

Gretton School

Manor Farm Road, Girton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB3 0RX

Inspection dates

22–24 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- All of the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for residential special schools are met. Leaders and governors check compliance on a regular basis, including ensuring that the website meets requirements.
- Senior leaders have developed a good curriculum. The curriculum promotes pupils' learning, well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Leaders and governors ensure good teaching and learning for most pupils, and the school continues to improve.
- Recent turbulence among teaching staff in Year 10 has limited the progress of some pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently show pupils how to improve the content and presentation of their written work.
- The new assessment systems do not reflect the good progress seen in pupils' work and in the monitoring of learning over time.
- Teachers and support staff work effectively together and manage pupils' behaviour well.
- Leaders are ensuring that pupils are safe and make rapid progress in their behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Leadership of the sixth form, teaching, learning and achievement are good.
- Leaders are not monitoring residential provision rigorously enough.
- Some staff do not know the role of the local authority designated officer.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for special schools

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), and the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that pupils make at least consistently good progress by:
 - ensuring that the new assessment systems show the progress pupils are making across all subjects so that action is taken swiftly to address weaknesses
 - rigorously checking, evaluating and improving pupils' writing, including the presentation of their written work.
- Good practice recommendations in relation to the residential provision:
 - Ensure that residential leaders and managers rigorously monitor documentation in the residential provision.
 - Ensure that all staff understand the role of the designated officer within the local authority.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	Requires improvement
How well children and young people are protected in the residential provision	Good

- Leaders and proprietors fulfil their responsibilities effectively in checking that the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for residential special schools are met.
- Policies are regularly updated, and leaders and governors ensure that policies are implemented effectively.
- The required policies for safeguarding pupils are published and information about other policies are available to parents and stakeholders on the school's website, including the statement of purpose and details of the residential provision.
- The areas for improvement identified for the school at its previous inspection of the education provision have been addressed effectively.
- Leaders have developed the curriculum for sixth formers so that it prepares them well for independent adult life.
- Pupils' learning and behaviour plans have clear targets for improvement.
- Pupils' work is assessed more consistently so that they know how to improve, although leaders are not ensuring that teachers are giving enough guidance to pupils on how to improve the presentation and content of their writing.
- Senior leaders and governors have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and use this information to develop clear priorities for development. They have rightly identified the need to refine the recently introduced 'Gretton Assessment' system so that it accurately reflects the progress seen in pupils' books and in their work over time.
- The headteacher and senior leaders successfully implement the 'Gretton Approach' to autism, which focuses on the needs of each pupil to develop their communication, social interaction and motivation for learning, to enable them to become successful learners.
- The school's arrangements for appraising staff performance are implemented effectively and include a range of evidence to look at the progress pupils are making across the school. Senior leaders use the criteria from the national teachers' standards well to determine the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- The deputy headteacher, who oversees teaching and learning and who is responsible for supporting teacher training, sets targets for improvement and provides good support to develop practice. In discussion, a group of newly qualified teachers and those in training spoke highly of the support provided by senior leaders, especially the deputy headteacher, in developing their practice.
- Leaders enjoy the confidence of most parents. A few parents expressed reasonable

concerns about the impact of the changes of teaching staff in Year 10 on their children's progress. The headteacher has arranged to meet these parents to seek to resolve these issues in line with the school's complaints policy.

- Leaders enjoy the confidence of most staff and nearly all of those who were employed in the school at the time of the previous inspection have noticed improvements.
- Local authorities are satisfied with the provision the school is making for pupils and the school's communication with them is good.
- Leaders successfully implement a relevant curriculum, which uses specialist approaches for pupils with autism to develop their communication, literacy, numeracy and personal development. Staff are skilled in the use of a wide range of specialist resources and approaches.
- The curriculum is carefully planned with well-chosen topics to provide a broad range of experiences in science, art, humanities, physical education and computing. Opportunities to promote communication, literacy, numeracy and personal development in a range of subjects are carefully identified in teachers' planning.
- Pupils in Years 9 to 11 have good opportunities to work towards a range of suitable examination courses such as functional skills awards, GCSEs and BTEC awards.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, effectively. There are good opportunities within the well-conceived programme of personal, social, health and economic education to promote the British values of respect, tolerance, the rule of law and democracy.
- Pupils have good opportunities to learn about public institutions and to appreciate different cultures through visits, such as to the public library, the post office and to different places of worship.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for enriching learning through a variety of sports clubs, such as boccia, football, cricket, running and rugby, and pupils compete with other schools.
- A variety of trips and visits to places of interest enrich learning, including a range of activities in the residential provision to promote independent living skills.
- There has been significant managerial upheaval in the residential provision since the previous inspection. The interim manager is new in post. The residential management team as a whole is newly formed and has limited managerial experience. However, staff are positive about the support they receive from the new team. Staff report, for example, 'I have been in a few schools and this one is amazing in terms of support. There is clarity in the support and where you stand' and 'you know who to go to and for what things'.
- The residential provision is sufficiently staffed. The staff team receive a range of training and have regular supervisions to reflect on their work. The staff work well together. The interim manager is well known to the children and works directly with them.
- There have been no complaints regarding the residential provision. Parents provide consistently positive feedback, both verbally and through Parent View. They report good communication and a partnership approach to meeting their children's needs. A typical comment was: 'They have been amazing, they are not just supportive of him but the whole family. It feels like they are there for all of us.'

