

Inspection of The Grange Therapeutic School

15-17 Somerby Road, Knossington, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 8LY

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

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?

Pupils are greeted warmly by staff when they arrive each morning. Some pupils begin by enjoying a healthy breakfast. Others relish the challenge of walking round the lake. Pupils value this time before lessons start to talk with staff about any concerns. Clear structures and routines help pupils get ready for learning.

Pupils who struggle to manage their emotions and feelings are supported well. They learn how to resolve conflicts and repair relationships. Most pupils respond positively to this approach. They get on well with each other. Bullying is unusual. Staff deal with it effectively. Pupils say that staff treat them fairly and with respect.

Personalised curriculum programmes play to pupils' strengths and interests. They know that everybody wants them to do well. Many pupils gain suitable education and training placements when they leave school. However, the curriculum is not organised carefully enough in some subjects. Not all pupils get the help they need to become better readers.

Pupils love experiencing the outdoors. Many learn valuable skills in bushcraft. Some participate successfully in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. These activities help to develop pupils' character and promote their well-being.

Parents and carers praise the nurture, guidance and support that staff give their children. One typically stated, 'My child has blossomed since joining this school.'

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

Leaders design bespoke programmes for pupils. They tailor these programmes to pupils' individual needs and aspirations. Many pupils study a mixture of academic and vocational subjects. Some pupils enjoy courses delivered by alternative providers. A small number of pupils engage successfully with the school's 'vocational plus' programme. Therapeutic support helps pupils develop their resilience and self-esteem. This flexible approach ensures that most pupils are prepared well for the next stage.

Leaders check how well pupils can read when they join the school. However, staff do not use this information consistently well to help pupils become confident and fluent readers. Teachers do not use the new phonics programme precisely enough to address gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge. Pupils' reading books sometimes do not match the sounds they need to practise. Staff do not insist that pupils use phonics to read unfamiliar words. Some pupils do not get the help they need to read fluently and with confidence. Leaders have started to raise the profile of reading in school. Access to online resources has increased pupils' choices of books. Pupils are beginning to have more opportunities to develop a love of reading across the curriculum.

In the lower school, leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum. They order new subject content logically so that pupils can build on what they have already learned. The curriculum content is not as well organised in the upper school. Some curriculum leaders do not think carefully enough about the order they teach new topics. Teachers do not always choose the most effective methods to teach pupils new information. Pupils sometimes struggle to know more and remember more. Some curriculum leaders are relatively new to their positions. They are still learning how to carry out their roles effectively.

Leaders follow well-practised procedures to help pupils when they join the school. Staff invest time building positive relationships, so that pupils learn to trust them. Staff manage disruptions to the daily routines calmly and effectively. Pupils feel listened to, and their views are respected. Most pupils improve their behaviour over time. As one parent explained, 'Staff give my child the space, security and expertise to help him thrive.'

Some pupils have struggled to attend well following COVID-19. Leaders' actions are beginning to bring about improvements. Many pupils improve their attendance the longer they are at the school.

Pupils benefit from an extensive programme of activities that enrich the curriculum. They take part in trips to the theatre and enjoy residential visits. They made poppies to display locally to mark Remembrance Day. They are raising funds towards building a helipad at a nearby hospital. Pupils learn about diversity and tolerance. Pupils in the lower school marked International Women's Day. Upper-school pupils have set up a group to celebrate diversity in heritage, gender and sexual orientation. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education. However, some pupils do not have a well-rounded knowledge of different faiths and cultures.

Most staff are positive about working at the school. They appreciate the help they get from leaders with their workload and well-being. Recent actions by the proprietor board have helped to recruit and retain staff.

Detailed updates from senior leaders keep those responsible for governance well informed. The proprietor board has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Regular audits of the provision identify any issues that need addressing. The building and the site are well maintained. Health and safety procedures are robust. Risk assessments are detailed. Policies are up to date and reflect the latest statutory guidance. The safeguarding and RSE and health education policies are available on the school's website. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They are alert to any signs that a pupil may be at risk of potential harm. Leaders respond quickly to any concerns raised. They review pupils' individual risk assessments regularly and keep detailed records of their actions. Leaders work closely with a wide range of external agencies to get pupils the right support.

Leaders complete appropriate checks when pupils receive part of their education at another provider. They take timely action when there are concerns that an adult's actions may place a pupil at risk of potential harm.

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

- Leaders have identified the need to prioritise reading. However, leaders' plans to support this are not yet securely in place. Some staff do not support pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read well enough. These pupils do not always get the help they need to be able to read accurately and fluently. Leaders must ensure that there is a coherent and consistent approach to the teaching of reading. They should ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to support pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read. They should make sure that pupils' reading books consistently match their reading knowledge. They should encourage staff to identify opportunities for pupils to read often and widely across the curriculum.
- The curriculum is not planned consistently well between the lower and the upper-school provisions. While the curriculum in a subject is often well sequenced in the lower school, this is not always the case in the upper school. Not all subject leaders take into account what pupils have already learned when pupils transition to the upper school. Teachers do not always make the most effective pedagogical choices when implementing the curriculum. Some pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum in each subject is planned logically and implemented consistently well, with a continuous curriculum running from the lower school to the upper-school provision.
- Some curriculum leaders are relatively new to their roles. They are still developing the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their roles effectively. They have not made sure that the curriculum is well sequenced and implemented consistently well. Senior leaders need to provide curriculum leaders with the right support so that they have the knowledge and skills they need to be effective in their roles.

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	120330
DfE registration number	855/6010
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10232287
Type of school	Independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Principal	Ollie Sharp
Annual fees (day pupils)	£74,000
Telephone number	01664 454264
Website	http://thegrangetherapeuticschool.co.uk/
Email address	Office@knossington.rutland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 to 8 March 2018

Information about this school

- The Grange Therapeutic School is an independent special school. The school provides education for pupils aged between eight and 18 years old.
- The school has two sites. The main site is used by upper-school pupils. The second site is a short walking distance away from the main site and is attended by pupils in the lower school.
- There have been some significant changes to senior leadership since the previous inspection. The chair of the proprietor board, the head of education and two assistant headteachers have been appointed. The special educational needs

coordinator and the designated safeguarding lead took up their roles during this academic year.

- A number of curriculum leaders have been in post for a relatively short period of time. A significant number of staff have joined the school since the pandemic.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Most pupils have social, emotional or mental health needs. Many pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- Pupils travel to the school from several local authorities.
- Pupils who are above the compulsory school age receive their education as part of the main school. They pursue a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs, including preparing them for adulthood.
- The school uses five unregistered alternative providers for pupils to receive some of their education. The school also uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place on 6 to 8 March 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal, the head of education and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with safeguarding leads to examine safeguarding records, the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central record. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors did deep dives in four subjects: mathematics, science, reading, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during social times and spoke with some pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the proprietor board on the telephone.

- Inspectors spoke on the telephone with representatives of three of the school's alternative providers.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans, a variety of school policies, information about pupils' behaviour and attendance, examples of pupils' EHC plans and individual risk assessments for pupils.
- Inspectors took into account responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also noted responses to the staff survey and the pupil survey.
- In order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors reviewed facilities at both sites and considered relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Williams

Ofsted Inspector

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