

Inspection of The Annex School House

Pembroke House, Leydenhatch Lane, Hextable, Swanley, Kent BR8 7PS

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?

This is a small school where pupils feel valued. The school has high expectations and pupils are supported well to rise to them. Pupils are safe and well cared for.

Prior to attending this school, pupils have experienced disruptive educations. Here, staff help pupils to develop a sense of pride and self-worth. They use their deep understanding of each pupil to provide them with an individualised curriculum. This builds pupils' confidence and helps them to address gaps in their prior learning. The school's determination for pupils to succeed results in many gaining qualifications and essential life skills.

Lessons are generally calm and focused. Pupils enjoy earning 'points' in the school's highly motivating rewards system. Adults are alert to potential triggers and use effective strategies to swiftly reduce poor behaviour.

Wider opportunities outside of the classroom help to promote pupils' personal development, including local visits to a gym. Daily 'house meetings' provide pupils with an active role in decision-making in school and opportunities to contribute to their community. The school provides tailored opportunities for pupils to develop interests in the arts and sports such as one-to-one coaching and music tuition.

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

The school places pupils at the heart of all it does. The close-knit staff team shares leaders' passion for making the pupils' time in the school a success. Pupils arrive with different starting points and adults work with pupils to evaluate their needs. The curriculum is designed to be truly bespoke to meet the needs of each pupil, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils typically study a broad curriculum. At its core is a strong personal development programme well matched to pupils' individual needs. Pupils benefit from therapeutic care provided by the school. Adults support pupils well in learning to regulate their behaviour. Pupils are sensitively helped to understand their emotions and strategies that will help them cope in situations they find difficult. This helps pupils to overcome barriers to learning successfully.

The school has prioritised core reading, writing and mathematics skills. Some pupils are reluctant readers. Initiatives such as the daily 'Tea and Papers' encourage reading every day. This, together with planned opportunities across the curriculum, encourages pupils to read and discuss age-appropriate texts. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive mathematics programme. This builds pupils' confidence in using and applying number over time. However, there is some variation in the quality of English tasks set for pupils. In some instances, these were not suitably adapted to recognise pupils' differing starting points. When this happens, not all pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to practise important writing skills.

In most subjects, adults have the expertise that they need to help pupils to build knowledge securely over time. For example, in art, pupils progress well from simple drawing skills to more complex pieces of work using colour and texture effectively. However, not all staff have received enough training to help them implement the curriculum as intended. As a result, pupils in some subjects, including English and science, do not learn new knowledge as well as in other areas of the curriculum.

Each pupil follows an individual education plan with short-term targets linked to their education, health and care plans (EHC plan). However, the quality of these targets is varied and in some cases, are too broad and not fully personalised to the pupil. Where this is the case, staff are not provided with the information they need to ensure pupils are meeting their longer-term targets.

The school's work to improve pupils' attendance is effective. They identify any barriers and work with pupils to promote the benefits of regular attendance. This is having a demonstrable improvement in pupils' attendance over time.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy as part of the personal, social, health and economic education programme. Pupils learn to appreciate difference and diversity, in readiness for life in modern Britain. They are skilfully supported to explore relationships and encouraged to reflect deeply on their own experiences. Pupils also access outdoor education. They learn to challenge themselves and manage their emotions in different environments.

The school prepares pupils for their next steps well. Pupils achieve success in functional skills and BTEC National Diploma qualifications. Staff supplement learning in school with meaningful opportunities to visit local colleges and explore potential careers such as animal husbandry.

The proprietor knows the school well and has a clear vision to further improve the quality of education that pupils receive. There is careful consideration given to the workload and well-being of staff. In turn, staff feel well supported by leaders, appreciating the regular supervision and daily debriefings.

The proprietor provides effective oversight and ensures the school meets its statutory duties, including compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor works well with school leaders to ensure all the independent school standards are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- In some subjects, staff do not have secure subject knowledge to design the most

effective activities to help pupils learn. This means that pupils do not practise their writing skills and learn in different subjects as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff receive further training to ensure that they deliver the curriculum consistently well in these subjects.

- Some targets set in pupils' individual education plans do not fully align with what pupils need to learn. As a result, these plans do not always provide teachers with specific information they need to meet pupils' needs across the curriculum. The school should ensure staff make effective use of pupils' targets and adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs.

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	135198
DfE registration number	886/6122
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10342056
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	J & R Care Ltd
Headteacher	Sajid Mahmood
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,000
Telephone number	07955 415444
Website	www.theannexschool.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@theannexschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 to 4 November 2021

Information about this school

- The Annex School House is a special school that is registered for up to 12 boys and girls aged between eight and 16 years with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not currently 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.

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.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher and teaching staff in the school. The lead inspector met with the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work and EHC plans.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection, including during breaks.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jo Petch

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024