

Inspection of Longridge School

Levedale Road, Penkridge, Staffordshire ST18 9AL

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school where staff know and care deeply for pupils. Pupils are sometimes anxious when they start at this school, but quickly settle and trust the adults who work with them. Pupils are happy and safe and keen to come to school every day.

The school is bright and has well-resourced spaces in which to play and learn. The sensory room and trampoline are very popular. Pupils have opportunities to go on trips to help them to develop an understanding of the wider world. However, leaders have not given enough thought to what they want pupils to know, so that pupils are ready for life in modern Britain.

The expert support of staff helps pupils to improve how they behave in school. Pupils know when and how to ask for quiet time. This helps them to settle and be ready for learning. There have been no incidents of bullying in school. If it did occur, staff would sort it out quickly.

Leaders have developed a curriculum for some subjects. However, they have not ensured that staff use this curriculum and the assessment strategies to plan their teaching. As a result, pupils do not know and remember more of the curriculum.

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

Leaders have developed an appropriately sequenced curriculum for some subjects in Years 3 to 8. They have set out the key information for pupils to know and remember in these curriculum subjects. However, some teachers are unaware of these curriculum plans. Others do not follow them. Instead, they use various resources in lessons. As a result, pupils do not receive the curriculum that leaders intend them to and they do not achieve as well as they could.

The curriculum in Years 9 to 12 is well thought out and sequenced. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers follow this curriculum. Pupils are not supported well to gain the knowledge and skills they need. This means that they are not as prepared as they should be for their next stage in education, training or employment.

Teachers do not use their checks on what pupils know to plan learning. For example, in humanities, teachers provide lessons that are often standalone. These lessons do not build on what pupils already know. As a result, pupils do not develop depth in their learning.

All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan that sets out how their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) should be met. Leaders have not considered how they will use the information in the EHC plans to help pupils learn. Leaders have not ensured that teachers know and use the information in the EHC plans to meet the needs of pupils. For example, leaders have not ensured that

teachers consistently use specific strategies identified in the plans. Leaders are beginning to identify the training that staff need to help them meet pupils' needs. However, this training is at the earliest stages of planning. Currently, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders are committed and passionate about the teaching of reading. 'Drop everything and read' sessions are part of daily life at the school. Pupils enjoy reading books in the library and the classrooms. Some pupils are very proud that they are beginning to learn to read. They are keen to talk about the new words they are learning and the books they are reading.

Leaders know that many pupils come to the school struggling to read. These pupils become frustrated. Leaders have introduced a phonics curriculum for those pupils at the earliest stages of reading. However, not all teachers follow this curriculum well enough. Pupils are not being helped to catch up or to learn to read well enough.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive appropriate training to help them manage pupils' behaviour. Staff design individual behaviour plans for each pupil to help support them. This is working well. Pupils quickly learn the school routines and follow these. Leaders have created calm spaces around the school, which pupils use to help them if they are feeling anxious. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare, but leaders scrutinise incident records when these happen. This ensures that staff follow the behaviour plans and that pupils get the help they need. Pupils are learning how to manage their feelings. This in turn allows them to access their learning.

Leaders have good intentions to introduce careers advice and guidance. However, this is at an early stage of development. Opportunities to promote pupils' personal development are provided through trips and in some curriculum subjects. For example, some pupils enjoyed a trip to an air museum. Other pupils are developing a love of gardening and enjoy planting flowers in the school grounds. Some plans are in place to help pupils learn about different cultures, traditions and the importance of respecting others. However, teachers do not follow these plans consistently. Leaders have not thought carefully about what personal skills they want pupils to know and learn at each stage of their education. Consequently, pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for life after they leave school.

The proprietor body does not have a strong oversight of the school's curriculum. It has not ensured that the school meets the independent school standards (the standards). As a result of this poor oversight, the proprietor body does not know the aspects of the school that need improving, and leaders have not done enough to tackle the school's weaknesses. The school meets schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher and proprietor body are determined to keep the children safe. They check that staff are suitable to work with pupils. Leaders provide comprehensive training and support to all staff. Staff value this training, and this helps staff to be vigilant when working with pupils to identify any concerns. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe.

All staff know to raise any concerns, however minor these might be. These concerns are acted on quickly. Leaders know to escalate a concern should it be necessary. Leaders are now working to ensure that safeguarding policies match the strong practice across the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders are still writing many of the subject curriculums. Where these have been written, staff do not consistently follow them, and sometimes staff are unaware these exist. As a result, pupils do not benefit from a good quality of education. Leaders need to ensure that the subject curriculums are completed and implemented by staff.
- Teachers do not use assessment and their knowledge of pupils to deliver a sequence of lessons that help pupils to know and remember more. As a result, teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. Pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of education as they could be. Leaders need to ensure that the teachers identify the needs of pupils and how best to support them, and deliver lessons matched to pupils' needs.
- Some teachers do not systematically follow the synthetic and systematic phonics scheme that the school has chosen. Therefore, pupils do not make the progress in reading that they could. Leaders must ensure that teachers implement the selected phonics programme consistently.
- Leaders do not consistently plan opportunities for pupils' personal development, including for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This means that pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders should decide what they want pupils to know and learn in respect of pupils' personal development, and put plans in place to ensure that this happens.
- Staff do not have the subject and specialist knowledge they require to deliver the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Pupils are not supported as well as they could be to learn. Leaders must clearly define what training staff need, and implement plans to deliver this training.
- Staff are not always aware of the specific needs of individual pupils. They do not use the recommended strategies laid out in EHC plans when teaching pupils. Pupils with SEND therefore do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should help and support staff to know how they can adapt pupils' learning appropriately to support all pupils effectively.

- Leaders' checks on the school's performance and compliance are not rigorous. The proprietor and governors have not made sure that the independent school standards are consistently met and that the curriculum is ambitious. This impacts on the learning experiences of pupils. Leaders must make sure that they fully understand their responsibilities. They should ensure that the school meets the standards consistently and that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and be ready for the next stage of their education.

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	10238165
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	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Reflexions 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	carol.harvey@longridgeschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is an independent school for pupils aged seven to 18. Pupils are often placed in the school following a breakdown of placement in their previous primary or secondary school.
- The school was registered with the Department for Education on 23 September 2021.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan.
- The school caters for pupils with SEND. The primary need for most pupils is moderate learning difficulties.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of 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.
- This was the first standard inspection of the school since the pre-registration inspection in September 2021.
- Inspectors held meetings with a representative from the proprietor body, the headteacher, the SEND coordinator, curriculum leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website and additional documents provided by leaders during the inspection.
- The inspectors made checks of the premises and other information to evaluate compliance with the standards.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics and humanities. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at pupils' work in science and religious education, and the personal, social, health and economics education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculums.

- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Pupils' case files were reviewed. The single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- Inspectors examined behaviour support plans and incident records, and observed pupils at other times of the day to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Rachel Henrick

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are—
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that—
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
 - 2(2)(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school—
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

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

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
 - 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which–
 - 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;
 - 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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