

Longdon Park School

Hilton Road, Egginton, Derbyshire DE65 6GU

Inspection dates

26–28 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is currently experiencing a period of transition. Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant rise in pupil and staff numbers.
- The senior leaders, including the acting headteacher and chair of the governing body, have all been appointed during the current academic year.
- The new leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and development areas. They are knowledgeable and effective in their respective roles.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan activities that interest and engage pupils. Pupils make good progress especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils enjoy a bespoke curriculum. There are a number of appropriate qualifications available. These include functional skills in English and mathematics, GCSE biology and vocational subjects such as horticulture, photography and hospitality.
- Staff know pupils well. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils say they are happy and feel safe.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. Instances of bullying are extremely rare.
- Pupils' attendance rates increase dramatically when compared to their previous school or setting.
- The sixth form is good. The teaching and support the students receive prepares them well for their next steps.
- The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards have been met.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with frequent enough opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that effective links have been made with other schools in order to moderate pupils' work.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders and staff receive appropriate training and support in order to undertake their areas of responsibility effectively.
- Ensure that teachers provide pupils with increased opportunities to practise and improve problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Create effective links with other schools in order to moderate pupils' work accurately and share good practice.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Despite being new to their roles, the senior leadership team have a good understanding of the school's strengths and development areas. The school improvement plan shows clearly which areas need to be improved, who is responsible for the actions and when the actions need to be completed.
- The senior leaders have set a culture of high expectations for staff and pupils alike. They are determined for pupils to succeed and ensure that pupils' behaviour, attendance and academic performance are the best they can be.
- The vast majority of staff are proud to work at the school. They are positive regarding the new school leadership team and welcome the opportunity to develop professionally. For example, feedback given to staff after a lesson observation is appropriate and relevant. There are also frequent opportunities for staff to attend training events and to cascade this new information to other staff members, therefore keeping them fully informed.
- The assessment leader has a good overview of the attainment and progress made by pupils across the school and especially in English, mathematics and science. Any pupil who is falling behind is identified quickly and supported by an action plan to help them to catch up.
- Transition arrangements before pupils join the school are a strength. Leaders ensure that they gain information about each pupil from a wide range of sources, including the pupils' family, school and, where appropriate, social care. This helps to ensure that staff know pupils well before they start at the school. Pupils, therefore, settle quickly, attend well and make good progress.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a broad and balanced curriculum on offer. Pupils are often taught a bespoke curriculum suited to their individual needs. The curriculum is supplemented by enrichment activities and visits to such places as the space centre and sea life centre.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is supported well through the curriculum. Recently, for example, pupils have raised money for the British Legion, visited a local Buddhist temple, celebrated Diwali and Chinese New Year, and enjoyed a skiing trip to Italy.
- The leader responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is experienced, knowledgeable and effective. There are clear procedures in place for the transferring of targets from education, health and care plans onto pupils' individual education plans. These targets are monitored frequently and updated when they have been achieved. Pupils with SEND therefore make good progress.
- The pastoral leader is effective in monitoring pupils' attendance. Pupils' rates of attendance improve dramatically when compared to their previous school or setting and often during their time at the school. Arrangements for monitoring the attendance of pupils at any alternative provisions are robust.
- There is an effective system of rewards and sanctions in place to help promote pupils' good behaviour. The '3Rs' of right place, right time and right thing are backed up by the

'3Cs' of caring for others, caring for yourself and caring for property. Any instances of poor behaviour are analysed carefully by the pastoral leader for any possible patterns or triggers, to reduce the likelihood of them reoccurring.

- Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and have respect for others who might be different from themselves. For example, the school is working towards 'Stonewall champion status' that promotes anti-homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language and behaviour.
- The majority of parents are positive about the school. One parent commented, 'I cannot thank this school enough. We've got our son back.'
- Leaders, governors and the proprietor are aware of the need to ensure that staff continue to receive effective training and support in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that there are effective links with other schools in order to moderate pupils' work and share good practice.

