

Sketchley School

Manor Way, Sketchley, Burbage, Leicestershire LE10 3HT

Inspection dates

5 to 7 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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The governors and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Governors and senior leaders have recently reviewed all aspects of the school, including leadership, teaching and therapy, and have produced a suitable strategic development plan, which is at an early stage of implementation.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good because teaching and therapeutic staff have a good understanding of pupils' individual barriers to learning. They assess and address these effectively in their planning for teaching and pupils' personal development.
- Pupils make good progress with their learning and personal development throughout their time at the school. The curriculum prepares them well to move through the different stages of their education and achieve creditable success in external examinations.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare are effective.
- Pupils' behaviour and social relationships improve considerably, often from low starting points on entry to the school. Their good attendance supports their progress.
- Governors have recently revised their arrangements for holding the school to account. They have a very good understanding of areas for further improvement.
- Senior leaders, through their thorough evaluation of all aspects of the school, have established priorities to address any inconsistencies in teaching and therapy.
- The school's post-16 arrangements are outstanding. The school works extremely effectively with further education providers to prepare pupils for further education and employment.
- Some parents and staff have been unsettled by recent changes and believe that there has been insufficient communication from senior leaders to achieve a common understanding of the school's planned direction.
- Recent changes to the arrangements for therapy provision are not yet embedded.

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?

- Embed and consolidate planned developments to ensure:
 - comprehensive therapeutic arrangements which achieve planned outcomes in pupils' learning and personal development
 - that all staff are appropriately informed and involved in effective whole-school evaluation and improvement
 - improved communication with parents so that they are appropriately informed about changes and developments.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and governors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The school has recently experienced a period of significant change in leadership and staffing. The governors and senior leaders have audited key aspects of the school's work, including staffing and therapeutic arrangements. They have produced appropriate improvement plans to further develop identified aspects of the school.
- The great majority of staff are proud to be members of staff at the school and believe that the school is aspirational for pupils' success. They demonstrate exemplary commitment to the care and development of pupils of all ages, and their contribution is key to the school's success.
- Senior leaders have high expectations of staff and a strong recognition of their contributions and diligence. There are wide-ranging opportunities for staff development and training, together with systematic arrangements for managing the performance of staff and ensuring continuous improvement.
- The quality of teaching is good. Senior leaders have effective arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement. Good support is provided to enable teaching and support staff to further develop successful practice.
- The curriculum at each key stage is broad and provides opportunities for pupils to achieve well across all required areas of learning. There are some limitations in the range of optional subjects available at key stage 4.
- The school promotes fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to visit places of significance in the local and wider community and to develop their understanding of the range of people and services that contribute to their quality of life.
- Arrangements for the management of behaviour and pupils' well-being are based on comprehensive policy and successful implementation. Staff work effectively to help pupils understand the consequences of their actions and to build successful relationships with each other. Pupils are positive about the school and the experiences it provides. They believe that they are safe in school and well-supported by the staff.
- Recent changes have created concern for some parents, although the majority remain positive about the quality of the school's work. Some staff have some concerns about recent changes and do not have a clear understanding of the school's planned direction.

Governance

- Governors provide strong support for the continuing success of the school. They have a clear understanding of what needs to be done, and they provide effective challenge to leaders and staff in the continuing improvement of the school.
- Governors have recently completed an audit of all aspects of the school's life, based on government guidance on effective governance. They have identified areas for further

improvement and are currently working to implement one coherent school improvement plan based on existing self-evaluations and improvement plans for each school site.

- Governors have ensured that a strong and effective leadership team is in place, with a clear vision for continuous improvement. Senior leaders have worked with governors effectively to evaluate all aspects of the school. They are central to the effective implementation of plans for systematic improvement.
- The governors oversee appropriate arrangements for the management of the performance of senior leaders and staff. Through these arrangements, they seek to create a unified commitment to effective teamwork, support for improvement and opportunities for the continuing development of leadership and management across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has produced an appropriate policy, which is reviewed and updated in response to changes in government requirements. The policy has regard to the latest government guidance. The safeguarding policy is available to download from the school's website.
- All staff are trained to respond to any concerns about pupils' wellbeing. The school's designated safeguarding leads are trained to the standards required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All members of staff receive regular update training to ensure that they are familiar with school and government safeguarding requirements.
- Pupils are taught about risks which they may encounter and how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils understand risks posed, for example by illegal substances, sexual exploitation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and creative, imaginative, effective ways of conveying knowledge and understanding to pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants have an excellent understanding of the learning characteristics of pupils, including their emotional and personal needs.
- Good teaching results from effective planning by staff teams. Lessons are well-structured, with clarity about learning objectives and the sequence of planned activities. Pupils at key stage 3, for example, develop their understanding of vocabulary related to the dimensions of circles. They understand how to calculate the circumference and develop their skills as they move on to calculating the area.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding of, for example, the characters in a novel or a play. They engage pupils' interest and attention in analysing, thinking and developing their own oral and written answers.
- Time in lessons is used effectively. Staff demonstrate an expectation of continuous engagement of pupils in their learning, paying attention to the contributions of others as they develop their own knowledge and understanding. Pupils sustain interest and engagement. They ask appropriate questions and are mostly keen to contribute.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good because they are engaged and interested in work.

