

# Inspection of Sedgemoor Manor School

Blackford Road, Mark, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 4NP

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Inspection dates: 23 to 25 May 2023

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive at this calm and nurturing school. They describe the school as unique and say it feels like a 'home from home'. Pupils feel listened to and say that staff understand them well. They learn to value their education because staff help them to experience success without lessening ambition. Pupils reflect on how this is different to their previous experiences of education.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils are motivated to meet these. They respond positively when staff remind them of expectations through rolemodelling and reinforcing positive behaviours. This is successful because of the strong relationships between staff and pupils. The impact of this is a reduction in more challenging behaviour, which both staff and pupils recognise and appreciate.

Leaders' dedication to preparing pupils to be active members of their community is clear. Pupils welcome the wealth of opportunities to develop their independence and give them the chance to hold roles of responsibility, such as school council, animal care and running their own clubs.

Many parents praise the school and how it has enabled their child to learn successfully. They say it has transformed their lives as well as those of their children.

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

Leaders and staff place pupils at the heart of all they do. Leaders have designed an ambitious academic curriculum. The wider leadership team and the proprietor support leaders well. They understand their responsibilities and provide effective challenge to leaders. They have an accurate view of the school's work. They ensure that the school meets the independent school standards in full and the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff understand the needs of pupils well. Teachers adapt pupils' learning so that it is personalised. Subject leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn and considered how it needs to be sequenced. The new assessment system, despite undergoing some improvement, identifies pupils' starting points and any gaps in knowledge. However, subject leaders are not secure in their knowledge of the curriculum across the age ranges of pupils. They do not have a full understanding of how the curriculum progresses from key stage 2 through to key stage 5. Consequently, they do not know how effectively pupils build on prior learning and how this could be strengthened.

Leaders have taken significant steps to make reading a whole-school priority. They know that aspects of this need to be refined to encourage pupils to engage with reading for pleasure more positively. Despite this, pupils read with confidence and fluency. Where needed, leaders use assessment to identify gaps in knowledge. There is a clear approach to make sure these pupils catch up quickly. In reading, as in other subjects, as the curriculum design is refined, leaders recognise the need to

strengthen staff expertise, subject knowledge and knowledge of strategies to ensure pupils learn academically with even greater success.

Staff take highly effective action to help pupils overcome barriers they face because of their needs. Information captured about each pupil is thorough. Each pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan is at the centre of this. Staff, including support staff and therapists, have the precise details they need to support pupils well. For example, to understand emotions and develop successful strategies to cope when they find situations a challenge. Leaders acknowledge that attendance is a concern. They are taking robust action to address this. The system for maintaining up-to-date pupil information is being strengthened and refined to increase its effectiveness and impact positively on staff workload.

Leaders have designed an impressive personal development programme. It ensures that the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is skilfully matched to pupils' individual needs and is age appropriate. Pupils gain an understanding of the world around them and their own place in the world. This helps them to increase in confidence in their interactions with others. Pupils are enthusiastic in expressing their views and opinions. They do so with a secure use of language and ambitious vocabulary. Leaders prepare pupils well for their next steps. They link pupils' aspirations to their individual curriculum. Leaders have forged successful partnerships with local colleges to ensure pupils can gain the experiences and qualifications they need. They make sure that pupils achieve appropriate accredited qualifications, including vocational qualifications and GCSEs. Careers education is woven into the curriculum. It is designed to encourage pupils to increase their self-belief and aspirations for the future.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding seriously. Proprietors ensure that leaders fulfil their duties and implement the school's policies effectively. Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being. Staff know how to spot safeguarding concerns and are vigilant of these. They are confident that any concerns raised are dealt with promptly and that leaders take appropriate action. There is a robust system of communication in place to make sure this is highly effective. Leaders work with external agencies where appropriate. They are rigorous in making sure that the right support is in place for pupils and their families.

Pupils have lots of opportunities in the curriculum to learn about keeping safe, including maintaining healthy lifestyles and positive relationships.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Subject leaders are not secure in their knowledge of the breadth of the curriculum in their areas of responsibility from key stage 2 to key stage 5. As a result, they do not have an accurate understanding of how effective the intended curriculum is on pupils' learning and how well it builds on prior learning. Leaders need to ensure that all subject leaders increase their knowledge of the curriculum for the age range of pupils at the school. This will enable them to identify areas for development that will make the most impact on pupils' education.
- Leaders are in the process of refining the academic curriculum to ensure it makes the best possible impact on how pupils learn. Staff do not consistently have the necessary subject knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn effectively. This is despite meeting their special educational needs well. As a result, pupils do not learn as successfully as they could. Leaders need to ensure that staff get the development they need to support pupils to achieve the best they can.

### 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123933
<b>DfE registration number</b>	933/6185
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267609
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	8
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Aspris Children's Services Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	John Anderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emily Bott
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	In the range of £71 332 to £110 758
<b>Telephone number</b>	01278 641632
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/sedgemoor-manor-school-somerset">www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/sedgemoor-manor-school-somerset</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:sedgemoormanorschool@aspriscs.co.uk">sedgemoormanorschool@aspriscs.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 to 17 January 2019

## Information about this school

- The last standard inspection took place in January 2019.
- The current proprietor, Aspris Children's Services Ltd, was formerly known as 'Priory Education and Children's Services'.
- Sedgemoor Manor School is a specialist provision for pupils with diagnosis of autism and associated complex needs. All pupils have EHC plans. Their placements are funded by several different local authorities.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and leadership team have been appointed. Leaders have amended the leadership structure of the school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is included on the list of approved independent special schools, in accordance with Section 41 of the Children's and Families Act 2014.

## 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the 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 assistant headteacher. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of proprietor and the operations director (who also the chair of governors). In addition, the lead inspector discussed the school with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, PSHE, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the curriculum leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to staff and some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with staff from a range of different roles across the school, including learning mentors and therapists.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held discussions with the safeguarding team and a wide range of teaching and support staff. The lead inspector considered the single central record and the school's wider processes for safer recruitment. Inspectors held discussions with pupils to gather their views of the culture of the school.

- Inspectors carried out a range of activities to confirm whether the independent school standards were met in full. Activities included: consideration of the site and premises, scrutinising the information the school provides to parents, including the complaints policy, and records, and considering how well leaders ensure that pupils' health, safety and welfare are protected.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, 'Parent View'. In addition, inspectors considered parents' views from face-to-face conversations and emails.
- Inspectors scrutinised the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

### **The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils**

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

☑ The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**

The proprietor requested an increase in the maximum number of pupils. Leaders have carried out significant improvements to existing school buildings to ensure that the needs of additional pupils can be met. The lead inspector toured the site with the headteacher and site manager. The refurbished buildings will provide additional classrooms which will replicate the current set up and include break out spaces. The improvements that have been made are suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. The lead inspector discussed the plans for staff recruitment with school leaders and a representative from the proprietor board. School leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

### **Inspection team**

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Vaughan

Ofsted Inspector

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