

Inspection of Field Gate School

Field Gate, Mill Field Road, Fishlake, Doncaster DN7 5GH

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 April 2023

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?

Field Gate School is a small independent school with a bespoke vision of how to provide accessible learning for all pupils. Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for every pupil. Leaders are passionate that pupils, many whom have struggled in education previously, participate fully and do well in their learning. Leaders and staff work closely with each pupil to deliver a carefully considered curriculum that matches pupils' needs and interests alike.

Parents and carers are highly positive about the school. They appreciate the attention given to their child and their individual needs. Parents speak highly of the regular communication that they receive. More than one parent used the word 'transformational' when describing the effect the school has had on their child, both at home and at school.

There are high expectations of pupil behaviour and conduct across the school. The school is very calm, with a nurturing atmosphere. Pupils have positive relationships with staff. Pupils understand the behaviour system well. Most pupils are now able to self-regulate and reset when something unsettles them. Leaders can demonstrate how pupils' attendance improves significantly once pupils are settled at the school.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are keen to talk about what they do and what they have learned. Pupils explained that bullying does not happen here. They feel safe in this setting, and inspectors agree that this is the case. Staff go above and beyond any expected duties to support pupils, carefully building relationships and trust.

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

School leaders have developed an effective curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. Learning is both formal and creative. For example, national curriculum science is enhanced by Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) gardening. During the inspection, pupils were applying what they had learned in science to support them in renovating the school pond. The discovery of a family of newts provided much excitement, with staff and pupils checking that these were common newts rather than the rare great crested newt.

The curriculum is broken down into small steps that are carefully matched to the needs of each pupil. In most subjects, learning is well structured and clearly demonstrates the planned learning journey. This allows pupils to develop their knowledge and skills intensively. Pupils are supported to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence. The curriculum in some subjects is less clear. While pupils have varied learning opportunities in these subjects, new and previous curriculum content is not as carefully matched. This may prevent pupils from regularly building on what they already know. Leaders have clear plans in place to continue to develop all subjects as the school grows.

Leaders understand how reading for pleasure supports pupils to build their vocabulary, develop their imagination and learn more about the world around them. They foster a love of reading in pupils who were previously reluctant to pick up a book. Staff recognise the importance of learning to read with accuracy and fluency. Pupils in the key stage 2 classroom access regular phonics lessons. In these sessions, pupils practise the sounds with which they are familiar and learn new sounds that they then practise. However, there are times when adults' modelling of sounds in a word does not help pupils. Sounds are incorrectly lengthened, which interrupts pupils when they attempt to decode and encode accurately.

Leaders offer high-quality pastoral support. Pupils learn about healthy foods, how to maintain an active lifestyle, and how to keep physically and mentally fit. They have an emotionally age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and of the protected characteristics. Pupils can access a wide range of opportunities to nurture, develop and stretch their talents and interests. Friday is used as enrichment time, when pupils can take part in activities they have earned by achieving 'cool coins' for making good choices and following behaviour expectations. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this opportunity. They talk with excitement about the different activities that they can choose, from cooking to horse riding to ice-skating.

Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Staff harness every opportunity to support pupils in their understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Leaders ensure that there is a programme of careers education. Leaders have chosen to embed links to various careers in some subject plans. This is still at a developmental stage. Leaders have ambitious plans in place to develop an enriched careers programme for pupils across the school.

The proprietorial board and the chief executive officer (CEO) work collaboratively with the leadership team at the school. There is a clear ethos and vision that run through the organisation. Staff across the organisation understand and can demonstrate the part that they play in ensuring that the school meets all parts of the independent school standards and fulfils its statutory duties. With the support of the executive leadership team, the headteacher has built an enthusiastic and resilient staff team in a short space of time. Staff at Field Gate School feel well supported. They say that the extensive induction programme prepares them well. Staff speak positively about the proactive approach to training and they relish being able to access further learning to support their personal development. Staff say that their well-being is a priority for school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to keeping pupils safe. This is well embedded and understood by all staff. There are detailed procedures in place to ensure that safeguarding incidents are carefully recorded. This is especially important due to the various sites at which pupils access their education. Low-level concerns are logged daily and proactively monitored by leaders. All staff access extensive training in safeguarding and understand the importance of recording and reporting any incident, however small.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- When teaching pupils to read, sometimes staff do not accurately pronounce each letter-sound clearly. Additional sounds are sometimes added to the end of the letter. This makes it difficult for pupils to hear each sound in a word. Pupils also model letter-sounds incorrectly. Leaders should ensure that all staff access further training in the delivery of a systematic phonics programme to help pupils read and write words with accuracy and fluency.
- Leaders' personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum includes careers guidance. The school is currently developing this aspect of the curriculum. Coverage of the careers programme is still in its infancy in some year groups. Leaders should continue to develop this aspect of their provision, so that all pupils are aware of the various destinations and opportunities that are available to them and of the different education pathways that may support them to access these options.

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	149152
DfE registration number	371/6015
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10267726
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	9
Proprietor	Five Rivers Child Care Ltd
Chair	David Howard
Headteacher	Sarah Weston
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,420 to £83,850
Telephone number	07935 066031
Website	https://five-rivers.org/education/schools/field-gate-school/
Email address	sarah.weston@five-rivers.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Field Gate School is operated by Five Rivers Child Care Ltd. The school operates primarily from one site in Doncaster. The school also offers education provision via its 'school without walls'. This is delivered through a number of risk-assessed sites in the community and in pupils' homes. This offer is part of the 1ACE: Another Chance Education provision for pupils who have had limited success in formal education settings or who have struggled in specialised settings.
- Field Gate School is an independent special school that provides specialist education for up to 30 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with social, emotional and mental health needs and those with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school's education staff work alongside therapeutic staff in meeting the pupils' needs.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.
- While the school offers some education provision remotely, this is delivered by the school itself. The school does not use 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, learning mentors and the Five Rivers senior education team, including the executive head teacher, the education adviser to the proprietorial board, the head of education and the head of alternative provision. Inspectors also met with the chair of the proprietorial board, the CEO and the head of governance.
- Inspectors looked in detail at English, mathematics, science and PSHE. They talked to leaders and staff about their curriculum plans. They also talked to pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects. They looked at pupils' work and visited lessons.
- An inspector visited the 'school without walls' 1ACE Doncaster provision for pupils who are not yet ready to learn in a classroom setting.
- Inspectors met with leaders with overall responsibility for safeguarding and looked at school records. They also scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment checks.

- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire and the pupil questionnaire. They also reviewed the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments, and spoke with a number of parents on the telephone.
- Inspectors talked to pupils to gather their views on school life.

Inspection team

Zoe Lightfoot, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

James Duncan

His Majesty’s Inspector

Patricia Head

Ofsted Inspector

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