

# Inspection of Old Sams Farm Independent School

Old Sams Farm, Quarnford, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 0SN

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Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2022

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils attend this school for a relatively short period of time. They say that they are happy here. The warm, friendly and inclusive atmosphere helps them to feel safe. They trust the adults to educate and support them. One pupil said, 'I enjoy the work that we do, it matches my needs.' The therapy team helps pupils with their social, emotional or mental health difficulties.

Leaders and staff have high expectations. Pupils work hard and behave well. They respond positively to the rewards they receive for attending every day and completing work. Staff deal with any fallings out swiftly and fairly. Pupils enjoy the frequent opportunities to rock climb and to walk in the local moorlands. They visit a nearby theatre and amenities.

Pupils have often spent long periods of time away from school and education. Despite this, they have good attitudes to their learning. They are resilient. Staff are preparing pupils well for their various next steps. Staff are skilled in addressing pupils' complex special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is a broad and appropriate curriculum in place to match pupils' individual needs. This allows staff to quickly identify and plug pupils' considerable gaps in knowledge. In mathematics, detailed assessments enable staff to pinpoint areas that pupils need to revisit or learn for the first time. In other subjects, quizzes help teachers to understand what pupils have learned and remembered at the start and end of a topic. However, leaders have yet to embed an assessment system for all subjects.

In science, pupils learn new content in a well-sequenced way. For example, they initially learn the differences between plant and animal cells. They then move on to bacterial cells and their different components and functions. In lessons, pupils enjoyed the challenge of deciding which organs of the human body belonged to which bodily system.

Staff prioritise and successfully promote reading. Pupils read every day and enjoy it. They are confident and fluent. They have a wide selection of appropriate books from which to choose. Pupils enjoy listening to audio books and to staff reading class books aloud.

Pupils' behaviour and attendance improves significantly after they join Old Sams Farm when compared to their previous school or setting. They are punctual to lessons at the start of, and during, the day. They behave well and interact appropriately during social times. Relationships between staff and pupils are cordial yet respectful.

Leaders have thought carefully about pupils' personal development. There are opportunities for pupils to learn about the British values of democracy, respect and tolerance. They can visit local places of worship and learn about cultures that are different to their own. Pupils know how to keep healthy and safe. They talk knowledgeably about eating a healthy diet and taking frequent exercise. Pupils know the potential dangers of being online. The proprietor has ensured that staff teach the statutory relationships, sex and health education content in an age-appropriate way. Pupils receive independent careers advice and guidance. Despite pupils only being at the school for a relatively short time, staff are doing all they can to prepare them for their adult life in modern Britain.

Staff cater well for pupils' individual needs. They use information from the previous school and other agencies to help decide on an appropriate curriculum. Pupils learn meditation and breathing techniques at the start of the day. These help pupils to keep calm and to control their emotions. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) could be sharper. They do not always identify precisely what the extra support will be, who will provide it and when.

The headteacher is well respected by staff and pupils alike. Staff say that leaders are mindful of their workload and their well-being. They are proud to work at the school. They are appreciative of the training opportunities that leaders make available.

The proprietor has ensured that the independent school standards are met. The classroom is maintained to a good standard. It contains suitable lighting and acoustics. Drinking water is labelled and the hot water does not pose a scalding risk. Pupils use their own bedrooms in the home should they fall ill. Showers at the local leisure centre are used after physical education lessons. The proprietor has ensured compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

While the school website contains all the required information, it is unwieldy and confusing to navigate. There are policies and documents that relate to other schools within the organisation.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. They know the potential signs of abuse or neglect to look out for. Staff know what to do should they be concerned about an adult. Leaders keep appropriate safeguarding records. These are shared with social care to enable pupils to receive the right support. Staff from the school and the home share information at the start and at the end of the day.

The safeguarding policy contains the necessary statutory guidance. It is available for parents and carers to download from the school website.

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

- Leaders have not yet ensured that there is an appropriate assessment system in place for all subjects. They are unsure as to how well pupils are progressing in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that there is an appropriate assessment system, which is not too burdensome for staff, in all subjects.
- Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are not always sharp enough. They do not say who will provide the extra support, when it will be provided and what that support will be. Pupils are not making as much progress as they could. Leaders should ensure that IEPs contain the necessary information so that they can monitor more accurately the progress the pupils are making.
- Leaders have identified that the school website is cluttered and difficult to navigate. It makes it difficult for the various stakeholders to find the relevant information. Leaders should ensure that the replacement website continues to contain the necessary information and that this information is straightforward and easy for people to find.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136168
<b>DfE registration number</b>	830/6038
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10232339
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	4
<b>Proprietor</b>	Dr Sean Fitzpatrick
<b>Chair</b>	Matt Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Diane Wood
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£38,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01298 214568
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.roachesschool.net">www.roachesschool.net</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:dwood@caretodayparallelpayers.net">dwood@caretodayparallelpayers.net</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	3 to 5 July 2018

## Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils who have social, emotional or mental health needs. They have often missed large portions of their education.
- Pupils are placed at the school by several different local authorities.
- The school is registered to admit both boys and girls. At the time of the inspection, pupils on the school roll were all boys and they each had an education, health and care plan.
- The school is operated by Care Today (Children's Services) Ltd. The owner of the company is the only member of the proprietor body. The organisation operates seven other schools.
- The headteacher was appointed in December 2020. She is also responsible for two other schools in the organisation.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from the 3 to 5 July 2018.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers.

## 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 held various meetings with the headteacher, staff and pupils. A telephone call was held with the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, science and personal, social, health and economic education. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to the pupils about the school and looked at samples of their work.
- Curriculum plans in other subjects were scrutinised.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector checked the single central record and scrutinised safeguarding records. Checks were made on staff training and staff knowledge of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff questionnaires.

- The inspectors only inspected the education provision at this school.

### **Inspection team**

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Lowther

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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