

The Place Independent School

Hill Farm, Belvoir Road, Bottesford, Leicestershire NG13 0EA

Inspection dates

14 November 2019

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(d)

- Senior leaders have made sure that key stage 4 pupils will study the full range of subjects.
- Pupils will study English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). They will complete qualifications in these subjects, at an appropriate level.
- Pupils will have weekly lessons in physical education (PE), history and geography. They will also study art and science, including through project-based work. For example, pupils will use the kitchen area to complete simple experiments.
- Pupils will study work-related subjects. This may include pupils studying at other places of learning. Staff will go with pupils when they study elsewhere.
- Leaders will adapt what each pupil learns to meet their individual needs and interests. They will consider the targets in pupils' education, health and care plans. Teachers will use this information when planning learning. This will ensure that pupils' learning is appropriate and suitably ambitious.
- Students in key stage 5 will study English, mathematics and ICT. When appropriate, they will work towards qualifications in these subjects, at a higher level to that which they have achieved previously. Students who are new to the school and who are behind in English and mathematics will receive support to help them to catch up.
- Students will study work-related subjects. This will help them to understand the world of work, and prepare them for their next steps.
- As in key stage 4, leaders will ensure that students' learning is appropriate to their need and interest, and is ambitious. Plans for learning will consider students' education, health and care plan targets.
- A key focus will be to prepare pupils for independent living. Pupils will learn how to cook and care for themselves. They will visit shops to buy food which they will then

cook for themselves. Such opportunities will help pupils to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-life experiences. They will also help pupils to grow in confidence and develop a sense of independence.

- The proposed curriculum in key stages 4 and 5 will provide pupils with wide-ranging opportunities to prepare well for life in modern Britain. They will be able to prepare for their next steps, including by understanding how to live independently.

Paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)

- Leaders plan to appoint a member of staff who will provide pupils with advice and guidance about careers and further education.
- This member of staff will regularly meet with pupils to help them to explore different job opportunities. They will also help arrange work placements for pupils. This will enable pupils to explore their interests further.
- The member of staff will work closely with key workers to provide pupils with support as they prepare to move to their next steps. This will include them accompanying pupils to colleges and work placements. This will help pupils to feel safe and to adapt to the new environment.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(e), 3(f), 3(i), 3(j)

- Leaders will ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge to be able to teach their subjects well. Subject leaders, for example, will provide appropriate support.
- There will be a range of resources available to pupils to help them in their learning. They will be able to use online resources, for example. There will also be the opportunity for them to go on educational visits as part of their learning.

Paragraphs 3, 3(g), 4

- Teachers will regularly check pupils' and students' understanding, including by asking questions. They will provide further support when necessary.
- In English, mathematics and ICT, pupils will complete written and online tests. Teachers will use these tests to check their understanding. They will also check students and pupils are studying for the right level of qualification in these subjects.
- Teachers will provide regular updates to parents and carers about their children's achievement. Teachers will inform them about what their children have learned, and what they will learn next.

Paragraph 3, 3(h)

- Staff will provide pupils with close attention and support. This will help them to behave well and engage with their learning. For example, teaching assistants help explain tasks that pupils or students struggle to complete.
- School leaders have ensured that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards in this part if it receives approval for the implementation of the material changes.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Pupils will have weekly lessons in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.
- They will spend time with their key worker to discuss any issues that they have studied in these lessons that may have affected them.
- Pupils will learn about risk. They will learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online and when they are out in the community.
- Pupils will learn about making sensible choices, including learning about healthy eating and healthy relationships. They will consider choices that may put their health at risk.
- There will be the opportunity for pupils to consider other people's beliefs, culture, values and opinions. They will learn about the different ways in which people live their lives. They will learn the importance of respecting people who are different to them.
- Pupils will be able to visit the local area. This is what pupils in key stages 2 and 3 already do. This will allow pupils to find out about the lives of people who live and work locally.
- Visits to local towns and cities will help pupils to learn about different cultures and communities. They will also learn how to be safe in urban areas.
- Pupils will learn about the support that the police, fire service and ambulance services provide.
- There will be opportunities for pupils to discuss topics in small groups. This will help them to learn that people have different opinions. They will learn the importance of respecting these different points of view, including those with which they do not agree.
- School leaders have ensured that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards in this part if it receives approval for the implementation of the material changes.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy is up to date. It reflects the latest government guidance. The policy is available on the school's website.
- Senior leaders have ensured that there is a culture of vigilance in relation to safeguarding at the school. All staff know that pupils' safety is everyone's concern.
- Staff receive regular training about how to keep pupils safe. They know to whom to report any safeguarding concern they may have. They know they should report any concern, no matter how small.

