

Inspection of Glebedale School

Grove Road, Heron Cross, Longton, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST4 3AY

Inspection dates: 29 November to 1 December 2022

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's ethos of being 'A nurturing school community, building resilient learners and capable future citizens' is at the heart of everything they do. The staff work hard to provide a place to learn where pupils feel comfortable and safe. Pupils do feel safe.

Staff help the pupils to access a wide and varied curriculum. For example, many pupils achieve GSCE qualifications. Other pupils benefit from attending vocational courses in the local community. Leaders are reviewing the curriculum to ensure that all subjects have the same ambition as, currently, some subjects are better planned than others.

If bullying happens, staff deal with it quickly. The staff expects pupils to behave well, and mostly they do. Behaviour in the primary department is very good.

Pupils who come to Glebedale have often had very poor attendance in previous schools. The pastoral team and emotional literacy support assistant provide expert support to help pupils to improve their attendance. However, many pupils are persistently absent from school.

Pupils enjoy and value the trips and enrichment activities, especially go-karting. The well-planned careers advice and guidance helps pupils to set and often achieve aspirational goals for their future.

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

Leaders and proprietors are committed to ensuring that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders are making progress in realising this ambition. For example, primary pupils receive a well-thought-through and ambitious curriculum. The primary curriculum helps pupils address any gaps in their knowledge. However, there remain some subjects in the secondary curriculum that are not as well sequenced as they need to be, taking into account pupils' starting points.

Some leaders have good subject knowledge, which helps them to plan the curriculum well. For example, in science, the leader has thought carefully about the sequence of learning. The leader has considered how this builds pupils' knowledge over time. As a result, pupils learn and remember more.

Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to be able to read confidently, alongside a love of reading. The few pupils who need to improve their phonic knowledge benefit from the planned phonics scheme. Staff read to pupils, and pupils have lots of opportunities to read to staff. Consequently, they develop as confident readers.

In the mathematics curriculum, there is a focus on developing pupils' confidence in using number. However, leaders have not identified how and when problem-solving

and reasoning will be taught. This means that teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to learn these important skills. Staff have access to a range of online training opportunities, but say that they would also value some face-to-face curriculum development training.

Assessment is used well in reading to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to keep improving. Staff assess pupils in other subjects when they start school. Some teachers use assessments well to inform next steps in learning. However, in some subjects, assessment is used less well, and the work pupils are given to do covers too much of what they already know well.

The special educational needs coordinator and the clinical team help staff understand the specific needs of the pupils. These staff use their knowledge of the pupils to identify appropriate interventions to meet the different needs of the pupils. As a result, pupils' special educational needs are well met.

Pupils go to college to study vocational subjects. Some pupils attend an alternative provision once a week. School staff always go with pupils to support them. The courses pupils learn link to their future aspirations. The alternative provision is unregistered, but the school and the provider ensure that they have considered all the potential risks and have put precautions in place to minimise these risks.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is a real strength of the school. The leader provides age-related curriculum content and support. These lessons help pupils keep themselves safe in the community and online. Pupils learn about how to make healthy lifestyle choices. The school teaches pupils to respect each other and other cultures in the community. Pupils take part in community initiatives such as collecting food for the food bank.

Leaders have a well-planned careers programme. Pupils receive the support and guidance they need to help them to decide what to do when they leave school. The careers leader ensures that pupils learn about and meet a range of providers. As a result of this support, pupils go to a range of different employment, training and education opportunities.

Staff support pupils to understand the routines of the school. For example, secondary-age pupils enter the school calmly at the start of the day. They put personal belongings in the lockers without any fuss. Leaders check incidents and physical interventions daily. In some secondary-age classes, pupils' behaviour affects how much the pupils get from their lessons. Leaders know that there is a high number of incidents in school. They are implementing strategies to reduce these.

The proprietor body and governors provide effective leadership and support. They ensure that the independent school standards and their duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are met. The proprietor body has some exciting initiatives, such as the 'Dream Big' initiative. These initiatives help leaders to provide resources and memorable experiences for individual pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The leaders and proprietors ensure that there is a safeguarding policy on the website. The policy follows the Secretary of State's latest guidance.

Leaders make sure that the recruitment process is rigorous. Leaders make appropriate checks on new staff.

The leaders and staff know their pupils and the potential safeguarding risks that they do and might face well. They are particularly vigilant for any changes and escalate any concerns quickly.

Safeguarding records are kept securely. The designated safeguarding lead is working on improving these records. She is ensuring that they match the strong safeguarding practices across the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A few curriculum plans are in the process of being developed and refined. In these subjects, pupils are not yet being helped to know and remember more. Leaders need to complete this review of the curriculum, ensuring that all subjects have the same level of coherence and ambition.
- Some staff do not yet have the subject and specialist knowledge they need so they can develop a curriculum to meet the pupils' needs. As a result, there is some variance in the quality of education that pupils receive. The leaders must clearly define what training staff need and implement plans to deliver this training
- Although leaders are focused on improving attendance, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means some pupils are not accessing the full curriculum. Leaders need to continue to work closely with parents, carers and pupils so that all pupils attend school regularly and persistent absence is reduced.

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	136220
DfE registration number	861/6004
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10238123
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Outcomes First Group
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Karen Caswell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£46,633 to £72,000
Telephone number	01782 3207773
Website	www.glebedaleschool.co.uk
Email address	Glebedale.School@acorneducationandcare.com
Date of previous inspection	12 June to 3 July 2018

Information about this school

- This is an independent school for pupils aged seven to 19. Pupils are often placed in the school following a breakdown of placement in their previous primary or secondary school.
- Leaders use an unregistered alternative provision.
- A significant number of pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The primary need for most pupils is for their social, emotional and mental health.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.

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 has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with a representative from the proprietor body, the headteacher, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website and additional documents provided by leaders during the inspection.
- The inspectors made checks of the premises and other information to evaluate compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at pupils' work in humanities, PSHE and citizenship.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Pupils' case files were reviewed. The single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.

- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- Inspectors examined behaviour support plans and incident records and observed pupils at other times of the day to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online parent questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jonathan Moore

Ofsted Inspector

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