

Inspection of The Stables Independent School

The Old Rectory, Old Rectory Road, Brumstead, Norwich, Norfolk NR12 9EU

Inspection dates: 30 April to 2 May 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

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?

Pupils feel accepted and valued at The Stables. They learn that it is possible to overcome difficult past experiences. Here, they can look towards a more positive future. Warm relationships help pupils learn to trust the adults who care for them. Pupils feel and are safe.

Staff are astute at noticing and responding to pupils' social and emotional needs. This helps pupils to regain control of their response to challenging situations. For example, if they lose a game, they learn to keep calm and give praise to an opponent. It is within this nurturing environment that pupils re-engage with education and progress well. Staff make sure that lessons focus on important skills, such as how to understand a wide range of texts.

Pupils find new interests. These include learning to play the drums or gardening. Therefore, when pupils leave the school, they have talents they can be proud of. Dedicated staff work hard to remove barriers to pupils' participation in the community. For example, building pupils' confidence to take the bus and go to careers fairs. Staff help pupils to step out of their comfort zone and make good memories. For example, surfing and horse-riding.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have adapted and improved the curriculum. It now makes more links between different subjects. For example, when younger pupils learn about the Stone Age in topic lessons, they also learn about shelter building designs in design and technology. This helps pupils to understand and remember more about different historical periods.

Teachers plan engaging and accessible lessons. For example, through using pictures to explain what life was like for people in the past. Teachers make sure that lessons include plenty of opportunities to practice important skills, such as calculation in mathematics. Pupils make steady progress in key skills. However, lessons do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their handwriting. This means that some pupils' handwriting difficulties persist longer than they should. This impacts pupils' pride in their work. Leaders are aware of this. They have plans to train staff in how to further adapt lessons to close pupils' gaps in learning.

Reading is a priority. The school has recently adopted a systematic reading scheme. This caters for pupils who have missed out on early reading experiences. Pupils are accurately grouped according to their stage of reading. Staff provide extra opportunities for pupils to read to an adult. Older pupils enjoy receiving 'points' for reading and completing quizzes on a wide range of books. When they access the next 'level' of reading, it makes them feel successful and motivates them to keep going.

The school is inherently inclusive. Leaders have trained staff in how to understand and respond to pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. This helps staff to adapt the types of support they give in the classroom. A new system of assessment highlights pupils' gaps in learning in granular detail. Staff use this information to precisely plan pupils' next steps. This information also contributes to education, health and care (EHC) plan reviews. Leaders involve carers and social workers. They work closely with external experts to make sure that pupils receive timely support.

Staff work hard to create a calm and orderly environment. The school culture is nurturing and makes pupils feel safe. Leaders pay close attention to the patterns of pupils' behaviour. They use this information to notice when things are going well and when pupils need more support. As a result, pupils' social and emotional responses significantly improve. Pupils learn that school is a place of happiness and success. They want to come to school and attendance is good. On the rare occasion when attendance becomes a concern the school works closely with external agencies to improve attendance over time.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) supports pupils to become successful citizens. Leaders have ensured that it gives pupils strategies to manage their feelings and emotions. Pupils can contribute to their local community with acts of kindness, such as litter picking. The school ensures that trips and visitors contribute to pupils' understanding of different cultures and religions. Leaders have adapted careers education to meet pupils' needs. This includes teaching pupils that it is possible to make a positive change at any stage in life, even if things have gone wrong in the past.

Members of the proprietor body have a range of social work and education expertise. They know the school well and intelligently challenge leaders on how well the school is providing for pupils' education. They have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards and that the school is a safe and welcoming place for pupils. The proprietor body ensures the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders are mindful of staff's workload and wellbeing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Lessons do not sufficiently provide opportunities for pupils to develop their handwriting. This means that some pupils' handwriting difficulties persist longer than they should and pupils do not have sufficient pride in their work. Leaders

should continue to train staff in how to adapt lessons to help pupils with their presentation and pride in their work.

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	145960
DfE registration number	926/6018
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10321486
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	6 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Clover Childcare Services Ltd
Headteacher	Sarah Porter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,693
Telephone number	01692581467
Website	www.thestableschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@thestableschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 June–1 July 2021

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- The Stables opened in September 2018. It is a specialist provision registered to take 22 pupils, from ages six to 14 years, who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Pupils are looked after and placed at the school by local authorities. All pupils have a personalised education plan (PEP) and an education and health care (EHC) plan.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.
- To date, Ofsted has conducted a pre-registration visit, two standard inspections, an action plan evaluation, and a progress monitoring inspection. The details of these are:
 - 9 July 2018, a pre-registration visit recommended registration
 - 12 March 2019, a standard inspection, where the overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement
 - 28 June 2019, an action plan evaluation, which was judged to be acceptable
 - 11 September 2019, a progress monitoring inspection, where the independent school inspection standards were met
 - 29 June 2021, a standard inspection, where the overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the behaviour lead.

- The lead inspector met with members of the proprietor body and spoke with the head of the local virtual school. The lead inspector also considered a range of documentation relating to leadership and management, including the school's development plan.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and humanities. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about 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.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of carers and considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector considered 16 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils through various discussions.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Pedlow

Ofsted Inspector

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