

Inspection of Longridge School

Levedale Road, Penkridge, Staffordshire ST18 9AL

Inspection dates: 27 to 29 February 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 Inadequate

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and well cared for at Longridge School. Staff work closely with individual pupils and take time to understand their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils have positive and trusting relationships with staff and know that everyone wants the best for them.

Pupils are generally calm and well behaved. Staff use behaviour support plans effectively to help manage pupils' individual needs. This helps staff spot when pupils need additional time to regulate their emotions. Pupils enjoy sitting and talking with staff at social times.

Pupils study a well-balanced curriculum. Those who are still at the early stages of learning to read are given the right support to help them learn their phonics and read with greater fluency. Pupils enjoy their learning in many other areas, particularly food technology.

Many pupils enjoy the additional opportunities the school provides. This includes celebrating different events such as Burns Night, internet safety day and Shrove Tuesday. The school is rightly proud of the money that pupils have raised for different charities.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. As one parent commented, 'We really value the school's approach and the support and care they give. They definitely go beyond our expectations.'

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

The school has made great strides forward since the previous standard inspection. Leaders have acted with purpose and determination to address areas of weakness. The curriculum across the school is now appropriately structured and sequenced; it is well matched to pupils' needs and their stage of development. Leaders have given careful thought as to what pupils will study in the different pathways the school offers. This sets out the building blocks that pupils need to know and remember to complete more complex tasks.

Teachers and support staff deliver the curriculum well. Resources are used highly effectively to help pupils make sense of what they are learning. For example, the use of picture cards and video clips in English helps pupils to understand narrative structures. In mathematics, staff use practical activities with cards and games to help pupils become more secure in their numeracy skills. There are also cross-curricular links made to mathematics when pupils are in food technology lessons. Pupils are encouraged to think about how to cut pizzas into halves and quarters. This all helps pupils to make progress in their learning from their starting points.

The school has rightly prioritised the teaching of reading and has made several improvements in this area. All staff have received training on how to teach the

school's phonics scheme. This has ensured that there is greater consistency in how this is delivered to pupils in the classroom. There are daily phonics lessons and teachers read books to pupils regularly. Staff carefully check the progress pupils make with their reading. This helps to spot where pupils may need additional help and support. Teachers ensure that the reading books they give to pupils are well matched to their phonics ability to help them practise the sounds they know. Many pupils make good progress with their reading. However, some pupils are not given enough time to practise their writing. This means that they struggle with their letter formation and spelling.

All pupils who attend the school have SEND and an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). The school ensures that these plans are reviewed regularly so that they accurately reflect pupils' needs and the targets they should be working towards. Leaders use EHC plans to create provision records that staff can contribute to and use in lessons. Staff know pupils extremely well and make suitable adaptations to lesson activities to help them access learning.

The school has put in place a well-structured personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Leaders have thought carefully about the content of this curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. They have set out an eight-stage approach so that pupils are taught topics at an appropriate level for their stage of development. The PSHE curriculum covers topics including healthy relationships, staying safe online and emotional well-being. Leaders also ensure that the PSHE curriculum is flexible to adapt to pupils' emerging needs. As part of pupils' wider personal development, the school celebrates different cultural events such as Diwali and Eid. There are also monthly activities planned into the school calendar where pupils learn about fundamental British values.

The school has implemented a new careers programme this year. This provides lessons in careers and is personalised to individual pupils. The school has recently appointed a careers adviser who is helping the school to develop links through the curriculum. Pupils have also enjoyed being part of an enterprise project. The school's weekly 'tuck shop' is run directly by pupils who manage both the money and stock. Leaders recognise there is further work to do with their careers programme to strengthen links to the world of work.

The proprietor body has taken decisive steps since the previous inspection to strengthen its work with the school. There are clear quality assurance systems in place that provide accurate information to termly proprietor board meetings. The proprietor body provides effective support and challenge to the school in order that the independent school standards are met. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its leadership. They are proud to work here and feel well supported with their workload.

The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to practise their writing skills. This means that some pupils continue to struggle with letter formation, spelling and constructing sentences. The school should provide more time for pupils to practise their writing to help develop their literacy skills.
- The school is in the process of developing its careers education, information, advice and guidance. Some aspects are relatively new, and pupils' understanding of pathways beyond school is more limited. The school should further embed and enhance its careers provision so that pupils have more opportunities to engage with the world of work and explore more potential pathways for when they leave school.

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	148734
DfE registration number	860/6087
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10322610
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Reflexion Care Group Ltd
Chair	Amanda Clarke
Headteacher	Carol Harvey
Annual fees (day pupils)	£70,200
Telephone number	01785 556710
Website	https://reflexionseducation.org.uk/longridge-school
Email address	enquiries@longridgeschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 November 2022

Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection took place in November 2022 where it was judged to be inadequate.
- A progress monitoring inspection took place in October 2023 where the school was judged to meet all the independent school standards.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Longridge School is an independent school for pupils aged seven to 18 years. Pupils are often placed in the school following a breakdown of placement in their previous primary or secondary school.
- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. The primary needs for most pupils are autism and moderate learning difficulties.

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.

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and the operations director for Reflexion Care Group Ltd. They also met with other teachers and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and reading, mathematics, food technology and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 first. The requirements for safeguarding in the independent school standards are met.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, risk

assessments, attendance information and behaviour logs to check compliance with the independent school standards.

- The school's website was checked.

Inspection team

Mark Howes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis

Ofsted Inspector

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