support to reduce any anxieties that they may have. This enables them to access the curriculum successfully and to learn very well.

The school promotes high attendance rigorously. Pupils are expected to attend full time as quickly as possible. Carefully structured transition work considers pupils' needs, including those identified in their EHC plans, well. The school strives to understand the pupils and their needs in depth before they start at the school. This allows pupils to receive a bespoke induction package that integrates them quickly into school life. Many pupils have had a significant period away from education prior to attending this school. However, due to the individualised and carefully targeted transition programme, the school's attendance rates are high.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is exceptional. Through weekly discussion and voting opportunities, pupils learn about the democratic process and about diversity in modern Britain. They practise considering different viewpoints, learning how to respect others' views and how to treat people well. The school meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act. In addition, pupils learn a wide range of important life skills. They learn how to keep themselves safe when out in the community. Through regular trips out of school, pupils develop a secure understanding of road safety and how to use public transport. Furthermore, pupils learn how to cook. They regularly prepare meals that introduce them to different foods, tastes and textures. Pupils also learn important knowledge about hygiene, allergies, food groups and how to budget and make wise financial decisions. This helps them to make sensible and well considered choices about how to keep themselves healthy and feed themselves well.

All pupils in key stage 3 receive appropriate careers advice and guidance. The school aims to instil a sense of aspiration through close engagement with the local jobs market, including local businesses and crafts and arts employers.

All school leaders, including the proprietor body, are determined to build a school that delivers the very best for all pupils, irrespective of their starting points or needs. The proprietor makes regular checks to ensure that the independent school standards continue to be met in full. Furthermore, thorough risk assessments ensure everyone's safety and security when carrying out the school's work. Staff benefit from carefully considered training that enables them to do their jobs well. They focus resolutely on working together to provide a high-quality education for the pupils.

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	149637
DfE registration number	869/6022
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10322076
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	7 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Phoenix Learning and Care Limited
Chair	Jonathan Pain
Headteacher	Rebecca Shaw
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,311 to £95,987
Telephone number	0330 135 8204
Website	www.phoenixschools.org.uk/grange
Email address	grange@phoenixschools.org.uk

Information about this school

- This is the first standard inspection of a newly registered school. The Grange School opened in September 2023.
- This school operates from one site at 18 - 21 Church Gate, Thatcham, Berkshire RG19 3PN.
- The school caters for pupils with a diagnosis of autism. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is part of Phoenix Learning & Care, which runs five special schools and a further education college across the south of England and Wales. Additionally, it runs a number of children's homes and adult care settings.
- The school is not currently using any 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.
- This was the first routine inspection 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.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and representatives from the proprietor body including the chair of proprietors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in: English and early reading, mathematics and humanities. For each deep dive, the 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.
- The inspectors also visited lessons and considered documentation and pupils' work from some other subjects.
- 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 views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. The views of pupils and staff were gathered through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of management meetings and behaviour incident logs. They also considered evidence of how the proprietor body ensures that the independent school standards are met consistently.

Inspection team

Sue Keeling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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