

Inspection of Rodenhurst School

Rodenhurst Business Park, Rodenhurst Lane, Roddington, Shropshire SY4 4QU

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 May 2024

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	Inadequate
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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?

Pupils arrive at Rodenhurst School with a range of experiences and emotions linked to their previous education. Many of these have been negative or involve extended periods of time away from education. This school is a real change factor for many of the pupils who attend.

Family Care's mission of 'healing pasts, building futures' is brought to life through each interaction that staff and pupils have. The strong bonds formed help staff and pupils alike through the trickier times when pupils become anxious or distressed. A range of successful strategies and support mean unpredictable moments lessen. Pupils learn right from wrong and get better at making the right choice.

The school sets out an ambitious curriculum. This rightly starts with a strong and consistent focus on pupils feeling safe and secure. Pupils then build their knowledge across a range of subjects. The gaps that all pupils have when they join are starting to close.

Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities, including visits out and visitors to school. Visiting art museums and places of worship, driving vehicles in a field and managing budgets to purchase ingredients for cooking support pupils to 'be the best they can be'.

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

The school is ambitious for all pupils. It wants to prepare pupils to succeed while at the school and in their life beyond this. For all pupils, this starts with building strong and trusting relationships with staff. These relationships are the bedrock of the school's success. Well-trained staff support pupils' social and emotional needs while maintaining clear boundaries and expectations through a balance of high nurture and structure. This care and understanding support pupils to engage in learning in the classroom and manage positive relationships with their peers.

The school makes sure that pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified through a thorough transition period when pupils first start. Staff take time to really know and understand pupils' past experiences and what their interests and aspirations are. The school also uses a range of assessments to identify what pupils can and cannot do. It uses this information to tailor the curriculum where possible while having clear and high expectations of what pupils need to learn.

The daily timetable carefully balances academic study with support for pupils' personal development. This balance is flexible at times, depending on the pupils' individual needs, but the school is clear that the pupils need to gain a solid grounding in a range of subjects to prepare them for their next stage.

The school has revised the curriculum, making clear the key knowledge and skills it wants pupils to know and remember. In many subjects, ways to reach the final outcomes are clearly broken down into small steps. This supports staff to know precisely what to teach and in what order. In mathematics, for example, pupils build a secure understanding of number in small steps. They revisit key concepts regularly to ensure they remember long term what they have learned.

Reading is a high priority. The school has ensured that all staff have now received training to understand phonics. This means all staff can successfully support those pupils at the early stages of reading. This happens throughout the curriculum and not just in phonics lessons which are adapted to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND. Staff read to pupils, and pupils read in lessons on a regular basis. The progress many pupils make in this area of the curriculum is strong.

In some parts of the curriculum, the small steps that lead to the final outcomes are not as clear. For staff who are teaching new content, this can lead to essential steps being missed. At times, the steps between one lesson and the next are too big. As a result, pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's work. The curriculum and wider opportunities help to develop pupils' resilience and character. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum, including relationship education, has very been carefully developed. Staff identify what individual pupils might need to be delivered on a one-to-one basis, as well as set lessons that all pupils access. There are a range of theme days and visits that support pupils' understanding of the society they live in. Staff constantly promote fundamental British values so that pupils are as well prepared as they can be for life in modern Britain.

The school has developed a wide careers offer since the last inspection. An external careers service works with key stage 4 pupils to consider their interests and design an individual flight path for each pupil. This includes potential careers, post-16 options, providers and courses to consider.

Leaders engage well with staff. They ensure that they consider both the workload and well-being of all staff. Staff say they are well supported by leaders.

The proprietor body understands and carries out its role effectively. It has taken appropriate action since the last inspection to ensure it is fully informed about the school's work. It does this through regular on-site visits and board meetings. It has brokered the support of external consultants to help quality assure the standards at the school. This helps it to hold leaders to account and support a continued focus on improving the school. The proprietor body ensures that spending decisions are made in pupils' best interests. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. Leaders, including the proprietor body, have ensured the school meets all the independent school standards.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Some parts of the curriculum do not have the small steps of learning as clearly identified as they are in other parts of the curriculum. As a result, staff do not always teach or emphasise what is most important to learn. The school should continue to refine the curriculum to make clear the most important knowledge and skills pupils need to know and remember.
- Staff expertise in different subjects varies. As a result, not all subjects are taught to the same standard. The school should continue to develop staff subject-specific expertise so that children benefit from the same standard of teaching in all subjects.

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	148556
DfE registration number	894/6013
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10284438
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	6 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Family care group
Chair	Andrew O'Reilly
Headteacher	Sarah Earing
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,705 to £85,705
Telephone number	01952 984361
Website	www.family-care.co.uk
Email address	rodenhurstschool@family-care.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 May 2022

Information about this school

- Rodenhurst School is part of the Family Care Group. The school provides full-time education for boys and girls aged six to 16 years who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties, including autism and associated conditions. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The last full standard inspection was in May 2022 when the school was judged to be inadequate. A progress monitoring inspection was carried out in March 2023. At that inspection, the school did not meet all the independent school standards checked.
- The school uses no 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy head and other leaders, including the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, PSHE and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work in mathematics, science and art and design.
- 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 scrutinised policies and documents relating to the independent school standards. The lead inspector toured the premises.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the pupil survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kirsty Foulkes

His Majesty's Inspector

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