

Inspection of Peak Education

The Old School House, Watling Street, Gailey, Cannock, Staffordshire ST19 5PR

Inspection dates: 10–12 December 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Peak Education staff's work to re-engage pupils back into education is very successful. They understand pupils' social and emotional needs very well. This enables staff to give pupils the right support at the right time to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Because of this, pupils become motivated to learn. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve academically. They skilfully encourage pupils to try hard, overcome challenges and never give up. This high-quality pastoral support and effective teaching help pupils to make strong progress in a range of subjects.

Pupils are given excellent guidance and support to help them manage their own behaviour. The school's ethos is: 'respect yourself, respect all others, respect the environment'. This helps pupils to learn about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. If problems happen, staff help pupils to think about how the problem could have been dealt with differently. This is enabling pupils to build more constructive social relationships.

Pupils say: 'I feel safe in school because staff care for me.' Staff form trusting and positive relationships with pupils. Pupils are confident to report bullying if it happens. Staff do not tolerate bullying and deal with it quickly.

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

Over the last year, leaders have taken effective action to improve all aspects of the school. There have been significant improvements in the quality of education. Leaders have completely revised the curriculum. It is now more challenging, and pupils are making stronger progress. Leaders carefully designed the curriculum around pupils' needs. The planning sets out learning in a logical order to enable pupils to build on their knowledge and skills over time. All staff have a detailed understanding of the gaps in pupils' learning. These gaps are due to prolonged periods out of education prior to joining this school. Staff make sure that pupils have the necessary knowledge and skills in place before moving them on. For example, in English, teachers make sure that pupils improve their basic grammar and punctuation skills. They then make sure that pupils apply these accurately in their creative writing. The revised curriculum planning has already resulted in considerable improvements in pupils' progress. But leaders know that further work needs to be done. This will ensure that curriculum planning enables pupils to make strong progress in all subjects, including music and art.

Leaders have improved staff's teaching skills very well. Teachers use their planning creatively to capture pupils' interests. For example, in mathematics, pupils learned about money through a topic on motorbikes. Fractions and measuring were taught through making and cooking pizzas. This approach helps to motivate pupils and maintains their focus on learning. Staff take care to ensure that pupils understand the purpose of learning and how it will help them in their day-to-day lives. All staff appreciate the support and training leaders give them. They also value the care leaders show towards their personal well-being. The whole staff team works closely together to share ideas and resources to further improve their skills. There is a strong commitment from everyone to

help pupils achieve as well as possible academically. Leaders know where the strengths in teaching are. They are continuing to provide regular training to ensure that all teaching is highly effective.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the school's ethos and curriculum. The wide range of outdoor activities, such as archery, abseiling and kayaking, support pupils to become more confident and resilient in overcoming challenges. This, in turn, helps to prepare them successfully to re-engage with academic studies. Through activities such as mental health awareness day, holding Macmillan coffee mornings, studying Diwali and their experiences in the 'day of languages', pupils develop an understanding of the wider world. Pupils also develop respect for others. They have many opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe through their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. For example, pupils learn about how to resist becoming involved in knife crime and how to recognise when relationships with others are unsafe.

Pupils have weekly careers education and guidance sessions to help them consider a range of different options for their futures. All staff are committed to raising pupils' aspirations and helping them to understand how they can contribute positively to society. Staff help pupils to understand the qualifications that they will need to follow a chosen career. They then ensure that pupils can access the relevant courses to achieve the qualifications. This work is helping pupils to plan more positively for their futures.

All staff provide pupils with exceptional pastoral support. Pupils trust and respect staff. They form positive relationships with their inclusive education practitioners. These practitioners help pupils to settle calmly when in school. The excellent support and care pupils receive has helped to improve their attendance successfully. Following prolonged periods out of education, pupils now positively engage in learning more regularly. When attendance issues arise, staff take every possible action to support pupils back into school. But due to pupils' changing needs, leaders know that they will need to continue to explore every possible way of supporting pupils to attend school every day.

Due to the very small numbers of sixth-form students, reporting on the provision is limited due to confidentiality. Sixth-form provision is designed specifically to meet the needs of individual students. It helps students to achieve well. Students achieve appropriate qualifications to help prepare them for the next stage of the education, employment or training.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor and leaders show a strong understanding of the requirements of the independent school standards. They have ensured that the independent school standards are now met consistently. For example, their actions to improve the quality of teaching have been extremely successful. Due to pupils' complex needs, leaders have focused on ensuring that the welfare, health and safety of pupils is always a high priority.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding procedures are extremely robust. Staff have a detailed understanding of pupils' complex needs. Staff are highly alert to any indication that pupils may be at risk of harm.

Staff are very clear about what to do if they are worried about a pupil. They act quickly to report concerns. Leaders follow these up swiftly. They work closely with outside agencies, such as health teams, to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to keep them safe. The school's premises are well maintained, safe and secure.

The safeguarding policy meets current government guidance and is on the school's website.

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

- In some subjects, such as art and music, curriculum planning is still developing. This means that pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Leaders should continue to review and refine curriculum planning to ensure that pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable in all subjects.
- Some staff's teaching experience and skills are still developing. This means that teaching in some subjects is not as strong as in subjects such as English and mathematics. Leaders should continue to provide support and development for staff to ensure that all teaching is highly effective. This will help pupils to make strong progress in all subjects.
- Leaders take all possible actions to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. They need to continue this highly effective work to make sure that pupils attend school more often. This will enable them to achieve the standards of which they are capable.

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're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	137956
DfE registration number	860/6039
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10112499
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Mr Paul Ball
Headteacher	Sharon Cliff
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,050
Telephone number	01902 790385
Website	www.peakededucation.co.uk
Email address	Sharon.cliff@peakpursuits.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–18 January 2018

Information about this school

- The last full standard inspection was in January 2018. A progress monitoring inspection was completed in February 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- All pupils on roll have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- We met with the executive headteacher and headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and the English, mathematics, PSHE and information and communication technology (ICT) teachers.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor.
- We focused on English, mathematics, ICT and PSHE as part of this inspection. We discussed the curriculum design with the headteacher and lead teachers, reviewed pupils' work in these subjects, spoke to teachers about pupils' learning and visited several lessons.
- We reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school. We looked at school policies, curriculum documents, health and safety documentation and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- We toured the school premises to check their suitability.
- We reviewed a range of safeguarding information, including the checks that leaders make on staff prior to employment. We checked the school's safeguarding policy and spoke to staff about the school's safeguarding procedures. We checked staff's safeguarding training. We also checked the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe when in school, including when using computers.
- There were no parent free-text comments and no responses to Parent View.
- The lead inspector considered the 13 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- We spoke informally to pupils throughout the inspection.
- We met with staff to discuss their views about the school.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wayne Simner

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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