Staff use humour effectively in developing pupils' oral skills. Pupils at key stage 3, for example, generate extensive vocabulary in individual presentation and paired discussion in a drama lesson. They introduce creative dialogue in a conversation based on a starter of 'I can't find it!'

- Tasks and activities provide appropriate challenge, well matched to individual starting points and learning styles. Pupils made strong and appropriate contributions to a conversation about the eulogy in a funeral service, based on well-chosen characters.
- Teachers ensure considerable review and reinforcement of learning, knowledge and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas and learn from the experiences of others. Pupils at key stage 4, for example, recounted their own experiences of being independent, based on their interpretation of events in a novel.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very flexibly together. They make a continuous response to changing individual needs, ensuring a sensitive balance between support and independence. Their questioning and listening skills result in feedback on successes and areas for further development of work, mostly oral and personal. Pupils, for example in key stage 4 mathematics, take appropriate responsibility for managing their pathway through various tasks related to shape and measurement, knowing that individual support is always available when required.
- All staff give sensitive attention to developing pupils' communication, with appropriate flexibility in accepting alternatives to spoken words to enable individuals to overcome anxiety.
- Teachers ensure good development of pupils' numeracy skills, including up to functional skills and GCSE levels at key stage 4. Numeracy skills are also developed effectively through learning in other subjects. Pupils are prepared well for the requirements of external accreditation, through both their learning and development of emotional resilience.
- Staff provide equality of opportunity throughout the school. There are no barriers to continued success and staff strive continuously to ensure that pupils are able to access new opportunities through suitable accreditation.
- Senior leaders, through their arrangements for evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, have identified some inconsistencies in classroom practice. They recognise where staff require further support and coaching to address these and ensure that all teaching is at least good.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff place a strong emphasis on building confidence, creating an environment of readiness to learn.
- Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their work and in themselves. They develop positive attitudes to learning and to success. They are helped to address personal distractions and anxieties, and they experience much success over time with integration into class relationships and with responding positively to the contributions of others.

- Pupils respect staff and learn increasingly to respect others. They are encouraged to respond promptly to requests from staff and to follow instructions so that lessons proceed without interruption.
- Individual pupils' personal characteristics, including their social and emotional needs, are well understood by staff, who work tirelessly to help them take increasing responsibility for their reactions and actions. Staff demonstrate sensitive management of individual anxieties and help pupils to learn appropriate strategies to deal with crises and to develop personal coping strategies.
- There is currently strong development of careers education and advice from key stage 3 throughout the school. Senior leaders have planned effectively for the improvement and embedding of good practice in helping pupils prepare for transitions at key points in their education. The school welcomes strong support from staff and independent external agencies. This work includes good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and work experience when appropriate.
- Bullying is rare and staff implement appropriate procedures to address and eliminate any individual pupil's concerns. Staff are alert to any use of inappropriate language, including criticism or teasing of others. Pupils are helped to understand the impact of their words and actions on others. The majority develop appropriate resilience in social settings.
- Pupils are safe in school and the great majority state that they feel safe. They are taught appropriately about risks to their well-being and how to keep safe online and in the wider community. Pupils increasingly develop self-awareness and responsibility for their actions and relationships.

Behaviour

- Pupils demonstrate good behaviour in lessons and around school. Lessons start promptly and pupils are ready to learn. There is very little off-task behaviour or deliberate distraction during lessons.
- Many pupils have experienced disruption in previous placements in education. In many instances, they have not been able to cope with the demands of large settings or with the self-regulation of their behaviour. The behaviour of many pupils shows considerable improvement once they settle into the culture of the school and they develop continued maturity over time in the school.
- Concerns about behaviour or well-being of pupils are mostly addressed promptly and solutions sought in consultation with parents.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to attendance and punctuality. There are no persistent absentees. The attendance of a number of pupils shows marked improvements from previously broken educational experience.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils mostly enter the school with levels of attainment below expectations for their age. This results mostly from disrupted previous educational experience. Many pupils have experienced difficulties with accessing aspects of learning, or emotional and social barriers to success.
- Pupils quickly adjust to the expectations of the school and to the variety of support and

intervention available to them. The majority make strong progress in their knowledge, understanding and ability to apply their emerging skills.

