

Inspection of Ashlea House School

Ashlea House, 474 Stockport Road, Denton, Manchester M34 6ET

Inspection dates: 19 to 21 September 2023

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?

Ashlea House School is a nurturing place where pupils are happy. Many pupils have had long periods of disrupted education prior to joining this school. The school supports pupils well to re-engage with their education. The school has high expectations for all pupils' achievement. Most pupils meet these expectations by learning and achieving well.

Pupils develop positive relationships with each other and with their teachers. Pupils benefit from well-established routines. Staff deal with behaviour issues sensitively. This helps pupils who may become unsettled to refocus on their work. They generally behave well in lessons and around the school.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about life beyond school. For example, they visit museums, a farm and a local observatory. They access a range of activities, such as football, swimming, tennis and climbing.

Pupils enjoy volunteering in their community and raising money for charity. At lunchtimes, pupils cook food for their peers. This helps them to develop their independence and confidence in preparation for adulthood.

Staff help pupils to understand the risks that they may face online and in the local area. For example, pupils performed enthusiastically in a courtroom role play about cyberbullying. This also helped them to develop their speaking and listening skills.

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

Pupils follow a personalised and engaging curriculum, which meets their learning needs. They study a wide range of suitable subjects. The curriculum is broad and balanced.

Pupils join the school with large gaps in their education, often having suffered significant emotional trauma. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school identifies any additional needs that pupils may have quickly. The school provides staff with detailed information so they can help pupils to access the curriculum. The school has ensured that all staff receive appropriate training to support pupils' individual needs. This guidance helps staff to enable pupils to achieve well across most subjects.

The school has designed a curriculum that enables pupils to build their knowledge in a logical way. However, in a small number of subjects, it is less clear what knowledge pupils should acquire. This means that sometimes teachers do not know exactly what they should teach and when they should teach it. As a result, in these subjects, a few pupils do not learn some of the essential building blocks that are necessary for their future learning.

In most subjects, teachers have secure knowledge, enabling them to deliver the curriculum content well. These teachers ensure that the checks they carry out on pupils' learning successfully identify where pupils have misunderstandings. Typically, teachers address any misconceptions that pupils may have. Despite the overall strengths of the curriculum, in a small number of subjects, teachers' subject knowledge is not as secure as it could be. On occasion, this prevents some pupils from achieving as highly as they could.

The school has raised the profile of reading. Many pupils struggle with reading when they first start at the school. Staff offer appropriate extra support to pupils who find reading more difficult. This helps these pupils to catch up and access the curriculum. Pupils have suitable opportunities to read every day. They also enjoy discussing and debating their thoughts on current affairs.

The school is skilled in helping pupils who have difficulty managing their emotions. In lessons, teachers adeptly reframe any poor behaviour. This helps pupils settle themselves down and concentrate in lessons. From their starting points, pupils' behaviour and attendance improve considerably over time. At social times, pupils' behaviour is generally calm.

The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The school ensures that pupils receive appropriate relationships and sex education and health education. Pupils learn about different religions by visiting places of worship.

Pupils receive high-quality impartial careers advice and guidance. They have meaningful encounters with employers. The school has developed strong links with local colleges. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

The school communicates well with parents and carers and guides them on how to support their child's learning at home. This enables parents to take an active role in their child's education.

Staff enjoy working at the school. The school regularly seeks the views of staff to ensure their workload is manageable. Staff appreciate that their voice is listened to and acted on. For example, staff are given time to complete tasks such as when working to improve the curriculum.

The chair of the proprietor body has regular contact with leaders through informal conversations and meetings. The proprietor body challenges and supports leaders in equal measure. The proprietor body has ensured that all the independent school standards (the standards) are consistently met. The school also complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

As part of this inspection, inspectors considered the school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils. The new site at Mile House in Crewe is maintained to a high standard. The school has ensured that there are separate toilet facilities and

suitable washing facilities for males and females, adults and disabled persons. The school has made good provision for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, and the medical examination and treatment of pupils. The school has ensured that there are suitable drinking-water facilities which are separate from the toilet facilities. Appropriate signage is in place. These additional premises, together with the original Ashlea House site, will enable the school to increase pupil numbers from nine to 14. The school demonstrates the knowledge to accommodate the material change request.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor body)

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not identified clearly enough what knowledge it wants pupils to acquire. As a result, some pupils have insecure foundations on which to build new learning. The school should ensure that in these subjects, it carefully sets out the knowledge that it wants pupils to learn and remember.
- A small number of staff lack aspects of the subject knowledge required to deliver curriculum content well. This hinders how well some pupils achieve. The school should ensure that staff are well trained to deliver all aspects of the curriculum.

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	135975
DfE registration number	357/6003
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10286420
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor body	Full Circle Limited
Headteacher	Jenna Coyne
Annual fees (day pupils)	£35,000 to £65,000
Telephone number	0161 336 0664
Website	www.fullcirclecare.co.uk
Email address	info@fullcirclecare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 February 2019

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The previous standard inspection took place from 5 to 7 February 2019.
- The school operates from premises at two separate sites. The Ashlea House School site at 474 Stockport Road, Denton, Manchester, M34 6ET accommodates pupils in key stages 3 and 4. The Mile House site is located at Middlewich Road, Crewe, CW1 4QH and accommodates pupils in key stages 3 and 4. This site opened in September 2023.
- There are currently no students in the sixth form.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

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 that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the chair of the proprietor body. An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and with leaders from a local mainstream school which has placed pupils at this school.
- An inspector visited the school's other site, Miles House.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the standards. As part of this, the lead inspector toured the school's premises.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector observed pupils reading to familiar staff.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 spoke to many pupils about their experience of school and their views of behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document and improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils.

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sanjay Patel	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Hill	His Majesty's Inspector

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