- There are no unmet national minimum standards. However, leaders and managers have not fully addressed two of the five points for improvement made at the previous inspection. Internal monitoring arrangements of the residential provision, while improved, remain insufficient to drive improvements rigorously, such as not ensuring that risk assessments are good enough or highlighting issues that require management challenge and scrutiny.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity well. They have implemented a three-year plan to improve access for pupils, parents and visitors with disabilities and are tackling any form of discrimination well.
- Leaders are making good use of the additional funding to subsidise enrichment activities and provide additional support for learning for disadvantaged pupils, to ensure that they make the same progress as others.

Governance

- Governors and the company directors closely check the school's compliance with the independent school standards, and the national minimum standards for residential special schools, and hold the school to account for its work.
- Governors have a realistic view of teaching and its impact on learning through regular monitoring and involvement in school life.
- Governors scrutinise the reports from school leaders, to drive improvements and help to influence priorities for development.
- Governors effectively oversee and monitor the impact of the arrangements to safeguard children.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that safeguarding and child protection policies, and training in safeguarding, are up to date.
- Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff, including supply staff, and for vetting visitors to the school are thorough.
- The school refers all concerns immediately to the designated officer for safeguarding and records show that leaders take immediate action to promote pupils' safety whenever any concerns are raised.
- Risk assessments in the school are suitably detailed. All pupils have an individual risk assessment. Potential risks for activities in school or on trips are recorded appropriately.
- Some of the risk assessments for resident children and young people contain inaccurate information, which has the potential to adversely affect the safety of the children.
- School and residential staff maintain high levels of supervision throughout the day and night, which promotes the safety and well-being of day and resident pupils effectively. Parents, staff and pupils are confident that pupils feel safe.
- The residential staff are aware of the increased vulnerability of disabled children. They are able to articulate what they would do if they had concerns about residents' safety or the conduct of staff. Staff are able to identify the designated safeguarding lead but lack

knowledge regarding the role of the local authority designated officer.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The school makes good use of baseline assessments in reading and spelling to determine the starting points for learning. This information is used alongside the information in each pupil's education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs, to develop individual plans for learning and behaviour.
- Pupils' plans include appropriate targets for learning and behaviour. Staff provide regular reports to parents on the progress their children are making towards their targets and in all areas of learning. Most parents said they are happy with the information they receive about their children's progress.
- Strong teamwork between teachers, teaching assistants and residential staff ensures that pupils remain focused and interested in learning. In a writing lesson with primary-aged pupils, staff successfully encouraged pupils to choose two different verbs to write whole sentences. In a key stage 3 history lesson, the teacher and teaching assistant encouraged pupils to generate a range of good ideas in constructing a trench, as part of their studies of the first world war.
- Staff provide good support for disadvantaged pupils, including the more able pupils.
- Staff manage behaviour well so that pupils sustain good levels of concentration in lessons and learn effectively. They implement the behaviour plans for each pupil referring to their individual targets and they maintain good relationships with their pupils.
- The teaching of the basic skills of reading and mathematics is good and the teaching of communication skills is particularly strong.
- There is some variability in the teaching of writing, as teachers do not consistently guide pupils on how to improve their writing, particularly in the presentation of their work.
- Consistently good teaching in the sixth form is ensuring that all learners make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers are using the new assessment systems to track and record the progress of their pupils, but it is too early to see the impact of this system on improving outcomes. Nevertheless, teachers are carefully tracking the progress pupils are making towards the targets in the individual learning and behaviour plans. They are also tracking the progress older pupils are making towards their examination courses.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good and improves significantly over time. Pupils develop their awareness of fundamental British values and show respect for other cultures and religious traditions.
- Pupils learn about democracy through the work of the school council and by reflecting on

current topics, such as the recent referendum result to leave the European Union.

