

Evergreen School

Evergreen House, Ipstones Edge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST10 2LP

Inspection dates

5–7 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher, the headteacher and leadership team are effective in their drive to both care for and teach pupils who have personal, social and emotional needs. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure.
- Leaders ensure that the school works as a highly effective team of specialists who are committed to the needs of their pupils. They ensure that they make good progress both emotionally and academically. They are very experienced in managing pupils who have social and emotional difficulties.
- The work of the school team ensures that pupils who may have missed a significant part of their education are able to settle down and begin to learn. Well-qualified teachers enable pupils to make progress in a wide variety of subjects. A skilled psychotherapist gives pupils significant support for their personal and emotional development.
- The teaching team provides a wide variety of learning experiences for pupils across a broad curriculum. Pupils make good progress because teachers plan individualised learning programmes for them. A successful reward system ensures that pupils are motivated to learn and behave well.
- The quality assurance leader for teaching and learning supports teachers with expert advice. She regularly checks teaching and drives improvements. However, improvements have not yet ensured that pupils develop a strong vocabulary. Sometimes they do not understand words that they read.
- The headteacher supports teachers to design effective mathematics lessons. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils develop their mathematical reasoning in problem-solving tasks. As a result, pupils make less progress in this aspect of mathematics.
- Leaders check pupils' work to ensure that they increase their knowledge, skills and confidence. However, leaders do not monitor the assessments of independent work often enough. As a result, some teachers do not have an accurate enough knowledge of what pupils can do on their own.
- Leaders make sure that the views of pupils are considered in the day-to-day running of the school. As a result, the pupils feel that they are valued. However, pupils have too few opportunities to support people in the local community and the wider world.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring that pupils use a large vocabulary of adventurous and technical words in their talk and writing
 - ensuring that pupils understand the meanings of new words when reading
 - ensuring that pupils develop their mathematical reasoning.
- Improve the personal development of pupils by developing their understanding of the wider world.
- Improve leadership by ensuring that the assessments of pupils' work enable leaders to track pupils' progress more closely.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. All members of staff who completed the inspection questionnaire agree that the school is well led and managed. They are proud to be members of staff at the school.
- Evergreen school benefits from being part of a network of six schools in the locality that are managed by the executive headteacher on behalf of Care Today Children's Services. Pupils in the school therefore benefit from being taught by specialist subject teachers who are employed to work across all six schools.
- The headteacher and executive headteacher have developed a strong team of teachers and specialists. Consequently, they now have a cohesive team of staff who support one another to ensure that pupils have the best of care, both academically and socially.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils therefore feel safe and are able to settle down, often after long periods of absence from any school. Pupils interviewed by the inspector said that they feel safe because the teachers care about them.
- The school team is enhanced by the employment of a skilled psychotherapist who offers weekly therapeutic sessions to individual pupils. She works with each pupils' key worker to support them to develop a programme of support. Consequently, pupils are strongly supported in their social and emotional development. The psychotherapist also leads termly group sessions of reflection for the full staff of the network of schools. In these sessions, they have the opportunity to reflect on a particularly challenging event or aspect of pupil management. She also offers termly individual therapeutic sessions for members of staff. The work of the psychotherapist, therefore, provides effective social and emotional support for both pupils and staff.
- Carers who look after the pupils when not at school say that they have 'really good communication with the teachers'. Because of this, they can give effective help with homework activities and rewards systems.
- The proprietor is in weekly contact with the executive headteacher and challenges him particularly about financial matters. Funding provided to the school from local authorities is well spent. The vast majority of the funding pays for staffing and resources. The executive headteacher also benefits from twice yearly visits from a school improvement adviser.
- The executive headteacher manages a robust cycle of appraisal across all of the schools. Consequently, the headteacher benefits from challenging targets for school improvement. The headteacher leads the performance management of staff at Evergreen School. As a result, all the staff at the school have clear targets to improve their performance.
- Teachers benefit from regular support from the leader with responsibility for teaching and learning as well as from the headteacher. The teaching and learning leader and the headteacher check lessons and scrutinise pupils' work. They make sound judgements and give good advice to teachers. Consequently, teachers know how to improve their teaching

and are able to plan highly personalised programmes for their pupils. The school improvement adviser provides effective support for the teaching and learning leader.