- Pupils across the age range of the school make strong progress in English and mathematics. Many make rapid progress with closing the gaps in their previous knowledge and understanding.
- The majority of pupils develop strong reading skills and staff help them to practise and demonstrate these through reading aloud. Those pupils who are less confident in public speaking are provided with alternative methods of communication.
- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is close to or above pupils from similar starting points. Where pupils' starting points are below average, they mostly make good progress in relation to other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils achieve considerable success in external examinations, including functional skills and GCSE. Almost all pupils move into the school's post-16 arrangements at the end of key stage 4. They are prepared well for the transition to post-16 education.

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

- Students in the school's post-16 groups demonstrate positive attitudes to attendance and punctuality. They learn to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. There are no persistent absentees. They are well prepared and supported to take advantage of the individualised curriculum available to them.
- The school's post-16 education arrangements demonstrate excellence in provision and outcomes. Senior leaders have an effective vision for what students can achieve, together with creative strategies to implement the vision.
- The provision enables pupils to continue to study for external examinations in English and mathematics. This helps them to develop further confidence in stressful examination situations and helps to underpin their successes at higher levels of study. The quality of teaching builds on pupils' earlier experiences and retains a high quality of relationships with staff.
- The school provides an imaginative and creative curriculum with strong and effective joint working with further education providers. For part of their week, students attend a variety of courses at various levels of challenge suited to their individual starting points. Current pupils are studying courses ranging from Level 1 courses, for example in childcare or animal care, to Level 3 courses such as creative media, animation, and performing arts.
- All students have maintained their placements since September 2018 and a number are engaged in the second year of two-year college courses. Excellent support is provided by school staff. They attend college with students, where required, and provide individual tuition and support in school.
- The school has developed a successful model for post-16 education, which is well matched to the needs and aspirations of individual students. Students' experiences are enhanced by excellent careers support and guidance, including relevant work placements and strong support with the further transition to employment or higher education.
- The post-16 arrangements represent a successful culmination of secondary education for students. They demonstrate the increased confidence built up over earlier years in the

school. This is evidenced by their attendance and success in college placements.

- All students move on to positive destinations with the confidence to succeed. Students, for example those students who completed their post-16 education in summer 2018, all moved on to appropriate placements in employment, further training or higher education. This represents excellent progress across higher levels of study.
- Students learn to be safe and independent in their decision-making. They demonstrate substantial and sustained progress, with excellent retention rates through their post-16 experience and beyond. The school provides outstanding experiences and outcomes for these students.

School details

Unique reference number	135217
DfE registration number	855/6026
Inspection number	10078669

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	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	15
Proprietor	Priory Education and Children's Services
Chair	Michelle Smith
Headteacher	James Wookey
Annual fees (day pupils)	£73,500
Telephone number	01455 890 023
Website	www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk
Email address	sketchleyhorizon@priorygroup.com
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 May 2016

Information about this school

- Sketchley School is an independent day special school which opened in 2007 and is located on three sites, in south Leicestershire. It is owned by The Priory Group. The third site, Progression House, which provides post-16 education, opened since the time of the previous Ofsted inspection of the school.
- The school provides full-time education for up to 65 pupils and post-16 students aged eight to 19 years. All pupils have autism and most have additional social, emotional or

mental health needs.

- Pupils are placed at the school by local authorities, often following a period of disrupted education elsewhere. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The majority of post-16 students are placed, for part of their timetable, at North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, Loughborough College, Confetti Nottingham or Brooksby Agricultural College.
- The previous inspection of the school was in May 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the age-range of the school. Lessons were observed jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team. He scrutinised samples of pupils' work in English, mathematics and additional subjects.
- The inspector held discussions about the governance of the school with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. He discussed all aspects of leadership and management with the headteacher, all members of the senior leadership team and The Priory Group's counselling psychologist. He discussed aspects of teaching and learning with teaching staff and teaching assistants.
- The inspector considered written responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, completed by 21 parents and carers. He also took account of oral responses from a small number of parents. In addition, he considered written responses to inspection questionnaires completed by 15 pupils and 52 members of staff.
- The inspector scrutinised several school policies, procedures and records to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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