- Older pupils, including sixth-form students, reflect on the impact of behaviour on others and their learning. They increase their self-esteem and grow in confidence as they move through the school. Older pupils support the learning of younger pupils in a variety of practical activities such as art, physical education, food technology and reading.
- Staff provide good support and guidance, including careers advice, to enable smooth transition at the end of key stage 4 into the sixth form.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils use the internet safely, move around the school safely and stay safe in practical activities such as science, food technology, physical education and art. They learn how to stay safe when using public transport and a few older learners learn how to drive a car safely.
- Children and young people report that they feel safe in the residential provision. They are clear that they can speak to any member of staff if they have a concern and equally clear that staff listen to them. They are confident that if they had concerns or worries that staff would take them seriously and act to support them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour and the use of physical restraint reduce significantly over time and there have been no exclusions.
- Pupils settle into their routines quickly and make rapid progress in their behaviour over time in response to the consistent behaviour management by staff.
- Children and young people behave extremely well in the residential provision. There has been only one physical intervention since the previous inspection and none for over a year.
- Pupils enjoy their learning activities and want to do well. Most parents said how much their children enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils increase their awareness of different types of bullying. They say that bullying is rare and most parents and staff agreed with pupils' views. There are very few recorded incidents of bullying in the school and none in the residential provision.
- Parents and pupils report that staff manage behaviour positively, through strong relationships.
- Staff carefully monitor pupils' attendance and identify ways to improve it. Pupils make rapid progress in their attendance over time, which has moved from below average attendance to broadly average attendance by most pupils. Many pupils achieve 100% attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Due to the previous disruption to their learning, pupils enter the school with attainment below the expectations for their ages. As they settle into their routines, they quickly catch up, and make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including communication, literacy, numeracy, science, art, physical education, computing and personal, social,

health and economic education.

- Visits to lessons over time, pupils' work and the school's information about the progress pupils are making indicate that pupils at key stage 2 are making at least average progress and sometimes better than this. They make good use of phonics for reading and spelling, and make good progress in their number skills and in solving problems. Progress is not as rapid in writing because pupils are not given consistent guidance on how to improve their work.
- By Year 9, many pupils take examination courses in literacy and numeracy, which helps them to develop confidence to take a range of other examination courses, including GCSEs and functional skills at key stage 4.
- There has been a significant year-on-year increase in the amount of examination entries and successes since the previous inspection. The oldest pupils are now typically achieving BTEC diplomas in sport, photography, food technology, games design, media studies and health and social care. They are also achieving GCSEs in a range of subjects including: physical education, mathematics, English, science, additional chemistry, additional physics, sociology, psychology, religious education, history, Mandarin, German, Spanish, information communication technology, product design and art.
- The recent disruption to learning in Year 10 has led to some pupils not making enough progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the more able, are making equally good progress as their classmates because good support is provided for their learning.
- The school's information about the progress of different pupils shows there are no significant differences in different groups of pupils.

Sixth form provision

Good

- The sixth-form coordinator is promoting learners' progress and well-being effectively.
- Since the previous inspection, the sixth-form coordinator has successfully developed the curriculum by providing good opportunities for students to prepare for independent living and extending the range of examination courses. These now include opportunities for learners to learn road safety and how to drive a car.
- Students are making at least good progress in their examination courses and in preparing for life beyond school as a result of consistently good teaching and support for their learning. All leave with a range of qualifications, including functional skills and GCSE.
- The most able students are taking AS and A level GCE examination courses in a range of subjects including sociology, psychology, philosophy and ethics, mathematics, further mathematics and physics.
- Learners' books, records of progress and visits to lessons over time show that teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations for learning for learners of all abilities and ensure that they use the information about previous learning to match coursework to pupils' different learning needs well.
- Residential staff provide good support for learning by focusing on preparation for independent living and ensuring that young people use and apply their literacy and

numeracy skills effectively in practical activities, such as cooking and shopping.

- Behaviour is consistently good and sometimes it is outstanding. Learners have very good attitudes to learning, take pride in their achievements and are well motivated to succeed.
- The sixth-form coordinator has developed strong links with parents, who are highly complimentary about the work of staff in ensuring that their children are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Transition arrangements are effective. There is good careers guidance, which helps learners to make informed choices about their future destinations, and parents are fully involved in transition reviews.
- In recent years, all learners have successfully transferred to college and sustained their places one year on. Most of the current learners have confirmed places in college and a few have conditional offers at universities.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision **Good**