- The headteacher attends half-termly meetings of the local education partnership and benefits from the training that is provided. She passes this training on to the teachers at Evergreen school, as well as other schools in the network. This has a clear impact on systems within the school, for example the new assessment and tracking system. It also has a beneficial impact on the progress pupils make, especially in mathematics.
- The curriculum offered to pupils ensures that they have opportunities to learn a wide variety of subjects. Five teachers, all specialists in their own subjects, teach all of the pupils. Visits to places of interest and a wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities that have a positive impact on pupils' learning enhance the curriculum.
- Pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make good progress. This progress means that they can manage their behaviour and can achieve relevant academic qualifications. Staff at the school work closely with a dyslexia specialist, as well as speech and language specialists, to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Leaders work well with outside agencies, the pupils' social workers and carers. Most pupils have education, health and care plans that are reviewed yearly. As a result, detailed and careful planning contributes well to pupils' social and emotional development and academic progress. Often, pupils have not been in education for long periods, but at this school, they have good opportunities to catch up with their learning.
- Leaders provide pupils with interesting opportunities to learn about the variety of different people who live in this country. They have cultural days when they learn about different countries and learn about a variety of different religions in religious education lessons. Citizenship lessons support them to learn about democracy and equal rights. As a result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The leadership team ensures that pupils have many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils have weekly opportunities at a 'children's meeting' to say what they think about the running of the school. Fundraising for a Douglas Macmillan charity took place recently. However, pupils have not had enough opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider world. They have opportunities to develop socially when they attend after-school activities like army cadets, regular visits to a trampoline centre or a visit to a recording studio or local college.
- Leaders have developed effective arrangements for assessing pupils' starting points on entry to the school. These arrangements provide informative details to create learning targets for the pupils and are reviewed termly. However, assessments of pupils' independent work are not made frequently enough. As a result, staff occasionally do not move pupils on to more challenging work quickly enough.
- The school has not yet admitted primary school age pupils. However, the school has plans and schemes of work, which take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of pupils in this age range.

Governance

- The school does not have a governing body. The proprietor provides challenge to the executive headteacher who monitors the work of the network of schools.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement through self-evaluation and management of staff performance.
- The headteacher has clear targets for improvement that are realistic and manageable.

Safeguarding

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is effective. Pupils say that they feel safe at school because they trust the adults working with them to help them deal with problems.
- Effective policies ensure that leaders promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The school meets statutory responsibilities for safeguarding, providing high-quality care and support for pupils. Leaders ensure the safety of pupils at all times with a robust system of risk assessment.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and social media.
- Accidents and behavioural incidents are carefully recorded and followed up diligently by staff.
- All staff are trained regularly in how to keep pupils safe. They are highly vigilant in their care for the pupils.
- A copy of the school's safeguarding policy, which complies with government guidance, is published on the school's website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good overall. Consequently, pupils make good progress. As well as learning English, mathematics and science, pupils learn history, geography, German, citizenship, religious education, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, art, computer skills and cooking. Their physical education is enhanced by a wide variety of outdoor education experiences. For example, they enjoy walking, rock climbing, abseiling, mountain biking and map reading.
- Teachers make detailed assessments of pupils' abilities when they first arrive in school. These are informed by work from previous schools and the work they do on arrival. The education, health and care plans that teachers set up in collaboration with healthcare professionals from outside agencies underpin pupils' learning.
- Plans for teaching show that teachers plan for different ages, aptitudes and abilities. This means that lessons are well tailored to the needs of each individual pupil.
- Questioning is often skilful, ensuring that pupils consider deeper aspects of learning. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. This gives pupils the confidence they need to be able to succeed. They frequently ask good questions about their learning.

- Teachers are skilled in leading pupils step by step towards new learning. They encourage pupils to learn independently and to find answers for themselves.
- Teachers are highly skilled at motivating pupils to learn. A very successful rewards system ensures that pupils keep trying, even when they feel less confident or find the work challenging.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. The headteacher takes examples of writing to the local network of schools to compare standards of writing with those of other pupils. However, teachers do not regularly ensure that pupils learn to use more adventurous and technical words in their work. This means that standards in writing overall are not as high as they could be.
- Teaching staff provide high-quality texts for pupils to read. They are taught well to discuss issues in the texts that they study. However, teachers do not consistently place enough emphasis on making sure that pupils understand unfamiliar words that they read.
- Pupils benefit from mathematics lessons that are often planned between both the teacher and the headteacher, who is a mathematics specialist. This means that lessons are highly focused on the needs of each pupil, as well as including visual aids that deepen pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in some aspects of mathematics. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. As a result, pupils make less progress in this aspect of mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils take a pride in their school. They are pleased to come to school in uniform and take care of the school environment.
- The psychotherapist provides therapeutic intervention sessions for pupils to enable them to make progress with social, emotional and mental health issues. As a result, pupils become more and more able to settle to learning. They become able to listen and respond to adults and their peers. They become more able to take and be successful in academic examinations.
- Personal, social, health and economic education and citizenship lessons ensure that pupils know about life in modern Britain. They have opportunities to learn about British institutions and about equal opportunities. One pupil reflected the views of many when they said that all people needed to be considered equally and that it was wrong that people were treated differently because they were Black.
- Pupils have weekly opportunities to air their views about the running of the school. At these 'children's meetings' they suggest changes. One change suggested was related to the kinds of rewards that were offered. Teachers made this change and this ensured that pupils know that their voices are heard.
- Pupils have careers guidance in key stage 3 within their PSHE economic education lessons. Pupils in key stage 4 have careers guidance as part of their life skills programme. This includes self-assessment, an introduction to curriculum vitae writing, interview

techniques, types of careers and pathways and making decisions. Some pupils have the opportunity to attend a course one day per week at Stoke-on-Trent College. The courses offered at entry level are: catering and baking, construction crafts, hairdressing and beauty, health and social care, childcare, and motor vehicle studies. At level 1, pupils can study catering and baking, creative arts, gaming, interactive media and graphic design, construction crafts and an engineering pre-apprenticeship.

