

Inspection of The Parks School

Market Street, Hindley, Hindley WN2 3AN

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 February 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has established an ambitious curriculum for pupils to study. It has high expectations for pupils' achievement. From their different starting points, pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy the enriching activities that the school provides. For example, weekly visits to museums, farms and markets significantly enhance pupils' experience of the wider world. Pupils leave the school confident and ready to lead independent lives.

Many pupils who attend this school have been without education for some time. They receive a fresh start at The Parks School. Pupils re-engage with learning because staff create a safe environment and a curriculum that inspires pupils. Pupils enjoy attending school again. One pupil, who summed up the views of others, said, 'This is a school that you actually want to come to.'

Pupils behave well. Staff are experts in creating trusting relationships that help pupils settle into school life. Pupils focus on their learning without disruption because of the calm environment that leaders create. The school applies its behaviour policy fairly and consistently. Pupils know what is expected of them. Most of the time they rise to these expectations. If pupils behave less well, the school helps them to get back on track.

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

School leaders and staff share the proprietor's vision for pupils to become confident in their relationships and be ready for their future lives. This vision is realised in practice. For example, in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, the school has carefully considered the areas for pupils to study. This equips pupils to be ready for their future lives. Pupils achieve certificates in art and design and food technology. Because the curriculum is inspiring and well structured, pupils develop confidence in these areas. In addition, pupils develop the knowledge and skills that they need in English and mathematics. For example, pupils confidently explore how language contributes to the atmosphere of a text that they are studying. In mathematics, pupils persevere when learning more complex concepts, such as fractions.

Pupils have many gaps in their learning due to interrupted attendance at, or exclusion from, their previous schools. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan to support their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers skilfully adapt current learning to meet the needs that pupils have. However, the school does not check and address the gaps that pupils have in their previous learning well enough. Sometimes, pupils learn new content without the prior knowledge that they need to fully understand this new learning.

Many pupils join the school with gaps in their reading knowledge. The school makes sure that these gaps are identified and addressed effectively. Pupils benefit from a well-taught phonics programme that helps them to become fluent and confident

readers. Staff have the expertise to deliver this consistently well. Over time, pupils who struggle with reading develop the skills that they need to access a variety of texts across the curriculum.

Staff use a range of supportive strategies to encourage pupils to behave well and attend school more often. This is successful. Over time, pupils learn to manage their own behaviour. They make considerable gains in their attendance. Pupils' attitudes to learning improve during their time at the school. Learning is rarely disrupted. Most pupils treat each other, and staff, with civility and respect.

Pupils' personal development is of the highest priority. Staff provide a rich variety of opportunities for pupils to build confidence, develop independence and experience the wider world. The school encourages pupils to contribute to discussions about matters that affect them, for example by considering consent and safe relationships. Pupils learn about staying safe online and wider dangers that they might face, such as crime and exploitation. This prepares pupils well for their future lives.

Pupils receive an appropriate impartial careers information, education, advice and guidance programme. They benefit from visiting a range of places to find out about courses and future careers. In Year 11, pupils receive specialist support to develop a personal careers pathway. As a result of this work, pupils secure college places, mentorship programmes or work.

The proprietor has appointed leaders with the required expertise to ensure that the independent school standards (the standards) are met consistently. Policies, including a safeguarding policy that meets current statutory requirements, are available to parents and carers on the school's website. The proprietor has ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The school has ensured that the education it provides has a positive impact on pupils. The proprietor is fully involved in the life of the school and knows the school well. The proprietor has a clear oversight of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The school meets the health and safety and premises requirements. The building is maintained to a high standard and teaching spaces are bright, clean and well resourced. There is a safe outdoor area that pupils can spend time in at breaktimes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Teachers do not check and address the gaps that many pupils have in their prior knowledge well enough. As a result, pupils sometimes do not build on prior

knowledge and struggle to understand new learning. The school should ensure that staff check pupils' understanding of previous learning so that they can accurately identify and then address any gaps that pupils have.

