

Inspection of Redbourn Park School

Grovehill Youth Centre, Stevenage Rise, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 6BH

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 June 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 Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils join this school having had negative experiences of education previously. The members of the dedicated staff team quickly understand pupils' needs through well-managed transition when pupils join. The school's positive and nurturing approach motivates pupils to come to school. As a result, attendance is high. This supports pupils to successfully start to re-engage with learning.

Staff are determined pupils will achieve well. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Staff know each pupil's targets. A combination of therapeutic and academic provision supports pupils to work towards their intended outcomes.

Pupils are able to be themselves and express their unique personalities. Staff work hard to respond nimbly to pupils' social and emotional needs. They apply a variety of behaviour management strategies effectively, to encourage pupils to settle, follow routines and access learning. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong.

For many pupils, this is their first opportunity to engage in wider school life. They experience school trips and take part in activities linked to their interests and talents, such as in horse riding, dance and art. This develops their confidence and self-esteem. Parents also appreciate the positive impact this school has on their children.

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

The school has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is now mapped out well in all subjects. Staff know what pupils need to learn. Prior to joining the school, pupils have experienced much disruption to their learning and education. Once settled, pupils typically make good progress from their starting points. Some pupils continue to require additional encouragement and support to fully engage in learning, including in reading and writing.

When pupils are interested in a subject, they show sustained levels of concentration. This is seen particularly in art, history, science, mathematics and in some aspects of creative writing when work is scribed. Staff think about what topics will interest pupils most. They break learning down into small steps to support pupils' attention and processing needs. Staff check that pupils can remember what they have been taught. These checks help staff set work that moves pupils' learning on.

However, there are times when the work set for pupils is less well matched to their specific needs or prior knowledge. This is in part because the individual targets the school sets pupils are not always precise enough. It is also because staff are still getting to grips with the most effective ways to deepen pupils' learning, while still addressing these specific needs. This means, on occasions, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to secure or deepen their understanding. Sometimes, expectations are too low, or work is set that does not precisely link to filling a specific gap in knowledge. This can lead to pupils losing interest in their work.

Sometimes, they complete work too easily or are insufficiently prepared for the activity to start with. As a result, staff at times miss opportunities to plug specific gaps or deepen pupils' understanding.

Younger pupils have daily opportunities to read and practise the sounds they need to know. Books are appropriately matched to their reading ability. Pupils enjoy having stories and non-fiction read to them. Pupils are supported to catch up in reading. However, a few younger pupils do not catch up quickly enough. This is because they are not consistently provided with activities that build on what they know with enough precision. This then affects their enjoyment of reading and willingness to participate in wider learning.

Pupils are provided with effective communication and language support from a range of specialist therapists. This helps pupils to express their feelings safely and achieve well against their targets. Staff are adept at pre-empting, managing and safeguarding pupils' emotional and sensory needs. Pupils learn a range of ways to help themselves regulate. They trust the staff around them to help them do this. Adults and pupils have high levels of respect for each other. When incidents do occur, the school helps pupils to reflect so they move on positively. There are very few instances of unkind behaviour towards peers. Many pupils experience proper friendships for the first time here.

Staff teach healthy and safe relationships in a way that meets pupils' specific needs and levels of understanding. This is very sensitively managed. Pupils are encouraged to help in the wider community, such as litter picking and raising money for charity. The school facilitates pupils' understanding of how to be independent. This includes going shopping, cooking, accessing play parks and understanding the personal space of others. Pupils learn about treating people equally. Pupils are starting to understand about different cultures.

The proprietor body and governors ensure that the school meets all the independent school standards, including the requirements under schedule 10 of the Equalities Act 2010. Regular quality assurance checks by the proprietor body ensure that the building is well maintained and safe. There are regular checks on staff well-being. The proprietor body has a detailed oversight of attendance, safeguarding and behaviour. It has also ensured that school leaders have the necessary expertise to improve the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- There are times when staff do not set work that is ambitious enough or matched closely enough to pupils' needs. When this happens, there are missed

opportunities for pupils to engage in learning that extends their knowledge. Pupils at times finish work too early as they can already do it and then disengage. The school needs to ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge to develop tasks that sustain pupils' interest in learning and ensure that pupils achieve what they are fully capable of.

- Some of the individual learning targets set for pupils lack precision. This means that gaps in learning are not always addressed quickly enough. This includes for some younger pupils who require additional support in reading. The school should ensure that they identify with precision the exact outcomes pupils need to secure.

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	148472
DfE registration number	919/6018
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10321487
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Redbourn Park Group Limited
Chair	Richard McCabe
Headteacher	Steve Lloyd
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,000 to £75,000
Telephone number	01442 601252
Website	www.redbournpark.co.uk
Email address	admin@redbournpark.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 to 17 November 2022

Information about this school

- The school is currently owned by Redbourn Park Group Ltd with three directors, all of whom work full time in the school and across the organisation's services.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2023 and also oversees the separately registered secondary school site.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils who attend the school have autism and additional needs linked to anxiety, trauma, communication difficulties and social, emotional and mental health.
- Places at the school are commissioned by four local authorities.
- The school does not use alternative provision. However, it does have its own therapy hub, which some pupils on roll access. This operates off site and is owned by the proprietor.
- All pupils attend the school site. There is no remote education provision.
- Inspection history:
 - In November 2022, Ofsted conducted the school's first standard inspection. The school was judged to require improvement. Three of the independent standards were not met.
 - The DfE issued a statutory notice on 2 February 2023. The proprietor was required to provide an action plan to highlight how leaders would address the unmet standards. In February 2023, an action plan was evaluated by Ofsted as not acceptable.
 - A progress monitoring inspection was conducted by Ofsted in June 2023. Two of the independent school standards remained unmet.
 - The DfE issued a statutory notice on 19 July 2023. The proprietor was required to provide an action plan to highlight how leaders would address the unmet standards. In October 2023, an action plan was evaluated by Ofsted as acceptable with some modifications.
 - A progress monitoring inspection was conducted by Ofsted in December 2023. All of the independent school standards checked at this inspection were met.
- The registration authority for independent schools granted the school a temporary material change to run from September 2023 to July 2024. This meant the school could admit a small number of Year 7 pupils until its secondary school site opened in February 2024. These Year 7 pupils left to attend the new secondary school in April 2024.
- The registration authority for independent schools granted the school a permanent material change in February 2024 to raise the number allowed on roll to 15.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the clinical lead, teaching staff and therapists.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors spoke to leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, look at pupils' workbooks and spoke with staff.
- The inspectors also looked at a range of pupils' work from across the curriculum as well as their individual EHC plans and learning plans.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the chair of the proprietor body. The lead inspector also met the directors and a governor.
- To check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors spoke to the headteacher, members of the proprietor board, staff and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons, observed social times and toured the school site.
- The lead inspector also visited the off-site provision therapy hub.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation, school improvement plan and governance minutes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses gathered through Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, which included six free-text comments. The lead inspector also spoke to parents at school pick up. There were no responses to the staff surveys. No pupils answered the pupil survey. However, the inspectors spoke to several pupils from different year groups during the inspection, as well as a range of staff.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Pryor

Ofsted Inspector

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