

Inspection of Hidelow Grange School

Hidelow House, Acton Green, Acton Beauchamp WR6 5AH

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 November 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 arrive at Hidelow Grange with fragmented educational experiences or having been out of school for periods. Staff's care, expertise and belief in the pupils turn these experiences on their head. Pupils enjoy school, attend exceptionally well and become motivated and engaged learners.

Strong relationships are evident between pupils and staff. The fine balance of rules and respect within a nurturing environment shines through. This is making a clear-cut and positive difference to pupils' behaviour, self-belief and self-control. Pupils know that they are in school to learn and learn they do. They grow in confidence in seeing themselves as readers and as rights-respecting individuals who contribute selflessly to their local community and beyond.

By the end of their time at the school, pupils gain a range of qualifications that set them up well for the next step of their life's journey. However, Hidelow Grange is so much more than this. 'Reflect, believe, develop, achieve' spirals through each moment of every day. From displaying recycled Christmas trees at a local festival to visiting Roman barracks, from rock climbing to raising money for carefully chosen projects and experiencing parkour and pickleball, pupils' experiences of opportunities beyond the school's doors are extensive and impressive.

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

The proprietor brings experience and expertise of relevance to this school setting. It ensures, through regular checks, that the school is safe, well resourced and maintained to a high standard. Since the previous inspection, leadership of the school has changed. The proprietor has supported this change and transition with care and attention to detail. The safety and well-being of the pupils have been maintained while allowing the leadership to further grow, develop and sculpt the curriculum in ways that are right and beneficial to the pupils the school serves.

The school creates a safe space in which pupils flourish. Pupils learn to know themselves as individuals. They grow in understanding of what makes them tick, what they find easy and what is hard, what they enjoy and where their talents and interests lie. Alongside this, pupils learn to deal with and overcome hurdles, behave to learn and be proud of their achievements.

The school has given a great deal of thought to the structure of the curriculum. A five-year plan provides an anchor point from which subjects off-shoot into clearly set-out learning sequences. Pupils start at different points in their secondary education. They arrive with varying gaps in their knowledge across subjects. They stay for differing lengths of time. The school takes a strong account of this in plotting an individual learning journey for each pupil. The school understands the context of pupils' life stories thus far and the time constraints of how long a pupil might remain with them. They make every moment count, both academically and personally.

Reading has been a recent and successful focus. The school places a strong emphasis and priority on every pupil being able to read well, with fluency, expression and understanding. No matter what lesson you are in, reading skills are clear to see. Visits to the local library are a regular part of school life. Pupils are proud to share book choices and talk about books they have read and enjoyed. For pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read, or with some very specific gaps, phonics has recently been introduced and is making a positive difference.

Less secure is pupils' application of their writing skills across the curriculum. Due to their educational journey thus far, many pupils have major gaps in their early writing skills. These include correct letter formation and how to structure and organise their thoughts in an extended piece of writing. This is a work in progress at the school, but more needs to be done to ensure that pupils are as successful in their writing consistently across the subjects as they are in their reading.

The skilled and dedicated staff pool their individual strengths and expertise to bring the curriculum and their subject meaningfully to life. The resources are spot on in hooking into pupils' individual interests while linking directly and well to the learning focus of the lesson. Making stents for the heart, creating sound waves, counting pocket money from the 'penny a point' behaviour charts and boarding a ship in London to further understand the past are just a few of the ways staff ensure that learning is exciting and relevant. The clear and consistent ways staff help pupils to retrieve and recall their learning work well.

A strength of the school is how completely it keeps the pupil front and centre of everything it does. There is effective integrated partnership work with the care and clinical teams. Leaders are skilled at getting the right information at the right time and reviewing it to ensure that pupils' needs are known, understood and met. They use this to good effect to ensure that the support, learning and subjects studied are personalised and a good fit for each pupil. The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school successfully merges the demands and targets from each pupil's education, health and care plan (EHC plan) into their learning and career pathway. Pupils achieve well across subjects. They gain qualifications which lead to college or the world of work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Some pupils have not been taught the correct letter formation or composition practices, leading to a lack of automaticity and depth in their writing. This hinders their ability to become effective writers and to create legible pieces of extended writing across the curriculum. The school should further refine the key

compositional knowledge pupils learn and develop staff expertise to deliver handwriting practice effectively.

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	144717
DfE registration number	884/6016
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10342126
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Caretech Community Services Limited
Chair	Declan Tuer
Headteacher	Samuel Goodchild
Annual fees (day pupils)	£49,246
Telephone number	01886 883821
Website	https://branas.co.uk/education/hidelow-grange-school
Email address	sam.goodchild@branas.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 December 2021

Information about this school

- Hidelow Grange School is an independent special school located in Herefordshire. It is part of the Caretech Community Services Limited.
- The school caters for boys aged between 11 and 18 who are experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties. At the time of this inspection, there were no post-16 students on roll. Consequently, inspectors could not make a judgement about the sixth form.
- Since the school's previous standard inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school is registered to take up to 20 pupils.
- Pupils are placed at the school by several local authorities from across the country.
- Typically, pupils attending the school have an EHC plan. Pupils attending the school are children looked after.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in December 2021. Inspectors judged the school as good.
- The school does not use 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.

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- As part of their work to check compliance with the independent school standards, the lead inspector met with the headteacher and the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector toured the school and reviewed a range of documents,

including those relating to health and safety, in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lorraine Lord

Ofsted Inspector

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