

Inspection of Selwyn Hall School

Royston Road, Foxton, Cambridge CB22 6SE

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Selwyn Hall provides a haven for pupils. Many have had substantial gaps in their education before coming here. The school prioritises building up trust between pupils and adults. Pupils develop strong connections with staff over time. Learning is tailored to pupils' interests. As a result, pupils want to come to school and enjoy learning. They feel safe and start to take part in more activities over time. Parents and carers typically say things such as, 'My child is thriving,' and, 'My child loves being part of the school community.'

The school challenges pupils and shares high aspirations with them when talking about the future. Pupils' understanding in each subject is informally assessed by teachers when pupils start, and this is then used to plan classwork. Pupils are encouraged to develop independence. Adults work with them to build up their confidence for this.

Pupils at Selwyn Hall are developing their ability to cope when upset or angry. The school teaches them strategies to help pupils refocus and calm down. All pupils have a 'safe space' they have chosen. Pupils use these, but staff then support them to get back to learning in their class.

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

The order of what skills should be taught in each subject is clearly sequenced in the curriculum, including key concepts such as chronology. The school adapts teaching to meet individual pupils' starting points. For example, a pupil might access elements of Year 5 skills for one topic, but start at Year 2 for another. In subjects such as mathematics and science, important knowledge is planned in a clear sequence.

All the pupils arrive with different experiences of education. Teachers take themes, for example 'the plague', and plan learning that builds on pupils' interest and expands their knowledge of the wider theme. For some pupils, content is chosen because they have missed so much learning in the past, for example by covering essential elements of primary-phase geography so that they can access the rest of the curriculum.

The school has systems in place to track what pupils have learned in subjects such as English and mathematics. In other subjects, the skills that pupils develop are tracked, but not the knowledge they have learned over time, such as content covered in history lessons.

The school works with other schools in the group to share planning and resources. This supports the work of teachers in knowing what it is appropriate to teach and when.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school takes a gradual approach to transition into the school. Staff get to know as much as possible about how to support pupils before they start. This helps pupils to engage well with learning. Many pupils rapidly increase their attendance as a result.

Pupils are encouraged to have items that might help them feel safe, such as a soft toy for reassurance. When pupils are upset, staff help calm them down gently and in a positive way. This means that pupils can behave and work hard.

Reading is taught well. The school's chosen phonics scheme is delivered to a high standard. As a result, all pupils are making progress with their reading. Pupils have access to books that are both diverse and interesting. Pupils listen attentively to stories that are read to them.

The school creates opportunities for pupils to socialise and play together as some have not done this regularly in the past. Every day finishes with extra-curricular activities that enhance learning. Lunchtime is communal, encouraging discussion. Pupils enjoy swinging on the large swing together. The school takes pupils into the local community, for example meeting the local minister and visiting the shop. Staff make positive use of any poor behaviour shown, for example by prompting discussion about discrimination.

There is a well-planned programme of careers education that supports pupils as they begin to move through key stage 3.

The school is well led. Staff feel well supported. The school is expanding in size gradually to ensure that staff are well trained and that pupils are settled before taking more pupils onto the school's roll.

The proprietorial body ensures that there is external challenge and checks are in place to ensure that the independent school standards (the standards) are met. For example, it ensures that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The site provides plenty of space for pupils to learn and play and meets the standards relating to this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some foundation subjects, the skills to be taught are clearly sequenced over time, but the content taught is personalised for each pupil by their teacher. Systems have not yet been implemented to ensure that the knowledge learned by

each pupil is coherently sequenced over time. The school needs to ensure that these systems are in place and used effectively.

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	149560
DfE registration number	873/6061
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10299277
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	7 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Polaris Children's Services Limited
Chair	Joanne August
Headteacher	Rebecca Pine
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000 to £80,000
Telephone number	01223 626625
Website	www.selwynhallschool.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@selwynhallschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2023. This is the first standard inspection of the school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Their places are funded by their local authorities.
- The school primarily provides specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is registered for up to 50 pupils aged 7 to 18 years.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school has an executive headteacher who has oversight of other schools under the same proprietorial body.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 met with the headteacher, the executive headteacher and the chief executive officer, who is also chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, and personal, social and health education. 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 pupils' work, and spoke to leaders about 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.
- The inspectors undertook a site tour and scrutinised documents relating to health and safety to ensure compliance with the relevant independent school standards.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Becky Quinn

Ofsted Inspector

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