

Inspection of Queenswood School

Callow Hills Farm, Hereford Road, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2PZ

Inspection dates: 8 to 11 February 2022

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?

Leaders and staff want every pupil to be safe, kind and aspirational. The collective staff team have a deep desire for pupils to do well. They help pupils acquire the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in the future.

Prior to starting at the school, most pupils have experienced difficulty and disruption to their education. Staff help pupils re-engage with their learning. They are calm and patient. They help pupils manage their feelings and emotions. Pupils say that staff really listen and care about them.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects. They enjoy the many opportunities for outdoor education. Pupils develop their confidence in activities such as kayaking and rock climbing. They learn to work together. Pupils report that there is little bullying. Adults skilfully de-escalate situations of conflict and support pupils to reduce any anxiety.

Leaders encourage pupils' talents and interests. Pupils join the football and basketball teams. Those with musical talents sing for an audience. Through enterprise projects, pupils grow vegetables and make jams to sell. Pupils learn to socialise through visits to cafes and caring for a community garden. Pupils develop the life skills they need ready for the world outside school.

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

Key to the proprietor's vision for the school is unlocking the potential of pupils who have previously experienced a turbulent education. Leaders focus on helping pupils develop a willingness to learn. By the time pupils leave the school, most gain qualifications in English and mathematics. Many pupils also undertake a range of vocational qualifications and achieve well. Leaders ensure that pupils have the right qualifications for the employment, training or apprenticeships they seek. Outcomes at the school are positive.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many start at the school with low self-esteem and lack confidence. Leaders ensure that pupils have the expert help and specialist support that they need. A wide range of therapies are built into the timetable. These focus on improving pupils' well-being, confidence and resilience. Over time, pupils learn to manage their behaviour and recognise how they are feeling. Adults are skilled in helping develop positive attitudes to learning.

Leaders place a high priority on teaching personal, social and health education (PSHE). It is taught well, and PSHE skills are embedded effectively into the wider curriculum. Leaders ensure that relationships and sex education and health education are taught effectively. Staff help pupils learn about issues such as consent and online safety. Pupils develop an understanding of the law of the land and how to be tolerant of others. PSHE also provides pupils with the life skills needed to contribute positively to society.

Leaders ensure that pupils study a broad curriculum. Some subjects, including mathematics, science and design technology, are coherently planned and sequenced. Teachers know what to teach. However, in other subjects, the key knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils are expected to learn are not clearly identified. The COVID-19 pandemic hindered leaders' refinement of some curriculum development. Leaders know there is work to do to ensure that new learning builds on what pupils know and can already do. New subject leaders have development plans in place to address this.

The 'LIFE (literacy is for everything)' curriculum ensures that pupils have opportunities to read and write in creative ways. For example, pupils read newspaper articles, blogs, timetables and information leaflets. Good quality books are found in all classrooms. Teachers create opportunities for pupils to read in different lessons across the curriculum. One-to-one support is used to help some pupils with their phonics and early reading skills.

Learning in mathematics builds pupils' knowledge step by step. Teachers make checks to see what pupils can do already. They use this information to plan and adapt their teaching to better meet pupils' needs. However, this is not the case in all subjects. At times, teachers are not clear about what pupils already know and can do.

Teachers place great emphasis on developing pupils' speaking, listening and oracy skills. Pupils are encouraged to explain themselves, express an opinion and listen respectfully to others. They do this well.

Pupils' personal development has a high priority in the school. Staff take time to find out about pupils' individual needs and interests. Leaders work well with a range of external agencies to support pupils and develop their individual skills.

The attendance of most pupils improves significantly once they join the school. This includes pupils who were previously out of education for some time. Carefully planned transition into the school helps pupils understand what is expected.

Those responsible for governance know the school well. They bring a wealth of skills and experience to their role. They provide challenge and support in equal measure. Robust checks and balances are in place to ensure the quality of provision. They commission external reviews of the school well to help identify and drive further improvements.

The proprietor makes sure that the school consistently meets the independent school standards. The buildings are well maintained and provide suitable spaces for learning and socialising. Appropriate resources are available to support learning. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The proprietor has established a robust approach to safeguarding. It is well organised, with efficient systems in place. Staff are appropriately recruited and vetted before beginning work. They understand pupils' vulnerabilities. Staff remain vigilant at all times. Leaders work closely with a range of outside support agencies to ensure that pupils at risk of harm are promptly given the help that they need.

Staff teach pupils about risk and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are supported to learn about healthy relationships. The school's safeguarding policy reflects current government guidance and is published on the school's website.

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

- Leaders are working with staff to further develop schemes of work but, due to the impact of the pandemic, not all subjects have been fully reviewed or implemented yet. It is clear that leaders are already taking action to refine and develop the curriculum so that the essential knowledge they want pupils to learn is made clear. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Sometimes, teachers do not have a good grasp of what pupils already know and can do. This means that learning is not planned as effectively as it could be to build on pupils' prior knowledge to best meet their needs. Leaders should help teachers to make better use of assessment information so that they can build on prior learning more successfully.
- Many middle leaders are new to their role. They have not yet had the chance to influence improvements in their subject areas of responsibility. Leaders should continue to support the development of new leaders so that they have a positive impact on school improvement.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	131353
DfE registration number	884/6011
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10205809
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services
Chair	Claire Imber
Headteacher	Robert Coles
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,000 to £80,000
Telephone number	01531 670632
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/queenswood-school-herefordshire/
Email address	robertcoles@aspriscs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 to 14 June 2018

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the proprietor has changed its name from Priory Education and Children's Services to Aspris Children's Services. Aspris Children's Services is an independent company within the Waterland portfolio. This change took effect on 5 January 2022.
- A transition group of four pupils in Year 7 and some older pupils with autism spectrum disorder are based at 'The Hub' at Yarkhill, Herefordshire, HR1 3SU which is about six miles from the school.
- The school works with four unregistered alternative providers to give pupils opportunities to access a range of vocational studies. Pupils study subjects such as brush making, tractor driving and animal welfare.
- The school provides for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school's last full standard inspection was in June 2018

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 the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and subject leaders. The lead inspector spoke with those responsible for governance, including the chief operating officer, the chair of the governing board, the finance director, the best practice director and a parent governor.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, science, design technology and PSHE. Each deep dive included discussions about the curriculum with subject leaders, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. The inspector also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects and talked about the books they were reading.
- Inspectors also talked to pupils more generally about their experiences in school. They observed pupils at breaktimes, spoke to them at the start of the school day and saw them at work in a range of lessons.

- Inspectors talked with staff to discuss how they are supported to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including school policies, curriculum documents and the school website.
- Two inspectors visited the annexe to the school site based at Yarkhill to talk with staff and pupils and visit lessons. Inspectors met with a representative of one of the alternative providers and visited another.
- In checking safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised documentation, looked at the school processes for reporting concerns and the employment checks that leaders make on staff prior to employment.
- Checks were made relating to the independent school standards, including checks on the school's premises at both of the school sites.
- The lead inspector considered responses, including free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire. She held a meeting with one parent.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Field	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector

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