- The children and young people make good progress as a result of the support they receive in the residential provision. This progress is most notable in increasing independence. A typical view came from a child who said, 'I have come so far.'
- Parents report that their children make significant progress in their social skills. The children develop strong bonds with each other. They interact with warmth and understanding. They are supportive, confident and kind to one another.
- The progress children and young people make helps to prepare them well for life after the school. The staff in the residential provision work hard to ease transition. As one professional stated: 'They have gone above and beyond to make sure that his future move is right. They have really fought for him.'
- The residential provision is sufficiently staffed, with ratios that enable good engagement and a range of activities to take place. The staffing levels contribute to positive behaviour and the diffusing of potentially difficult situations.
- The children and young people say they enjoy life in the residential provision, and 'get to do lots of new things'. They outlined a range of activities that they are able to undertake, which include organised activities off site and more relaxed informal time on site.
- The staff seek and value the views of the children and young people, such as consulting them when recruiting staff.
- The residential premises and accommodation are clean and well maintained. Houses and rooms vary in terms of how homely they are; this is dependent on the wishes of the individual child or young person.

Quality of care and support in the residential provision **Good**

- Children and young people in residence benefit from the support and guidance of enthusiastic and motivated staff. They see the staff as positive role models and, as one

pupil said, 'they are more like friends and mentors'.

- Parents are positive about the way in which the staff support the children and young people to transition into the service and to prepare for moving on from the service. As one parent said of the support her child was receiving, 'the school bends over backwards to make this smooth'.
- There are good links between the school and the residential provision. Regular meetings take place between residential staff and school staff. The majority of residential staff also work in the classrooms, which increases the consistency for children and young people.
- Children and young people say they grow in confidence and self-esteem, and the staff are sensitive to the individual needs of the residents. Parents report that the support results in children's anxiety lessening and as stated by one parent, 'I can see his confidence increasing. He is not frightened to give things a go.'
- Residential accommodation is spread across two houses and a bungalow. Resident pupils reported that their belongings are safe. There are communal lounges and dining areas.
- The children and young people engage in a variety of leisure activities such as visits to the cinema.
- Resident children and young people have varied meals. In the evenings, many prepare their own meals, which contributes to emerging independence. A parent said: 'He has started cooking and shopping. He will go shopping for ingredients and help with cooking the meals.'

School details

Unique reference number	136047
Social care unique reference number	SC425708
DfE registration number	873/6048
Inspection number	10020939

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	11
Number of boarders on roll	8
Proprietor	Cavendish Learning Limited
Chair	Mr Aatif Hassan
Headteacher	Zoe Kirby
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,500 to £82,500
Annual fees (boarders)	£97,500 to £122,500
Telephone number	01223 277438
Website	www.grettonschool.com
Email address	info@grettonschool.com
Date of previous inspection	12–14 November 2013

Information about this school

- Gretton is an independent day and residential special school for girls and boys with autism, specifically for high-functioning autism and those with Asperger's syndrome.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs, and are funded by their local authority.
- The school, which is part of the Cavendish Education Limited, opened in January 2010. It was initially registered for up to 60 pupils aged from five to 19 years with provision for up to eight residential placements.
- The school received a material change inspection on 26 January 2015 in response to its request to the Department for Education to increase the number of day pupils to 96. There are currently 95 pupils on roll, including 11 learners in the sixth form.
- There are no pupils at key stage 1.
- There are 21 pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding, including the pupils who are looked after by their local authority.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides residential care for eight pupils for four nights per week. The school's residential provision was previously inspected on 16 November 2015 when the overall experiences and progress of children and young people was judged as good.
- The leadership team has been reorganised since the previous inspection. The headteacher is now the part-time principal. The deputy headteacher was appointed as substantive headteacher in September 2016. The replacement deputy headteacher, head of compliance and assistant headteachers were appointed in September 2016 and an interim head of care is in post.
- Approximately one third of the staff are new since the previous inspection and there have been three changes of teachers in Year 10 since the beginning of the autumn term.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was an integrated inspection of the school and residential provision.
- Inspectors observed lessons and activities across the school, including the sixth form and in the residential provision.
- The lead inspector looked at the school's information about the progress pupils are making, including examination results and destinations. The inspector looked at samples of work and heard a few pupils read in their lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders in the educational and residential provision, met with a representative of the board of directors, the governing body, and with newly qualified teachers and teachers in training. There was a telephone conversation with the chair of governors, who is also the chair of Cavendish Education Limited.
- Inspectors examined the responses of 27 Parent View returns, including four written comments, and held telephone discussions with eight parents to seek their views. The written comments from a small proportion of parents with children in Year 10 were also considered.
- The lead inspector considered 50 completed responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils in the school and other pupils in the residential provision.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan; minutes of governing body meetings; the school's policies to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils; procedures for the safe recruitment of staff; records of training; curriculum plans and schemes of work; information for parents and stakeholders; the complaints policy; and duty rotas in the residential provision.
- Inspectors examined the school's website to determine if the required information was published.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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