- School records show that leaders take timely, appropriate action to respond to concerns. They work with parents and local services to support pupils.
- Senior leaders will ensure that a suitably trained safeguarding leader will be present on the new school site.
- School leaders have ensured that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards in this part if it receives approval for the implementation of the material changes.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 28(1), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(d)

- There are appropriate toilet, washing and changing facilities on the proposed site.
- There is a shower available, should pupils choose to use it.
- The water supply to these different facilities is suitable.

Paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b)

- There is a medical room available for the short-term care of sick pupils or students. The medical room has a wash basin. The room is near to a toilet.

Paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- The standard of the building is suitable for use as a school.
- The classrooms are of an appropriate size. The acoustics of each room are suitable.

Paragraphs 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- There is drinking water available at all times for pupils.
- There is a sign to show from where pupils can get drinking water.

Paragraphs 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- There are appropriate outdoor areas for pupils to use for recreation and sport. This includes a covered area for them to spend time outside when it is raining, should they wish.
- School leaders have ensured that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards in this part if it receives approval for the implementation of the material changes.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- Senior leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the independent school standards. The proposed school site meets the standards in Part 5. Leaders' plans for the curriculum that pupils will study meet the standards in relation to Parts 1 and 2. Leaders have ensured that there will be appropriate support in place so that teaching enables pupils to achieve well.
- School leaders have made sure that the procedures for keeping pupils safe are robust.

- School leaders have ensured that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards in this part if it receives approval for the implementation of the material changes.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	142939
DfE registration number	855/6038
Inspection number	10124564

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Dr John Steward
Chair	Dr John Steward
Headteacher	Cate Tumman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,595
Telephone number	01949 844 440
Website	www.theplaceindependentschool.co.uk
Email address	cate@theplaceindependentschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	16–18 January 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 14	7 to 18	7 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	13	26	26

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	13	26
Number of part-time pupils	2	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	13	26
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	13	26
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	13	26

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	3	5
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this school

- The school is a specialist provider for pupils with complex needs. The school's aim is to help pupils to 'overcome adversity and provide a positive influence upon their current and future lives'.
- The school is registered to admit up to 20 pupils aged seven to 14. Thirteen pupils currently attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's last standard inspection took place on 16–18 January 2018.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a change in proprietor.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, to check the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the proposed changes to the school's educational provision. These changes are to provide education for pupils aged 14 to 16 and students aged 17 to 18 at a new school site, located at 7, Jericho Lane, Barkestone NG13 0HF. The pupils in this new provision would have complex needs similar to those already within the school's provision for 7- to 14-year-olds.
- This was the school's first material change inspection for these proposed changes to the school's provision.
- The Department for Education commissioned the inspector to inspect the suitability of the school's provision for the new age range of pupils the school wishes to teach. The commission requested the inspector to inspect: the curriculum; the quality of teaching; the provision for pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the suitability of the school's premises and accommodation; and the quality of the school's leadership and management.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, headteacher and other leaders.
- The inspector undertook a tour of the proposed new site.
- The inspector considered the school's documentation relating to curriculum and safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at the school's single central register and the system for undertaking checks on new staff.

Inspection team

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Inspection dates

16–18 January 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher has built a cohesive team which has a strong commitment to improving the life chances of the pupils.
- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points as a result of effective teaching and a curriculum that is relevant to their needs.
- The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to experience learning in a range of contexts, including outdoors and off-site. This ensures that pupils are motivated to engage with their learning.
- Leaders with responsibility for different subjects have detailed knowledge of individual pupils' learning and progress. Planning is, therefore, personalised and well matched to pupils' needs.
- Safeguarding is effective. The school has robust systems in place and staff are well trained and knowledgeable.
- Relationships in the school are strong. Staff actively promote the school's values and there are clear expectations that are lived out in the day-to-day life of the school.
- Behaviour is good overall because all members of staff apply consistently the agreed behaviour management strategies. Where individual pupils display challenging behaviour, this is managed effectively in line with school policy.
- The school has a strategic plan for further improvement, but this lacks focus and priorities do not have measurable or time-related outcomes.
- Not all leaders are fully involved in monitoring the work of the school or supporting colleagues to develop and improve their practice.

