

Inspection of Queenswood School

Callow Hills Farm, Hereford Road, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2PZ

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 October 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	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?

Pupils arrive with a range of previous experiences of education, many of which have been negative. Over time, these experiences become increasingly positive. Pupils develop a willingness to learn and they achieve a range of qualifications. These lend themselves well to pupils' next steps as they move beyond school into the world of further education, apprenticeships or work.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. The school is determined to unlock the potential and access brighter futures for each young person placed with them. They achieve this. Pupils are proud to talk about their learning. They can share a song they have been practising to play on the keyboard, or read a poem with expression and meaning. They show a secure understanding of democracy.

Positive, respectful relationships are key to this success. Pupils appreciate how well staff know them as an individual and care for them. They feel safe. They feel valued and that their voice is heard. Conversations on the setting up of the school council and recollections of a visit to a farm raise a smile as each pupil's character and interests come to the fore.

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

The proprietor sets a clear vision and steers a true course to ensure that the school consistently meets the independent school standards. The two school sites are well maintained and provide high-quality resources and social spaces. Pupils are safe and the curriculum meets their needs. Pupils engage increasingly well with their learning.

Staff have a deep understanding of the individual needs, strengths and interests of pupils. They use knowledge well to set high expectations and intervene subtly when needed. In turn, pupils settle to school life and learn, with help, to follow the behaviour expectations. They attend well and move through the school's phases of learning to learn, then being ready to learn and finally into being inspired to learn. Pupils discover how to trust the adults in the school. From this trust comes a gradual acceptance of the school's expectations and increased access to learning across the curriculum. At times, staff are less confident at supporting pupils' learning within lessons so on occasions pupils lack opportunities to think for themselves.

Recent changes to the organisation of the curriculum mean that practical subjects are taught at the Callow site and the more academic subjects are taught at the Yarkhill site. Teachers use high-quality subject resources to deliver the lessons. This in turn, is helping pupils to access their learning in a way that suits them and allows them to achieve well. Pupils are supported to access a range of qualifications geared towards their next stage of education and life. These include GCSE and functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and science as well as practical qualifications, for example mountain bike mechanics and agriculture.

The school understands that the pupil referred to them on paper is often very different to the person who arrives in school. Each pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. On entry to the school, these EHC plans are not always recent nor reflective of current additional needs. The school has structured referral and induction processes in place that ensure they put the right help in at the right time for well-being, counselling and behavioural needs.

A recently refined academic intervention programme is in its infancy. Individual interventions are in place. However, some staff are not confident to apply these to the curriculum, meaning pupils do not make as much progress as they could. For example, pupils at the early stages of reading are receiving additional individual support through phonics. This support is not followed up in lessons. Pupils lack opportunities to apply their phonics knowledge across the subjects they study.

Teachers know what each lesson is setting out to achieve, what learning has come before and what comes next. Teachers weave their secure subject knowledge skilfully across and between lessons. This enables pupils, over time, to become successful learners. They develop the skills to stay in lessons or go back to lessons they have left. They can listen to discussions and learn to debate a text. Pupils get the opportunity to learn how to write a manifesto for the school council. Pupils demonstrate how well they can remember and apply their learning in different situations. Seeing a three-dimensional drawing of a cat bowl become reality and the tuning in of a radio made by pupils show the potential that is being unlocked day by day.

Throughout their time at Queenswood, pupils have a range of opportunities to develop personally. They interact with a range of visitors coming into school and enjoy visits out. Pupils learn to understand the opportunities open to them beyond the school gates and how to keep themselves safe, for example through considering the dynamics of what makes a healthy relationship. They are supported to gain confidence and a belief in themselves. The school works effectively in partnership with parents to help set out and realise their child's hopes for the future.

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)

- Staff do not always support pupils' learning in lessons as well as they could. This means pupils do not always have opportunities to think for themselves. The school should ensure that staff have the appropriate pedagogical knowledge to probe, question and extend learning so they can best support pupils' progress.

- The recently introduced interventions programme stands separate to the curriculum. Staff who deliver the curriculum lack knowledge of the interventions used. As a result, pupils do not apply the learning they gain within these sessions to their learning in curriculum subject lessons. The school should further embed the recently introduced interventions programme, including early reading, so that all staff integrate the pupils' learning from interventions across 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	131353
DfE registration number	884/6011
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10342018
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services Ltd
Chair	Nancy O'Regan
Headteacher	Robert Coles
Annual fees (day pupils)	£62,000 to £88,000
Telephone number	01531 670632
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/queenswood-school-herefordshire
Email address	queenswoodschool@aspriscs.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 to 11 February 2022

Information about this school

- Queenswood School is part of the Aspris Children's Services Ltd group. The school provides full-time education for pupils aged 11 to 19 who have social, emotional and mental health needs, including autism. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by a small number of local authorities.
- The school works with two unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- The school's most recent standard inspection was in February 2022, when it was judged to be good. Since this standard inspection, Ofsted carried out a material change inspection in June 2023 to increase the number of pupils it can cater for to 58. Pupils attend lessons across both sites at Yarkhill, Herefordshire HR1 3SU and Callow Hills Farm, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2PZ.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

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 judgement 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.
- As part of their work to check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and subject leaders. The lead inspector spoke with those responsible for governance, including the chief operating officer, the regional director, the safeguarding leader and the head of quality assurance from the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including considering early reading, science, music, 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 spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including art and mathematics.
- 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.
- The lead inspector carried out activities to consider how well the school meets the independent school standards. This included: a detailed tour of the two sites and premises and considering documents, policies and plans linked to the health, safety and welfare of pupils. These included the fire risk assessment, checks on fire safety equipment, site safety and tree surveys.
- Inspectors talked with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys of staff and pupils. They considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from Gloucestershire local authority.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with leaders to consider how they support pupils' behaviour.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including school policies, curriculum documents and the school website.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from each of the alternative providers that the school uses.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Hoddinott

Ofsted Inspector

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