- Although there has been one recent fundraising event for charity, pupils have not had enough opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider world. Leaders are well aware of the need to develop this aspect of learning.
- Pupils are able to take advantage of a wide variety of extra-curricular activities and visits. They have visited the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford, a theme park and a country park. Pupils regularly take part in evening activities such as fishing, trampolining, go-karting, playing pool and visiting the cinema.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Teachers create good relationships with all pupils who say that they know the teachers care about them. The very good relationships between the home and the school have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and personal development.
- Pupils have come to this school with unacceptable behaviour patterns that have sometimes been dangerous to others. As soon as they come to Evergreen School, they learn to behave better because the staff are all skilled in managing pupils' sometimes challenging behaviour.
- Pupils explore all aspects of bullying during PSHE education lessons. As a result, they are well educated about all forms of bullying. They know whom to turn to if they feel unsafe.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in this school. They learn to keep themselves safe and they know how to use the internet safely.
- The numbers of behavioural incidents decrease markedly as pupils settle into the school. There has only been one incident where restraint has been needed in the past year. This is because staff are very well trained to deal with any emotional outbursts and they work together as a staff team most effectively. They set firm boundaries and they are skilled at encouraging pupils to calm down.
- The attendance of most pupils is good. Of the pupils who had spent more than two years in the school most had improved their attendance markedly in the second year. Most of these pupils had over 90% attendance. The school worked hard with the carers in the home to improve the attendance of the few who attended less regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most of the pupils are disadvantaged and/or have SEN and/or disabilities and are children looked after. The progress they make is because of the good leadership in the school that gives effective support for their social, emotional and mental health needs and academic education.

- Attainment is low overall, but it is improving quickly. This is because of the accurate assessments when pupils arrive in the school, which enables teachers to plan highly effective learning activities. In addition, all of the pupils have lessons with teachers who have excellent subject knowledge.
- Pupils make good progress at both key stage 3 and key stage 4. Most pupils in key stage 4 made slower progress in their first year at the school, but outstanding progress in their second year, especially in mathematics and/or art. This is because they were more settled in school routines and had become more motivated to learn.
- Pupils have good opportunities to enjoy reading. Carers in the home support the expectations of the school, with regard to daily reading.
- Most of the previous pupils at Evergreen School have left to take up places in further courses at other educational establishments. They all gained qualifications at entry level or GCSE.

School details

Unique reference number	142657
DfE registration number	860/6043
Inspection number	10039280

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school (boarding school)
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Dr Sean Fitzpatrick c/o Care Today Children's Services
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Steph Baker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,500–£40,964
Telephone number	01538 266 874
Website	www.roachesschool.net
Email address	roachesschool@caretodayparallelpayers.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Evergreen school is registered as an independent boarding provision and day school for up to six pupils aged seven to 16 years in key stages 2, 3 and 4. To date, the school has not admitted primary school age pupils. It is located in a village in Staffordshire. The school caters for children and young people looked after by the local authority, some with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. The school considers admitting pupils commissioned by local authorities in England and Wales.

- Evergreen School is part of the Farm Schools network, operated by Care Today's Children's Services. Evergreen School does not have its own website but directs parents to The Roaches School website where the relevant information (such as policies and the prospectus) for the Farm Schools network are available.
- The headteacher of Evergreen school manages three of the schools in the Farm Schools network. The executive headteacher has strategic overview of all six schools in the Farm Schools network.
- There are no pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The Farm Schools network aims 'to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, with proactive care and education plans that enable the children to achieve their goals and maximise potential'.
- The proprietor is Sean Fitzpatrick, on behalf of Care Today Children's Services, which is an organisation whose aims are to meet individual needs. 'We offer a wide network of provision, from family support and foster placements through to children's homes.'

Information about this inspection

- This was the first standard inspection of Evergreen School. Prior to this inspection, there had been two pre-registration inspections, one on 16 June 2016 and the second on 3 October 2016. Prior to the pre-registration inspections, pupils educated at Evergreen School were on the school roll at The Roaches School.
- The inspector observed two one-to-one lessons, an English lesson and a mathematics lesson. She also visited a 'cultural day' lesson about customs in India.
- The inspector scrutinised all the pupils' workbooks as well as mathematics and English workbooks from previous pupils who had left the school in July 2017.
- The inspector interviewed the pupil at the school as well as one previous key stage 4 pupil.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, the quality assurance leader for teaching and learning, the psychotherapist, the main classroom teacher and the care manager of the home.
- The inspector spoke to the proprietor on the telephone.
- The inspector looked at the results of the teachers' questionnaire and at the results of the parents' questionnaire that were completed by carers in the home.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Mary Maybank, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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