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?

- Ensure that the school improvement plan is more effective in enabling leaders to gauge whether actions have been successful within the given timeframe.
- Establish and embed a monitoring and evaluation calendar which involves all leaders in a range of focused activities.
- Reduce inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by ensuring that leaders, including subject leaders, provide targeted support and training for colleagues.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The headteacher has ensured that there are robust systems and documentation which underpin the day-to-day work of the school. The parent company provides support for some aspects of the running of the school, for example finance and human resources.
- The headteacher is providing strong and focused leadership. She is well supported by her strong and cohesive team, who are committed to improving the life chances for the pupils. There is a culture of high expectations within a warm and welcoming atmosphere.
- The proprietor and leaders are ambitious for pupils and strive to ensure that transition from the school is carefully considered and pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Older pupils are helped to find out about different options available to them beyond school, to help them prepare for their adult life.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. It ensures that pupils develop basic literacy and numeracy skills and apply them in different contexts. Physical education (PE) lessons, which usually take place off site, provide a range of opportunities for physical development. The school makes particularly good use of the woodland area available to support aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their knowledge and understanding of the environment.
- The personal, social and health and economic curriculum includes a wide range of topics to help pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain, and both national and global issues. For example, they learn about the British parliamentary and justice systems, and are encouraged to discuss the impact of events and actions which may challenge such institutions.
- Leaders know the school well and have an accurate view of what is working well and what could improve further. They have worked with external consultants to validate their evaluations. However, although they have identified what needs to be improved in an action plan, this plan is not as effective as it might be in ensuring that improvements can be regularly reviewed and happen in a timely manner.
- There is a calendar outlining when monitoring and evaluation will take place. This work is at an early stage and, as yet, does not include all leaders in a full range of activities. Findings from monitoring activities do not fully inform improvement priorities.

Governance

- The proprietor and school leaders have established a 'supportive committee' to provide support and challenge to school leaders. Members have skillsets which are helpful to the school. The group has access to employees of the parent company when further, specific expertise is required. Plans are in place to extend this group so that there is greater connection with the local community.
- The proprietor, who is employed by the parent company, is knowledgeable about the school and is actively involved in aspects, such as commissioning for places at the school, financial planning and recruitment.

- The proprietor and headteacher meet regularly to discuss the school's work. The proprietor is aware of the need to be outward-looking and build relationships with other schools and organisations locally, so good practice can be shared. This is also seen as a way of helping the school's pupils to achieve effective transition back into mainstream education or other appropriate destinations.
- The proprietor and supportive committee are improving the level of challenge to the school. They have generated a strategic plan which identifies improvement actions. However, as with the school's improvement plan, the strategic plan is not as effective as it could be in setting out how the supportive committee and leaders can check the progress of key actions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established clear procedures to safeguard all members of the school community. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and documentation is detailed and of a good quality. Staff apply the school's expectations and policies consistently, and are mindful of pupils' welfare and safety at all times.
- All members of staff are observant and vigilant when working with pupils. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are fully up to date with the most recent government guidance. They meet regularly to review pupils' well-being and discuss therapeutic approaches they can use to support pupils.
- Incidents are recorded carefully on an electronic system so all staff have access to relevant information about individual pupils and can meet their needs appropriately. Leaders also monitor incidents so they can identify any patterns of behaviour, which they can then respond to by adjusting provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is effective as a result of the good relationships that teachers and teaching assistants develop with pupils. Most teaching is on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, and this enables adults to take a flexible approach that is responsive to pupils' needs at the time.
- Pupils engage with their learning because teachers make every effort to make it interesting and relevant. They plan different types of activity to promote curiosity and positive learning behaviour. As a result, pupils enjoy the confidence adults have in them and often try hard to do their best.
- At the end of every term, the school provides detailed information about pupils' progress to parents and carers. This includes information about attendance and behaviour, demonstrating pupils' non-academic progress.
- Books show that pupils regularly complete written work, as well as taking part in practical activities and discussion. All work is thoroughly marked by the subject leaders, who, in line with the school's policy, identify additional challenge and next steps in learning. This gives them a detailed knowledge of pupils' abilities.

