

# The Greater Horseshoe School

Little Bovey Lane, Heathfield, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 6RH

## Inspection dates

2 to 4 July 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met in full.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff. In its first year of operation, the staff team has become highly skilled so that pupils make strong progress.
- Staff value the impact the school has on pupils' pastoral and academic progress. The induction process and ongoing training prepare staff well, helping them fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils focus well on activities and staff teach and guide them well to succeed.
- Over the year, the number of behavioural incidents has reduced and pupils' engagement in learning has increased. Pupils have settled well in school and are showing sustained improvements.
- Leaders' priority, in their first year of operation, has been to ensure compliance with the independent school standards. Moving forward, leaders acknowledge the need to focus on how their improvement work will have an impact on pupils' progress.
- Pupils are happy, safe and value school. They have developed strong relationships with staff which are deeply rooted in mutual respect and trust.
- Pupils' personal and social development is threaded through the school's curriculum. Each lesson provides high-quality opportunities for pupils to make progress against their personalised targets.
- Pupils make strong academic progress. In most cases, teaching aligns with pupils' needs and supports future learning. However, on occasion, staff do not always consider what pupils already know, can do and understand.
- Leaders have an accurate evaluation of the school's performance. Leaders regularly share information about the school. They challenge each other well to continue to drive improvements.
- Pupils' individual education plans closely consider their needs. However, the progress that pupils make against the targets in these plans is not always clear.

### 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?

- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - plans for securing school improvements closely consider the impact actions will have on pupils' progress
  - all staff have a clear understanding of pupils' progress against the targets in their individual education plans and use this to inform future learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers more consistently provide academic activities that align with pupils' emerging needs, considering closely what it is pupils already know, can do and understand.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders have ensured the independent school standards are met in full. Since the school's opening, leaders have closely monitored how well the school is meeting these standards to prevent falling short of these minimum expectations.
- Leaders have an accurate evaluation of the school's performance. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have demonstrated how their actions have brought about improvements. Robust monitoring is in place to check on the quality of the school's work. This informs leaders' decision-making when providing staff training and professional development.
- Leaders' visions for the school are embedded and shared by all. In a short time, leaders have developed a highly effective staff team that has pupils' best interests at the centre of all it does. Leaders make clear that staff should focus on pupils' achievements by actively noticing positive behaviours. Staff do this well. When things are less successful, staff unpick what may have contributed to this and amend their future approach. As a result, this is an evolving school which adapts its approach to the ever-changing needs of the pupils.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff. They are highly aspirational and have achieved a considerable amount in their first year of operation. Since opening, the number of pupils at the school has steadily increased. Current pupils are making strong progress and the staff team is stable and highly skilled. Staff morale is high. Leaders' actions have made sure that the school is operating well and having a positive impact on the lives of pupils, who, prior to this, had struggled in other educational settings.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the impact of the school's work and how well leaders support them in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. They state that the induction process prepared them well for their roles and that ongoing training is thorough. Staff value the opportunities they have to discuss pupils daily. They feel well placed to recognise patterns and trends in behaviour and to adapt their approach accordingly. As a result, staff form a highly effective team.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum with pupils' pastoral and academic needs at its heart. The curriculum has three aims: that it is broad, rich and personalised. The curriculum closely considers pupils' interests, so their engagement with activities is more likely to lead to effective learning. Academic rigour underpins this. Often, pupils do not realise they are learning, such is their enjoyment. This aligns with the views of the deputy head who states how well staff 'smuggle in learning'. Consequently, pupils make strong progress and a feel-good factor permeates the school.
- Leaders' use of tracking how well pupils make progress is still in its early stages. Leaders have introduced a new system to support staff when tracking pupils' progress and providing suitable activities based on pupils' needs. Leaders recognised that, prior to this, some academic activities varied in quality and resulted in inconsistencies. Staff are now more confident in supporting pupils' needs, but this work is still in its infancy.
- Since opening, leaders have adopted a school development plan which correctly focused on ensuring that the independent school standards were met in full, particularly those

which related to the school's premises. However, leaders acknowledge that they now have sufficient systems in place to monitor these on an ongoing basis. Leaders are now able to turn their attention to strengthening the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and to the impact this has on pupils' progress.

