

Inspection of Fairfield House School

57–59 Warburton Lane, Partington, Manchester M31 4NL

Inspection dates: 25–27 February 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Fairfield House School is a place where pupils feel safe and happy. Classrooms come alive with happy chatter, singing and laughter as pupils arrive at school. Staff provide a calm and nurturing environment. Pupils and staff enjoy each other's company.

Staff help pupils to develop a love of learning. The headteacher plans a wide range of interesting activities. For example, pupils relish the time they spend on the school's farm. They take pride in caring for the farm animals and growing vegetables. Pupils achieve well personally and academically.

Pupils develop a sense of belonging. They contribute to the school and wider community. For example, pupils made and sold Christmas cards to raise money for charity.

The headteacher has high ambitions for each pupil. She encourages and helps pupils to achieve their best. Pupils are enthusiastic in their lessons. This is because staff know pupils well. They make sure that activities capture pupils' interests.

Pupils typically behave well. Staff provide a wide range of carefully tailored support to help pupils to improve their behaviour. Pupils learn to regulate their own behaviour when needed. Bullying is very rare. Adults handle any situations that do arise with expertise.

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

The headteacher has planned a carefully sequenced curriculum. Across different subjects, staff plan activities that build on pupils' previous learning. At the start of each lesson, staff check that pupils have understood what they have learned before. Staff make sure that pupils revisit their learning to help them know more and remember more. For example, in mathematics, pupils have lots of practice to help them develop accuracy in their written calculations.

Staff plan a wide range of practical experiences to support pupils' learning. For example, in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils learn how to manage a budget. They visit local shops to practise using money. In science, pupils visit local outdoor areas and places of interest. Through well-planned visits, staff help pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

The curriculum that the headteacher has planned is broad and engaging. Pupils develop their skills and knowledge across a range of subjects. For example, in art and design, pupils practise painting and drawing. They use different materials for sculpture. During our visit, a pupil was working with deep concentration to make a model of a volcano. In PSHE education, staff plan lessons which help pupils stay healthy. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy eating. Older students learn important life skills, such as self-care, cooking and how to change bed linen.

Staff help pupils to understand the importance of reading. Pupils practise their reading skills by reading a range of texts. These include books and recipes. Pupils learn to read signs and notices when out on visits. For pupils at an earlier stage of reading, staff share rhymes and reread favourite stories. Staff plan regular opportunities for pupils to practise their reading comprehension skills. The headteacher makes regular checks on how well pupils are learning. She ensures that teaching builds on the reading skills that pupils already have. Some of the early reading books that staff use to help pupils practise their phonics skills are too difficult. They include too many sounds and letters that pupils do not know.

Staff, including those new to the school, have received a wide range of effective training. This has increased their expertise in helping pupils to improve their behaviour. Staff are skilled in supporting pupils' personal development. Most staff have not had recent training in teaching the curriculum. This means that there are some inconsistencies in the approaches that staff use when teaching. For example, staff use different approaches when teaching handwriting.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many have social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff are successful in meeting the diverse range of pupils' needs. A parent we spoke with described the noticeable improvements in her child's behaviour and confidence since attending the school. Pupils are keen to come to school. Attendance is well above the national average.

The school's curriculum is rooted in the personal development of pupils. Staff work hard to build pupils' independence. Pupils develop important skills for their future lives. Students in the sixth form are prepared well for work experience. The headteacher is meticulous in ensuring that students gain the skills they need to contribute to society. For example, a student had plenty of practice helping at meal times to prepare her for work in a local cafe.

The building is well maintained, clean and well resourced. The newly refurbished sensory room is used by pupils on a regular basis. There is an attractive garden area for pupils to get fresh air at breaktimes. Leaders make full use of the school's nearby farm. Pupils access physical education three times a week away from the school building.

Leaders make sure that all staff follow the school's health and safety requirements, including fire regulations and risk assessments. The headteacher keeps parents and carers well informed about the work of the school. The school's policies are available to parents and others. The complaints policy is fully compliant.

The proprietor ensures that all of the independent school standards are met. The headteacher and proprietor are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff provide an extremely caring and nurturing environment. Pupils' safety and welfare take the highest priority for leaders. Staff are effective in keeping pupils safe. Leaders ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and that everyone knows them. All staff read the relevant parts of the latest national guidance about safeguarding.

Leaders work well with other agencies to support pupils. Adults in school make sure that pupils are well looked after. Staff act quickly if they have concerns.

Pupils learn how to stay safe and behave responsibly in different situations, including when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Reading books for pupils who are learning to read are sometimes too difficult for them to practise their decoding skills. Leaders need to make sure that reading books are closely matched to pupils' phonics ability.
- Gaps in staff knowledge have led to some inconsistencies in the approaches to teaching. Leaders should ensure that staff training is used to develop the expertise of staff across different areas of the curriculum. Leaders should use this training to develop a consistent approach to teaching.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 | 136239 |
| DfE registration number | 358/6019 |
| Local authority | Trafford |
| Inspection number | 10128818 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 8 to 25 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 5 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 2 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Mrs Tzaraine Cope |
| Headteacher | Mrs Leanne Doherty |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £41,769 |
| Telephone number | 0161 776 2827 |
| Website | www.fairfieldresidential.co.uk |
| Email address | management@fairfieldresidential.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 16–17 May 2017 |

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place on 16 and 17 May 2017.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Fairfield is a special school that caters for up to eight pupils between the ages of eight and 25 years with autism spectrum disorder, severe learning difficulties, complex health needs and challenging behaviours.

- The school is owned by Fairfield Residential. The company also owns Fairfield farm project, which provides off-site provision for pupils at the school. The farm is located approximately six miles from the school.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- We met with the headteacher. In addition, we held discussions with staff which focused on safeguarding and the curriculum.
- We considered art and design, reading, mathematics and PSHE education as part of this inspection. Inspection activities included discussions with leaders, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils about their learning.
- We spoke with a parent and a pupil's social worker. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the independent school standards, the curriculum, school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- We met with the assistant director of the school.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020