

Inspection of Glebedale School

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

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 July 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Before coming here, pupils have had difficulties in other settings. Most have missed a lot of school and have negative experiences of education. This school understands their needs and provides them with a fresh start.

At Glebedale School, pupils benefit from attentive teaching and informed specialist support. This helps them re-engage with learning. It also helps them to improve their attendance and behaviour. Importantly, the school provides pupils with supportive routines that make them feel safe and secure.

Pupils' behaviour does bring challenges, but staff manage incidents safely and calmly. If pupils act or speak unkindly, then staff intervene to stop others from being upset. In all circumstances, the school guides pupils to reflect on their actions and to find constructive ways of coping with their feelings. Because of this, pupils are usually content in school.

The school sets high expectations for learning. All pupils access a broad and interesting curriculum that is taught by staff with secure subject knowledge. They achieve well. By the end of Year 11, pupils gain qualifications and typically secure places on further education or training courses.

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

This school identifies and meets pupils' needs well. It is a safe and supportive place in which to learn. During their time here, pupils are supported to grow academically, socially and emotionally.

Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded its capacity. In the main, the growth in pupil numbers has been managed well. The school has recruited more staff and reviewed the staffing structure. This has strengthened staff expertise and developed the curriculum offer. For instance, a carefully sequenced and ambitious English curriculum enables pupils to achieve well. Central to this, is a focus on reading. This includes a structured phonics programme, which is used daily with those pupils who need it. In addition, the school has established other effective reading and writing routines that help plug gaps in pupils' learning.

The curriculum offer across other subjects prepares pupils well for further learning and help them develop useful daily life skills. In food technology, for example, pupils learn how to prepare healthy meals and to handle equipment safely.

The school's clinical and pastoral teams provide expert input. This is a notable strength of the school. These teams support teaching staff to use effective strategies for supporting pupils' needs. This input means the school's therapeutic approach is woven throughout the curriculum. The school's approach helps to get the best from pupils in lessons.

Similarly, attention to pupils' personal development is an integral part of school life. Staff model calm, respectful behaviour and set clear boundaries for pupils. Pupils learn about safe, healthy relationships and the difference between right and wrong. An elected pupil council gives pupils a voice in shaping school life, and teaches them about democracy and representation. Beyond the classroom, older pupils can take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. In addition, an informal art club runs at lunchtimes and pupils can participate in extra-curricular activities on Friday afternoons.

As pupils move up through the school, careers guidance becomes more sophisticated. For instance, younger pupils learn about the world of work through role play. Older pupils receive informed advice about courses, qualifications and training that will help them get jobs. All pupils work towards recognised qualifications, including GCSEs. Nevertheless, as the school has grown and developed the curriculum, it is now well placed to increase the range and ambition of the qualifications it offers.

Most pupils have a history of erratic school attendance. The school supports them to improve their attendance, and many get into regular and punctual habits. However, some poor attendance persists. This hinders these pupils' achievement.

Staff express confidence in the school's leadership. They feel supported in their roles and value the guidance they receive. Most of the time, staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively. They know the pupils well, and are calm and supportive. Occasionally, staff do not act soon enough to de-escalate pupils' heightened behaviour or to notice potential triggers. This can lead to some use of restraint that might have been avoided.

The school maintains constructive contact with parents and carers. This happens informally through regular phone calls and more formally through termly written reports.

The proprietor has established effective systems for maintaining school oversight. There are several levels of scrutiny and accountability, including a level of local governance. Through these reliable systems, the proprietor ensures compliance with the independent school standards. In addition, regular checks on the quality and impact of the school's work are used to drive ongoing improvement.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act. Leaders make sure staff understand safeguarding guidance, and are alert to the range of risks that pupils may face. All staff know what to do when concerns arise. All the required policies and information are published on the school's website.

Pupils at this school are supported to overcome challenges, stay safe and build optimistic futures.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- The range and ambition of the school's qualifications offer has not kept pace with curriculum developments at the school. Consequently, the current qualification offer is not as broad as it might be. The school should consider appropriate ways to increase the qualifications available to pupils.
- On occasions, staff do not act soon enough to de-escalate pupils' heightened behaviour. This can lead to some use of restraint that might have been avoided. The school's clinical and pastoral teams should continue to support all staff, and particularly less-experienced staff, to intervene in the most constructive ways and at the right times.
- The school is not consistently taking effective steps to improve some pupils' attendance. As a result, some pupils miss their learning and this creates gaps in their knowledge. The school needs to identify the barriers to good attendance and continue to support families to overcome them, to further raise pupils' attendance.

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	10391755
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	36
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	P Bloom Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Karen Keeling
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,373 to £83,373
Telephone number	01782 3207773
Website	www.glebedaleschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@glebedaleschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 November to 1 December 2022

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils aged 7 to 19 with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The primary need for most pupils is for their social, emotional and mental health. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are referred to the school by local authorities.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision,
- The school was registered by the Department for Education in 2010. The previous standard inspection took place between 29 November and 1 December 2022. A material change inspection in February 2024 raised the school's maximum pupil capacity to 40.

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 with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met and talked with the headteacher, staff, pupils and representatives from the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited classrooms, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also considered the curriculum in 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.
- Inspectors observed staff and pupil interactions. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day. Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff and parents' views.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation published on the school's website. They checked the premises and looked at documents and records kept in school.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Pamela Matty

Ofsted Inspector

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