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

Unique reference number	137821
DfE registration number	359/6000
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10377311
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Inspire Training and Education Services Ltd
Headteacher	Steven Williams
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,861 to £67,752
Telephone number	01942 909 033
Website	www.inspirecs.org
Email address	stevenwilliams@inspiretes.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 to 8 June 2023

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place on 6 to 8 June 2023.
- Since the previous standard inspection, the Department for Education (DfE) has commissioned an emergency inspection. This took place on 12 September 2024.
- Leaders make use of three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school operates from one site based at Market Street, Hindley WN2 3AN.
- The school has an additional site at 29a Park Road, Golborne, Wigan WA3 3PU. This site is not currently in use.
- The school is registered to admit up to 30 pupils. The school caters for pupils who have been out of education for extended periods. Some pupils attend the school on short-term placements. All pupils on roll at the time of the inspection have an EHC plan. The special educational need for which the school caters is social, emotional and mental health.
- Pupils' places are commissioned and funded by the local authority.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the proprietor body, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and members of staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, early reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered the curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also talked to leaders, staff and pupils about some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding. They also reviewed information relating to the standards. They also looked at records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- As part of their checks on the standards, inspectors made a tour of the school premises.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents and took account of their views.
- Staff's views were considered during discussions with them and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. To gather the views of pupils, inspectors spoke informally with pupils throughout the inspection.

The school's progress in meeting previously failed standards

During the inspection, we checked whether the school now meets the independent school standards that it was judged to have failed at its previous emergency inspection on 12 September 2024.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school now meets the previously failed standards.**

The school now meets the following standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a)-7(b)

- At the time of the emergency inspection in September 2024, the school's single central record (SCR) was incomplete and some of the required suitability checks for agency staff had not been completed. At the time of this progress monitoring inspection, the proprietor had put in place a suitable SCR and all checks for agency staff had been completed.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a)-9(c)

- At the time of the emergency inspection, leaders were using at least two different systems for recording behaviour incidents. In addition, there was variability in how physical intervention records were kept. At the time of this progress monitoring inspection, behaviour incidents and physical intervention records were recorded using a single system. Additionally, leaders carefully analysed these to respond effectively to pupils' behaviour and additional needs as they arise.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a)-16(b)

- At the time of the emergency inspection, the proprietor had not put in place suitable risk assessments for members of staff that had not completed positive handling and restraint training. In addition, some pupils' risk assessments were not reviewed as often as they should be. At the time of this progress monitoring inspection, the proprietor had put in place a suitable risk assessment for members of staff who had not yet received physical intervention training. Furthermore, pupils' risk assessments are now updated frequently and reflect the current risks, actions and mitigations to support pupils.

- The standards in this part are now met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa)–19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)–21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(c)

- At the time of the emergency inspection, the school had two versions of the SCR. Leaders had not followed procedures when employing agency staff and the induction programme for new staff was ad hoc. At the time of this progress monitoring inspection, leaders had implemented a single SCR, carried out all necessary checks on agency staff and introduced a comprehensive induction programme for new staff.
- These standards are now met.

Part 6. Provision of Information

Paragraphs 32(1)–32(1)(j), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(d), 32(3)(a)–32(3)(g)

- At the time of the emergency inspection, leaders had not ensured that parents were provided with key information, such as the contact details for the proprietor. Nor had they made it clear to parents that key documents were available or how they could request a copy. At the time of the progress monitoring inspection, leaders had established a school website with all of the key information available. They had also made it clear to parents how they can access this information.
- These standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- At the time of the emergency inspection, the proprietor had not ensured that the school met all of the standards that were checked during the inspection. It did not have robust systems in place to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. At the time of the progress monitoring inspection, the proprietor has ensured that all standards are met and that systems to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are robust.
- This standard is now met.