- Leaders have ensured that pupils' individual education plans reflect the targets seen in education, health and care (EHC) plans. Pupils have daily, high-quality opportunities to work on these areas. However, the progress that pupils have made so far is not clear enough to enable leaders and staff to review and adapt targets accordingly.

## **Governance**

- The proprietor has an accurate and detailed evaluation of the school. She has achieved this through regular reporting about aspects of the school's performance and checking the validity of this information. There are clear structures in place to regularly check on key performance indicators such as attendance, safeguarding and pupils' progress. This information supports leaders' ability to hold others to account while also celebrating achievements.
- There is a small governing body in place. Each member is highly knowledgeable about the school and the needs of pupils for whom it provides education.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that recruitment processes are robust. Leaders' checks on new staff are comprehensive, ensuring they only appoint adults who are suitable to work with children. They record this information on the school's single central record. Leaders regularly check the single central record, making sure it is up to date and compliant with the independent school standards.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority across the school. Staff are highly knowledgeable about how best to keep pupils safe. The school's approach to inducting new staff is thorough, ensuring that all staff know what is expected of them and know what to do when concerns about pupils' welfare arise. Ongoing training is detailed and tracked so that there are no gaps in staff knowledge. As a result, staff recognise concerns well and pass these on to designated leaders of safeguarding in a timely manner.
- Leaders act swiftly and appropriately to the concerns they receive about pupils' welfare. Record-keeping is a strength of the school. It makes clear the nature of the concern, and subsequent actions leaders have taken to keep pupils safe. All actions are well communicated, leaving no doubt that concerns have been acted on and, where relevant, external support is sought. In addition, daily briefings provide regular opportunities for staff to discuss any changes in behaviour which may be the symptom of an underlying concern. Consequently, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and staff have frequent opportunities to share any concerns they may have.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Staff have high expectations of pupils. They set suitably challenging activities for pupils, which they derive directly from targets in pupils' EHC plans. Staff use clear guidance to

support pupils, while making sure instructions are clear and succinct. Staff skilfully challenge pupils so that they are operating outside their comfort zone and develop independence. Consequently, pupils work with increasing independence to achieve well.

- Staff engage pupils in learning very effectively. The curriculum in place enables staff to tailor learning to pupils' interests and provide a clear context for learning. All of this is supported by an academic rigour, which ensures a high quality of learning in a range of subjects. As a result, pupils engage well in lessons, make strong progress and access a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. In the first year of operation, staff have already established a rich and trusting relationship with pupils. Staff treat pupils with respect and set challenging activities so that they are better equipped for life after school. Staff appreciate that for many pupils, previous educational experiences have been negative and often disrupted. They focus on pupils' positive experiences in school so that pupils can feel proud of what they have achieved. As a result, pupils value school and enjoy lessons.
- Staff closely assess pupils' ongoing progress. In each lesson, staff score pupils' progress from one to four. Staff assess pupils' academic progress, their pastoral progress and their engagement in learning. Staff meet twice daily to discuss how well pupils achieve in lessons so that they are best placed to help pupils secure further progress.
- The staff team responds well to pupils' personal and social needs. Staff use their strong knowledge of pupils to provide flexibility within the curriculum, particularly when considering pupils' personal and social development. As a result, staff respond quickly and effectively to pupils' emerging needs in these areas, providing suitable support.
- Staff provide academic activities for pupils, using the school's curriculum to guide them. However, some pupils have considerable gaps in their knowledge. Staff have clear guidance from the curriculum to ensure that they teach pupils key content. But, at times, staff follow the curriculum objectives too rigidly, rather than considering what it is pupils already know, can do and understand, for example attempting to teach pupils how to use ambitious punctuation when pupils' knowledge of how to use basic punctuation is not yet secure.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The newly formed student council provides pupils with an opportunity to contribute towards the development of their school. Pupils are clear about their roles and have already worked together to form a school motto, with one pupil suggesting 'make everyone equal'. Pupils speak passionately about the school and look forward to the role they have going forward.
- Pupils access valuable opportunities to develop their understanding of fundamental British values and public institutions. Police visits help build pupils' familiarity of the role of police officers. These also led to pupils wanting to discuss, and write about, the impact of knife

crime. The fundamental British values underpin the curriculum, with 'tolerance' and 'respect' at the centre of the school's work.

