

# Inspection of The Place Independent School

Hill Farm, Belvoir Road, Bottesford NG13 0EA

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Inspection dates: 12 to 14 March 2024

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school's values of 'be passionate, be brave, be caring and be ambitious' underpin all the school does. Pupils enjoy collecting reward 'tickets' or points when they demonstrate these values in their work and attitude. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Staff are passionate and ambitious for all pupils to succeed. Staff take time to get to know pupils. They understand their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and interests well.

Most pupils' behaviour improves the longer they are at the school. They are mostly respectful of staff and visitors. Pupils reflect on their emotions. They learn to regulate their feelings and behaviour.

Class sizes are small and pupils benefit from individual support in lessons. Teachers can spend plenty of time working with each pupil. Most pupils engage well with their learning. Pupils say they feel happy and safe.

The school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests through enrichment opportunities. This includes visits to local amenities and places of interest, such as museums and the library. Pupils especially enjoy opportunities to learn outdoors and be around the school's animals, such as Loki the dog, Truffles the pig, Eric the goat and the alpacas.

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

The curriculum is appropriately broad and well considered. Pupils experience a range of subjects that include academic, creative and vocational learning. All lessons have well-sequenced schemes of work. The school's curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Teachers adapt lessons to the needs of each individual pupil.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the topic being taught. They regularly give praise for work well done. Pupils' progress is evident. However, teachers do not always provide an effective range of activities to support pupils' progress through the curriculum. For example, in mathematics lessons, teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills. In English lessons, there is not enough time dedicated to allowing pupils opportunities to undertake extended writing.

Teachers are passionate about what they teach. Most teachers frequently assess pupils' knowledge and understanding in class, such as through their 'stick-it' approach to starter activities. In a mathematics lesson, the starter activity allowed pupils to recap and check their understanding of 2D shapes and how to label sides and vertices before moving on to learning about coordinates. When they undertake such assessment, teachers are able to identify when pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They use this information to inform their planning. However, assessment procedures are not fully developed across all subjects and classes.

Sometimes, teachers do not use assessment opportunities to check learning or to identify misconceptions and gaps in knowledge.

The school has put in place a structured phonics programme. Well-trained staff provide effective daily interventions for these weaker readers. The books these pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. Where pupils still find learning phonics difficult, the school provides targeted support.

Pupils' additional needs are understood and meticulously catered for. All pupils at the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school's pastoral team, therapy team and special educational needs and/or disabilities team, work well together to support these pupils. Staff receive helpful information about pupils, which they use to set pertinent and relevant targets.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of everything that the school does. Through the curriculum, pupils develop an understanding of right and wrong. The school also ensures that pupils receive valuable careers information. Staff support pupils to become more confident and resilient. They do this through enabling pupils to experience a wide range of outdoor educational activities, such as tree planting, fishing and bushcraft.

Leaders know their school well. They know what is working and where improvements are still to be made. Leaders have created a team of staff who share their ambition and determination to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. Staff say that they feel well supported at the school and that their well-being is considered.

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school's premises are maintained to a good standard. The procedures in relation to first aid, fire safety, and health and safety are appropriate. All necessary information is available to parents. The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. 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)**

- Curriculum implementation is not wholly consistent. In some subjects, some teachers do not consistently check on pupils' prior learning to identify gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge. Some staff do not provide pupils with well-considered activities, including to help pupils to extend their reasoning skills or to complete extended pieces of writing. On such occasions, pupils do not achieve as highly as they might. The school must ensure that assessment processes and the

delivery of the curriculum in all subjects are of an equally high quality, so that pupils learn as well as they should.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142939
<b>DfE registration number</b>	855/6038
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10326782
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	46
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Tommy MacDonald Milner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Charlotte Hardy
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£98,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01949 844440
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theplaceindependentschool.co.uk">www.theplaceindependentschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:charlotte@theplaceindependentschool.co.uk">charlotte@theplaceindependentschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 to 25 November 2021

## Information about this school

- The Place Independent School is an independent special school. Pupils who attend the school have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is registered to admit up to 50 pupils, aged seven to 18. Currently, there are 46 pupils on roll, aged seven to 16.
- The school operates on two sites. The lower school is located at Hill Farm, Belvoir Road, Bottesford NG13 0EA. The upper school is located at 7 Jericho Lane, Barkestone NG13 0HF.
- The school does not use the services of alternative provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in November 2021, when it was judged to be good.

## 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and the proprietor.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE). For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and pupils' books and work for science, history and geography.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; reviewed safeguarding records; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site and at lunchtime.

## **Inspection team**

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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