

# Inspection of Spring Valley School

The Old Rectory, Risley Lane, Breaston, Derby DE72 3AU

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Inspection dates: 15 to 17 February 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Staff provide a caring and nurturing environment for pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Staff know pupils' individual needs well. Pupils have a range of difficulties, and staff support pupils to manage all their challenges well. Staff have pupils' interests at the heart of all that they do.

Many pupils have had negative experiences at previous schools. Some have struggled to attend a school or been excluded prior to arriving at Spring Valley. Staff go to great lengths to help pupils fit into the school. Pupils settle into life at school quickly. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. All pupils attend very well. Pupils get on well with each other. They say that sometimes there are 'squabbles', but teachers help them to sort things out. Pupils are not worried about bullying.

Pupils benefit from a structured approach to school life. Routines help pupils understand expectations and appropriate behaviour. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can do and how they should behave. Pupils work hard to meet these expectations.

Pupils understand the school's rewards system. They appreciate being able to earn points that convert to prizes. Pupils say they like their teachers and their school.

Pupils learn about a range of subjects. They enjoy practical activities such as baking biscuits and dissecting a heart. The curriculum is not yet well planned in all subjects so pupils do not learn as well as they could across the curriculum

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

Most pupils have experienced considerable disruption to their education in the past. They arrive at Spring Valley at different points throughout the school year. Leaders' initial aim is to re-engage pupils in school life. Leaders give priority to physical activity to support pupils' physical and mental well-being to prepare them for academic study. This is effective in establishing well-needed routines and high expectations of conduct. Pupils respond well.

Staff have made a good start to developing pupils' reading skills. Pupils receive regular phonics sessions. These sessions are well planned and help pupils to build on their knowledge. However, leaders have not established a consistent approach to teaching phonics across the school. Staff have not been trained to teach phonics. Not all staff have the knowledge they need to support pupils' reading development. Staff promote a love of reading across the school. Teachers read to pupils regularly. Pupils read aloud to adults. Plans are in place to enrol pupils as members of the local library and make regular visits. The school's library contains a range of appropriate books. Plans are in place to develop this further.

The curriculum is well planned in some subjects. For example, in physical education (PE), leaders have devised plans to ensure that pupils experience a range of activities and sports. Lessons revisit prior learning. Plans enable pupils to increase their knowledge and develop their skills.

Teachers continually assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. They correct misconceptions and guide pupils to understand how to rectify mistakes and develop their knowledge.

The curriculum is not well planned across all subject areas. In some subjects, leaders have not identified the important knowledge that pupils should know and by when. Plans do not consider how pupils will build their knowledge over time so that they know and remember more.

Leaders place considerable emphasis on helping pupils to manage their own behaviour. Staff use a range of strategies to help pupils self-regulate. They encourage pupils to reflect and to make appropriate decisions. Pupils' behaviour improves rapidly when they start at the school. Pupils attend extremely well. They are keen not to miss school.

Pupils' personal development is promoted through all aspects of the school's work. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education curriculums cover a range of appropriate topics. Pupils are continually encouraged to develop character, for example by reflecting on their behaviour. A range of activities are planned to help pupils understand how they can contribute to society. For example, pupils are due to take part in a local group's litter-picking campaign in the local community. Pupils learn about their career options in PSHE lessons. Pupils told the lead inspector about expectations of conduct and attitude in interview situations. Pupils understand diversity. They welcome differences in others. Pupils' attitudes reflect the inclusive ethos of the school.

The proprietor has ensured that school leaders have the knowledge and skills they need to ensure that the independent school standards are met. However, the proprietor has not ensured that sufficient staff are in place to manage the different aspects of the school's work. This means that the headteacher has been trying to juggle too many roles. The headteacher has been unable to provide strategic leadership to drive curriculum development and planning.

The proprietor has not had sufficient oversight of the school's work. Leaders have not had the support they need. They have not been held to account for the quality of education. Staff have worked hard to establish a safe and nurturing environment that encourages pupils to engage in school life. They have achieved this successfully. However, they have not had the training and support they need to be fully effective in their roles. For example, staff have not received effective phonics training.

Inspectors identified two minor concerns in relation to the site at the start of the inspection. Leaders took prompt action to resolve these matters and all standards

were met by the end of the inspection. The site is well maintained and provides a suitable environment for learning.

The school provides information to parents as required by the independent school standards. However, the company's website is difficult to navigate, and it is not easy to find relevant information. Parents and carers report that the school communicates with them well. They are kept up to date with all aspects of their child's life at school. Parents are extremely positive about the school.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's routine work supports pupils' safety and well-being. Staff know individual pupils well and are quick to spot any potential safeguarding concerns. Positive relationships between staff and pupils, and between staff and parents, support the school's safeguarding arrangements. Leaders work closely with external agencies.

Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They know how to raise concerns. Staff take all concerns seriously. Appropriate action is taken in response to concerns. Issues are recorded and monitored. Records are detailed and of high quality.

Safer recruitment practices are followed to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The proprietor does not have sufficient oversight of the school's work. The curriculum needs further development and staff have not received the necessary training to be fully effective in their roles. The proprietor should ensure that systems are in place to monitor the quality of leaders' work and to hold leaders to account effectively. The proprietor should ensure that leaders are supported to act when weaknesses are identified.
- Leaders have not established a consistent approach to teaching reading. Not all staff know how to support pupils to develop their reading skills. Leaders should ensure that there is a coherent and consistent approach to teaching reading. They should ensure that all staff, including support staff, are trained to teach reading, including how to teach phonics effectively. They should ensure that pupils' reading books consistently match their reading knowledge.

- The curriculum is not well planned in all subjects. In some subjects, teachers plan independently from each other. Therefore, plans do not consider how pupils will build knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that plans for all subjects identify the key knowledge that pupils should know and by when. Plans should enable pupils to build on prior knowledge and provide opportunities for pupils to revise subject content so that they know and remember more over time.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148406
<b>DfE registration number</b>	831/6014
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	10213187
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	8
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Sean Fitzpatrick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matt Wilson
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£40,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	07961 022304
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.roachesschool.net">www.roachesschool.net</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:mattw@caretodayparalleparents.net">mattw@caretodayparalleparents.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Roaches Farm Schools Network, a group of schools operating as part of Parallel Parents Ltd.
- The school provides full-time education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and autism spectrum disorder.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## 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 the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other staff.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, science, PSHE and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, looked at pupils' work, visited lessons and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about their understanding of safeguarding matters. The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and other related policies. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children and the school's safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector toured the school site to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered parents' views as shared in text messages and through free-text comments entered on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Deborah Mosley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector



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