The school now meets the following standards:

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7 (a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7 (b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that—
 - (a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - (b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - (c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - (a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - (b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 19(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 19(2)(a) a person offered for supply by an employment business to the school only begins to work at the school if the proprietor has received—
 - 19(2)(a)(i) written notification from the employment business in relation to that person—
 - 19(2)(a)(i)(aa) that the checks referred to in paragraph 21(3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vii) and (b) have been made to the extent relevant to that person;
 - 19(2)(a)(i)(bb) that, where relevant to that person, an enhanced criminal record check has been made and that it or another employment business has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate in response to such a check;
 - 19(2)(a)(i)(cc) if the employment business has obtained such a certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school, whether it disclosed any matter or information; and
 - 19(2)(a)(i)(dd) that, where that person is one for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, it or another employment business has obtained such further checks as appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
 - 19(2)(a)(ii) a copy of any enhanced criminal record certificate obtained by an employment business before the person is due to begin work at the school;
 - 19(2)(b) a person offered for supply by an employment business only begins work at the school if the proprietor considers that the person is suitable for the work for which the person is supplied;
 - 19(2)(c) before a person offered for supply by an employment business begins work at the school the person's identity is checked by the proprietor of the school (irrespective of any such check carried out by the employment business before the person was offered for supply);

- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is–
- 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff (“S”) appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether–
- 21(3)(a)(i) S’s identity was checked;
- 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
- 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
- 21(3)(a)(iv) checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications;
- 21(3)(a)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
- 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d);
- 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S’s right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
- 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
- including the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained; and
- 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff (“S”), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.
- 21(5)(a)(i) checks corresponding to those referred to in sub-paragraph (3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vi) and (vii) have been made to the extent relevant to any such person; and
- 21(5)(a)(ii) an enhanced criminal record check has been made and that it or another employment business has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate in response to such a check,
- 21(5)(c) where written notification has been received from the employment business in accordance with a contract or other arrangements referred to in paragraph 19(2)(d) that it has obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate, whether the employment business supplied a copy of the certificate to the school.

Part 6. Provision of Information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
- 32(1)(a) the information specified in sub-paragraph (2) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector , the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate ;

- 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request;
 - 32(1)(d) following an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, a copy of the report of the inspection (if it has been sent to the proprietor) is published and maintained on the school's internet website, and provided to the parents of each registered pupil, by any date specified by the body who conducted the inspection;
 - 32(1)(e) following an inspection under section 87(1) of the 1989 Act, a copy of the report of the inspection (if it has been sent to the proprietor) is published and maintained on the school's internet website, and provided to the parents of each boarder;
 - 32(1)(f) an annual written report of each registered pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught is provided to the parents of that registered pupil except that no report need be provided where the parent has agreed otherwise;
 - 32(1)(g) any information reasonably requested in connection with an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act which is required for the purposes of the inspection is provided to the body conducting the inspection and that body is given access to the school's admission and attendance registers;
 - 32(1)(h) where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State;
 - 32(1)(i) where a pupil with an EHC plan wholly or partly funded by a local authority or other body through public funds is registered at the school, such information as may reasonably be required for the purpose of the annual review of the EHC plan is provided to the responsible local authority; and
 - 32(1)(j) particulars of any action specified in sub-paragraph (4) are published and maintained on the school's website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents.
- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
- 32(2)(a) the school's address and telephone number and the name of the head teacher;
 - 32(2)(b) either–
 - 32(2)(b)(i) where the proprietor is an individual, the proprietor's full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted, or

- 32(2)(b)(ii) where the proprietor is a body of persons, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office;
- 32(2)(d) a statement of the school’s ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 32(3)(a) particulars of the school’s policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions;
 - 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language;
 - 32(3)(c) particulars of the policy referred to in paragraph 2;
 - 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13;
 - 32(3)(e) particulars of the school’s academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations;
 - 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year; and
 - 32(3)(g) a copy of the report of any inspection carried out under sections 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act or section 87(1) of the 1989 Act.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.
- 34(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(c) “well-being” means well-being within the meaning of section 10(2) of the Children Act 2004.

Inspection team

Jen Sloan, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Haroon Asghar	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Cunningham	His Majesty’s Inspector

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