- Pupils' personal development is a key priority for the school. This includes opportunities to learn how to keep safe and healthy. As a result, pupils feel safe, confident and valued at school.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Prior to joining the school, pupils had negative, often disrupted experiences in education, which sometimes resulted in permanent exclusion. However, pupils enjoy school now and demonstrate excellent improvements to their behaviour.
- Staff manage any challenging behaviour very well. Incidents of poor behaviour have fallen and there have been no exclusions.
- Pupils' attendance rates have improved over the year. Leaders track attendance well and recognise any patterns or trends that may be emerging. Most pupils, prior to joining the school, had disrupted learning experiences with some not regularly attending school for up to two years. Currently, pupils' attendance is at least good.
- The school is calm and orderly, reflecting a purposeful learning environment. Pupils focus well in lessons and respond well to staff guidance and feedback. On occasion, staff challenge pupils to try activities beyond their comfort zone. Pupils respond to this challenge very well.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils make strong progress from their starting points. When pupils join the school, staff prioritise familiarising themselves with pupils' pastoral needs in order to help ensure a smooth transition into school so that pupils settle well, feel safe and thrive. Staff also gather information about what pupils know, can do and understand to help inform future learning.
- Over time, pupils demonstrate increased engagement in lessons. Staff score pupils' engagement in each lesson out of a maximum of four points. These points build up over time and pupils can use them to get rewards such as a bicycle. From their starting points, pupils' individual engagement scores increase over time.
- Pupils develop their knowledge well in writing. They write for different purposes. For example, following a visit from a local policeman, some pupils wrote to persuade the government to tackle knife crime. Lessons provide pupils with the key features they need to produce an effective piece of writing, with the inclusion of genre-specific features.
- Pupils' mathematical knowledge develops well from their starting points. Pupils have opportunities to develop their basic number and place value knowledge before tackling more challenging learning.
- Pupils access and achieve well across a rich, meaningful curriculum. Pupils access high-quality lessons in subjects, including music, art, design technology and land-based studies. They have the equipment they need to succeed, and staff have the expertise to deliver these subjects. Subjects often link with a topic, which provides context and

meaning to their learning, for example using printing and rolling in art to create t-shirts, tea towels and bags to sell at the summer fair.

- Pupils make strong pastoral progress. In each lesson, they have high-quality opportunities to develop against their personal and social targets. The use of therapy further supports this work.
- Activities to promote pupils' academic progress occasionally vary in quality. Pupils have considerable gaps in their knowledge. Over time, staff are providing activities that better support pupils' progress and are developing their understanding.

## School details

Unique reference number	146167
DfE registration number	878/6074
Inspection number	10081016

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 special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Joanne Sams
Chair	Jason Goddard
Headteacher	Lukasz Miecznikowski
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,000–£67,000
Telephone number	01626 782 038
Website	<a href="http://www.thegreaterhorseshoeschool.co.uk">www.thegreaterhorseshoeschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:lukazsm@enhancedlearningservices.co.uk">lukazsm@enhancedlearningservices.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The Greater Horseshoe School caters for up to 50 pupils with complex needs. There are currently 15 pupils on the school's roll. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and have been placed at the school by their local authorities.
- The Department for Education registered the school in September 2018. This was the school's first standard inspection.
- The proprietor owns the school through her company, Enhanced Learning Services Limited.

- In addition to its main site, the school also uses outdoor facilities at Chipley Mill, Bickington, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 6JW.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector considered evidence of pupils' progress. This included evidence in pupils' workbooks and 'chunking sheets', which shows how well pupils met their targets in each lesson. The lead inspector also considered how well pupils were achieving against the targets in their education, health and care plans and individual education plans.
- The lead inspector observed several sessions over the course of the inspection, including an off-site visit to Chipley Mill, which provides opportunities for outdoor learning. A member of staff accompanied the lead inspector on all these occasions.
- The lead inspector met with the head of school, the director of education, the deputy headteacher and the lead thrive practitioner. He also met a number of staff to discuss their experiences at the school, including induction and training.
- The lead inspector met with two pupils who represent the newly formed student council.
- The lead inspector met the proprietor. He also spoke with a representative from the local authority responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- Throughout the inspection, the lead inspector evaluated how well the school meets the independent school standards.
- The lead inspector considered four responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. He also considered six responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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