Governance

- The governing body is a strength of the school's leadership. Individual governors are well trained, knowledgeable and skilled in their areas of responsibility. They hold senior leaders stringently to account for their actions by asking relevant and pertinent questions during meetings. Frequent and detailed reviews are held to ensure that key aspects of the school are scrutinised. For example, a recent check on the quality of safeguarding was carried out diligently by the safeguarding governor.
- Individual governors visit the school to check on areas such as pupils' behaviour and attendance. Reports are written, and the findings fed back to other governors during meetings. This helps to ensure that all governors are kept up to date with the school's strengths and development areas.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff have received appropriate safeguarding training including spotting the signs of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and neglect. An online system is used effectively by staff to record any welfare concerns they may have regarding a pupil or family. These concerns are passed on swiftly to outside agencies such as social care and the local child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS), should extra support for a pupil be required.
- Leaders are well aware of their duty to report any concerns regarding a member of staff to the local area designated officer for Derbyshire.
- Appropriate checks are made on adults before they are allowed to work at the school.
- The proprietor has ensured that the safeguarding policy meets requirements and is made available to parents on the school's website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils enter the school with knowledge and skills well below those normally expected for their ages. However, from these low starting points, the effective teaching they receive enables them to make good progress.
- Teachers use assessment effectively to plan activities at the correct level of challenge. For example, during a key stage 3 mathematics lesson, pupils were using calculators to calculate the mode, mean and median from a set of data. Pupils initially found this a challenge, however, by following the teachers' demonstrations and instructions they completed the task successfully.
- Teachers plan activities that enthuse and engage pupils. During a key stage 2 science lesson, pupils were intrigued to investigate the different states of water as a solid, a liquid and a gas. The teacher skilfully questioned pupils and extended their scientific vocabulary by correctly using the terms 'evaporation', 'water vapour' and 'condensation'.
- Teaching assistants are a strength of the school. They have positive relationships with pupils and are therefore able to support learning effectively. Teaching assistants understand the importance of allowing some tasks to be completed solely by the pupil, therefore promoting independence.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. During a key stage 4 GCSE biology lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to prepare slides of onion cells to be observed under a microscope. Pupils' scientific vocabulary was successfully developed by using the terms 'nucleus', 'cell wall' and 'magnification'. A pupil said, 'The iodine makes the onion cells stand out more vividly.'
- Teachers plan activities with a clear focus so that pupils know what they need to do in order to be successful. For example, in a key stage 3 descriptive writing lesson pupils had been asked to write about an animal including its appearance, behaviour and an action. One pupil had successfully written, 'The minute penguin swam quickly after a seabass.'
- Adults insist on high standards. They encourage pupils to contribute fully during lessons and to try their best. Pupils respond well to these expectations by behaving well and producing work to a good standard for their ability.
- Pupils experience therapeutic and physical development support from staff. There are opportunities for pupils to carefully use large gymnastics balls in order to develop self-confidence, coordination and core strength.
- Parents and carers receive appropriate information regarding pupils' progress in termly reports. The reports also contain comments about pupils' attendance, behaviour, effort and attainment.
- Teachers do not consistently provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to improve problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils significantly improve their attitudes, attendance and progress during their time at the school. When asked, pupils could not think of how the school could be improved.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when online. They know to keep personal information private when using social media and playing online games.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves fit and healthy by eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise at the local gym or swimming pool.
- The therapy team is effective in providing emotional support for pupils who are experiencing trauma, speech and language difficulties or mental health issues. The team ensures that pupils can talk through any issues and help to put strategies in place for pupils to cope effectively with school. This work undoubtedly impacts positively on pupils' progress.
- Pupils are reminded of the British values of, for example, tolerance, respect and the rule of law, through displays and work undertaken in the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum.
- Pupils using alternative providers behave and attend well. There is good communication between these providers and the pastoral lead to ensure that the pupils' personal development is good.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils told the inspector that incidents of poor behaviour are rare and are dealt with quickly and fairly. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare.
- Pupils behave well during lessons and during social times. The vast majority of lessons run smoothly and without interruption because pupils follow adults' instructions promptly.
- The extensive grounds allow pupils to exercise if they wish during break and lunchtimes. There are opportunities to play football or use the trim trail and climbing wall. At lunch, pupils and staff eat and chat together. This opportunity helps to strengthen the good relationships that already exist between them.
- Daily briefings at the start and end of the day are an effective opportunity for all staff to discuss individual pupils and any behaviour that may be a cause for concern. Consequently, all staff have an up-to-date picture of each pupil and can therefore alter their lesson plans accordingly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils often start at the school having missed significant portions of the curriculum. Pupils can therefore have large gaps in their knowledge and understanding of subjects and topics.