- Although there are written comments in pupils' books, in line with the school marking policy much of the feedback to pupils is verbal, at the point of learning. This means that any misconceptions can be dealt with quickly and a good pace of learning is maintained.
- Questioning is often a key element in lessons. Skilful questions provide challenge and encourage active participation and positive attitudes. However, the quality of questioning seen during the inspection varied from lesson to lesson.
- Subject leaders plan and mark pupils' work, and liaise with teaching assistants, who deliver some lessons. This sometimes leads to inconsistencies, because planning is sometimes interpreted differently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are pleased to be a valued member of the school community. One pupil explained that the hands making up the canopy of the tree on the school's logo 'show that you are part of the school family'.
- Pupils feel safe at the school. They have confidence that all adults will look after them and say that if they are worried or unhappy 'someone will notice'. They all have weekly sessions with their key workers, who provide regular opportunities to discuss any concerns that pupils may have.
- Pupils value the support they receive from staff members. As pupils settle in to the school, their confidence as learners grows. This is because, as one pupil's 'rap' declared, 'the teachers have hope'.
- Pupils know about the risks associated with social media and internet use. They learn about how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils know about bullying and say that any issues are dealt with very quickly. They are less sure about different types of bullying and where it differs from falling out with a friend.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is an orderly environment, where the caring ethos permeates all aspects of its work.
- Pupils generally follow the expectations of the school and are rewarded if they are 'caught doing the right thing'. Some pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour at times and this sometimes leads to the need for intervention. However, any poor behaviour is managed well and consistently, and disruption is kept to a minimum.
- Leaders track behavioural incidents in detail. Because they reflect carefully on the causes, leaders are able to reduce the number of incidents through the support they provide. In this way, aspects of pupils' non-academic progress can be demonstrated.

- Attendance is good for most pupils. However, overall attendance is a little below the national average, because, given the small numbers on roll, occasional absences have a significant impact on overall figures.

Outcomes for pupils

- Overall pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Work in books shows that some pupils are making rapid progress, filling gaps in learning and working at standards that are closer to expectations for their age.
- Pupils read competently and accurately, often with some expression. They have good understanding of the text they are reading, and answer questions about it. Less-confident readers are more hesitant and have limited decoding skills, but try to find meanings through contextual clues or pictures. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and give examples of books they have enjoyed.
- Mathematics books show that pupils complete a variety of activities to develop fluency in calculation. For many pupils, there are gaps in prior learning, which mean that the work they tackle can be at different levels of difficulty, but contributes equally to their overall progress. Some pupils confidently tackle multi-step problems and apply a range of mathematical skills in different contexts. Other pupils complete work successfully with support but, as yet, lack the confidence to work independently.
- Attainment in writing is often low relative to pupils' ages, but the content of the work is often more mature than the accuracy of the writing would suggest. Books show that pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are improving.
- Pupils make equally good progress in other subjects, such as environmental sciences, history, geography and art. For example, they show an increasing knowledge and understanding of habitats, historical events and the work of famous artists.
- Although no pupils are working at standards expected for their age, some have the potential to do so and are making rapid progress towards their individual goals.

School details

Unique reference number	142939
DfE registration number	855/6038
Inspection number	10039198

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 school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	The Place Young People's Company
Chair	Sonia Frankish
Headteacher	Cate Tumman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£51,333
Telephone number	01949 844440
Website	www.theplace-care.co.uk/independent-school
Email address	cate@theplace-ypc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Place Young People's Company, which is a specialist provider for children with complex needs. The company's aims are 'to provide therapeutic care and nurture to young people who have emotional, social, educational and behavioural difficulties, as a result of past trauma and attachment difficulties'. The company owns four children's homes.
- The school was registered by the Department for Education on 6 October 2016. This is the school's first standard independent inspection.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is situated on the Belvoir Castle Estate. The main building is a converted farmhouse. There is a range of outbuildings, some of which have been converted to teaching spaces. There are paddocks and a ménage within the site. The school keeps horses, pigs, alpacas and chickens.
- The school has exclusive use of a woodland area a short distance from the main school where pupils go for some lessons. Local sports facilities are used regularly for PE lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector toured the school with the headteacher and carried out a check of the school's premises, including the outbuildings and grounds.
- The inspector observed the learning of a number of pupils, both indoors and in an outdoor setting. These visits were carried out with the headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with pupils and listened to some pupils read.
- Working alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the inspector scrutinised a range of pupils' books and reviewed the school's assessment information.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, school policies and a number of documents relating to safeguarding.
- There were two responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector took into account the eight responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jane Salt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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