

# Inspection of Parkgate Farm

Ipstones Edge, Ipstones, Stoke-On-Trent ST10 2LR

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Inspection dates: 23 to 25 June 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

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?**

Pupils feel happy and safe in this school. They behave well and settle down to their work. This is because they know that staff have high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils have weekly, one-to-one sessions when they can talk to someone about any problems. This helps them to develop positive relationships. Teachers help pupils to understand what bullying is and how to regulate their behaviour. As a result, incidents of bullying are rare.

Frequent outdoor activities help pupils to learn about the local area. Activities, including walking and climbing, help pupils to develop stamina and resilience. Opportunities, such as learning to care for animals, support pupils' personal development.

Pupils enjoy learning because teachers plan activities that are well matched to their needs and interests. Pupils respond well to adults' high expectations of what they can do. They make strong progress in many subjects in the curriculum. The school places a strong emphasis on the importance of reading. All pupils say they enjoy reading and they read confidently. Pupils frequently find out more about their personal interests by reading and researching on the internet.

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

The school meets all the independent school standards. Leaders know the school's strengths and what they need to do to improve. The highly experienced proprietor and governors at Care Today Children's Services regularly support and challenge leaders about pupils' personal and academic progress. Teachers from other schools in the network also provide specific support. For example, they come to the school to teach music, lead outdoor activities and teach physical education.

A full-time psychotherapist provides therapy for each pupil and expert advice to staff. Leaders have ensured that staff have had training in all the pastoral skills they need. This means that staff know how to support pupils with mental health and behavioural difficulties effectively. Staff say they feel well supported by leaders.

Leaders have developed a broad, rich curriculum for pupils which caters well for their needs. In some subjects, such as modern foreign languages and art, teachers and teaching assistants need further training to plan and teach these areas successfully. Leaders are aware of these weaknesses and plan to rectify them in the autumn.

Teachers assess pupils' knowledge and abilities on arrival at the school. They frequently modify their plans to suit pupils' needs so that pupils can make up any gaps in their learning. Teachers thread opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills through the curriculum. This strong emphasis underpins a focus on reading and writing.

Pupils' books in subjects like English, mathematics, history and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education show a clear sequence of learning. This supports pupils to build on what they have learned before. Teachers make effective links between subjects. For example, pupils deepen their learning by linking the study of the Vikings with the geography of Scandinavia and Norway. Similarly, what pupils learn about the first space landing feeds into the writing of a diary entry by Neil Armstrong. At times, teachers are not clear enough about exactly what pupils need to learn or what they have to do. This confusion slows down the acquisition of new learning.

Pupils' behaviour has improved markedly since they joined the school. Their attendance is exemplary. Adults consistently apply the behaviour policy. They are swift to deal with any behaviour issues. They also provide pupils with the chance to reflect, talk and explain how they are feeling. Adults help pupils to develop appropriate strategies to manage their behaviour. Pupils comment on how their behaviour has changed for the better. Teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils focus well on their lessons and produce work in their books of which they can be proud.

Pupils talk confidently about different faiths and there is rich evidence of their work on this in books. Elements of spirituality are very strong in PSHE education. For example, pupils reflect on their own beliefs or reflect on what it might mean to be a 'rock' for someone. Teachers teach pupils to report abuse online to help pupils to develop the skills to keep themselves safe. The school encourages pupils to think about others in the locality and the wider world. For example, pupils sent harvest baskets to people in the community. Pupils explore fundamental British values in taught sessions and also during incidental discussions. The school begins the work on careers education that will be continued when pupils move to secondary school. This includes opportunities to meet people from a variety of professions, including nurses, police officers and fire fighters. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to find out about a broad range of future careers, including those matched to their interests and aspirations.

Leaders have ensured that the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding policy is displayed on the school's website and meets government requirements. Safeguarding is at the heart of the work of the school. Adults are vigilant and quickly provide effective support for pupils who are distressed. Leaders collaborate closely with other agencies. Morning and evening debriefings enable any issues or incidents to be identified swiftly. Concerns are managed appropriately and are well documented. Leaders are trained in safer recruitment so that they can ensure that all adults are safe to work with children. Teachers help pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe.

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

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently coherently planned and sequenced in subjects such as modern foreign languages and art. This means that pupils do not learn as much about these subjects as they ought to. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders should continue to ensure that all subjects are carefully sequenced so that pupils build on what they know and can do.
- Teachers are not always clear enough about what they want pupils to know and do by the end of the lesson. This occasionally slows the learning. Teachers should ensure that pupils know what is expected of them when completing tasks.
- Teachers and teaching assistants benefit from regular feedback about their teaching skills from leaders. However, they have not had recent opportunities to address their own individual professional development needs. Leaders should continue to develop the skills of teachers by providing more access to professional development.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147169
<b>DfE registration number</b>	860/6052
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10193309
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	4
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Sean Fitzpatrick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Steele
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£40,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	07718 070351
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.roachesschool.net">www.roachesschool.net</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:roachesschool@caretodayparalleparents.net">roachesschool@caretodayparalleparents.net</a>

## Information about this school

- Parkgate Farm is located in a former farmhouse in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The building has been renovated and refurbished.
- It is the seventh school in the Roaches Farm School Network.
- The school is registered to provide education for pupils aged seven to 16 years. However, at present, leaders use this school primarily as a middle school for pupils aged seven to 13 years.
- At the time of the inspection, there were four girls enrolled at the school. Although the school is registered to cater for both boys and girls, there were no boys on roll.
- The school offers places to pupils who have an education, health and care plan and/or those who are children looked after. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, including those with an autism spectrum disorder. Many are likely to have missed substantial amounts of schooling and have significant gaps in their learning.
- The school opened in September 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school makes use of local leisure centres for physical education.
- This is the school's first standard inspection.

## Information about this inspection

Ofsted 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 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, consultant headteacher, headteacher of 'lower school' and other school staff.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in English, mathematics, history and PSHE. This means that in each of these subjects they interviewed the curriculum leader, teachers and pupils about those subjects. They visited lessons and looked at examples of pupils' work in each subject. The lead inspector also looked at examples of pupils' work in art and modern foreign languages.

- The lead inspector toured the premises with the headteacher to ensure that they provide an appropriate environment for pupils.
- Inspectors examined a large number of policies, schemes of work and plans, as well as documentation related to health and safety.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the consultant headteacher to discuss safeguarding procedures and scrutinised safeguarding documentation. She also spoke to the teacher, the teaching assistant and the care home manager about safeguarding and about their well-being and workload.
- The lead inspector spoke to the proprietor of the school who leads Care Today Children's Services and to the chair of governors on the telephone. She also spoke to the school's psychotherapist on the telephone.
- There were no results from the Ofsted staff survey of views, but the lead inspector took account of a very recent survey of views conducted by the school, as well as talking to the teacher and the teaching assistant in person.

### **Inspection team**

Mary Maybank, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Harwood

Her Majesty's Inspector

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