- Pupils settle quickly into the school's routines and respond positively to adults' caring and nurturing ethos. This enables pupils to make good progress towards gaining level 1 and level 2 functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are offered a bespoke curriculum. Leaders are able to provide a range of subjects with appropriate qualifications. For example, during this academic year, pupils are successfully studying GCSE science and units in horticulture, photography, swimming and hospitality.
- Inspection evidence and information provided by the school indicate that pupils in key stages 2 and 3 are making particularly strong progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Information provided by the assessment leader and work seen in pupils' books show that pupils in key stage 4 are making good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils receive good careers advice and guidance. Pupils complete online tools and have two meetings with an independent careers adviser in order to map out their next steps. There are opportunities for pupils to undertake work experience placements at local stables, garages, cafes and restaurants. This careers advice and guidance ensure that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

Sixth form provision

Good

- The leadership of the sixth form is good. There are equally high expectations of conduct and attitudes to learning in the sixth form as there are in the rest of the school. Students are supported well and make good progress in their chosen subjects.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers use assessment information appropriately to plan lessons that engage students in learning. For example, when developing students' comprehension skills, the teacher challenged students' thinking by asking them to describe the difference between using quotes and plagiarism when writing their answers.
- The school has not yet been open long enough for students to have left the sixth form. However, inspection evidence suggests that current students are making good progress towards completing functional skills level 1 and 2 in English and mathematics. Other students are currently making good progress towards A-level English literature and a BTEC National Diploma in music.
- Students who attend local colleges as part of their weekly timetable are making good progress in a variety of vocational subjects including animal care and construction.
- The PSHE curriculum provides students with the opportunity to deepen knowledge and skills in a wide variety of topics. For example, there have been recent discussions regarding the implications of 'Brexit', a talk from a practising Muslim and appropriate information regarding sex and relationships education.
- Students can enrich their curriculum through activities such as cooking, boxing and music. Several students also volunteer at the local charity shop and animal rescue centre.
- Students told the inspector they enjoy attending the sixth form and that behaviour is consistently good. Students enjoy the extra responsibility of meeting and greeting guests

during school events as well as helping the facilities manager with odd jobs around the school site.

- Students receive good, independent careers advice and guidance. They have access to the same information offered to pupils in the main school as well as weekly careers sessions, a careers fair and visits to local colleges. There are appropriate work experience placements available in local businesses. Students are therefore prepared well for their next steps.
- Parents are as positive about the sixth form as they are about the rest of the school. One parent commented, 'My daughter has really turned a corner and now started to focus on the future.'

School details

Unique reference number	141994
DfE registration number	830/6043
Inspection number	10078671

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education
Chair	Lynette Edwards
Acting Headteacher	Nick Simpson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,500
Telephone number	01283 733 195
Website	www.longdonparkschool.co.uk
Email address	longdonparkschool@acorncare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–24 March 2016

Information about this school

- Longdon Park School is situated in a rural location between Derby and Burton-on-Trent. It is a day school catering for pupils with complex special educational needs, autism, communication difficulties and challenging behaviour.
- The acting headteacher was appointed in February 2019. The senior leadership team have all been appointed during this academic year.

- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 56 pupils between the ages of seven and 18 years. There are currently 41 boys and four girls on roll all of whom have an education, health and care plan.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in March 2016.
- The school uses the following alternative providers; Derby Skillbuild, Moor Lane, Derby DE24 9HY; Lichfield College, The Friary, Lichfield WS13 6QG; Engineered Racing, Mansfield Road, Derby DE21 4SX and Derby City Boxing Academy, 290 Stockbrook Street, Derby DE22 3WH.
- The school's vision is 'to deliver an educational environment that enables young people to achieve their aspirations socially, emotionally and academically'.

Information about this inspection

- Ofsted announced the inspection to the headteacher the day before the inspection began.
- The inspector observed the learning in all classes across all key stages and examined a sample of pupils' workbooks from a range of subjects. These activities were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector held a range of meetings with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, including the chair, the managing director of Acorn Care and Education Group, a group of staff and two members of the therapy team. He also spoke formally with a group of pupils from all key stages including the sixth form and two parents.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to the curriculum, assessment, pupils' progress, school improvement planning, risk assessment, behaviour and records relating to safeguarding.
- There were four responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. There were five responses to Ofsted's parent free-text service and 33 responses to Ofsted's staff survey that were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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