

Good Apple Independent School

Unit 3 Granary House, Acland Street, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 2NS

Inspection dates

12–14 March 2019

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, has ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher has successfully built on the existing success of the school's well-established alternative provision that operates from the same premises.
- Pupils make good progress. They enter the school with skills and knowledge much lower than those expected for their age. Pupils are successfully working towards qualifications in English, mathematics, science and a range of other subjects.
- Staff support pupils very well. Pupils have spent a large amount of time away from mainstream education. Pupils have often experienced trauma and have a variety of behavioural, social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Teachers plan lessons that interest and motivate pupils to complete them successfully. These include English, mathematics, science and cookery.
- Pupils receive good careers advice and guidance. Several pupils have undertaken appropriate work experience placements and are currently applying for post-16 education and apprenticeships.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are extremely positive. These relationships ensure that pupils behave well. Incidents of low-level disruption and bullying are rare.
- Pupils' attendance increases significantly when compared to their previous school or setting. Pupils state they are happy and feel safe.
- Leaders do not always identify the specific aspects of pupils' learning that are required for them to make even better progress.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons that sufficiently challenge pupils. This is particularly the case in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar activities.
- At the time of the inspection, some information on the school's website was out of date.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should make better use of information about pupils' learning to sharply identify the important, specific aspects pupils need to make even better progress.
- Teachers should carefully plan lessons to sufficiently challenge pupils, particularly in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Leaders should ensure that the school website gives parents and carers the most up-to-date information regarding the work of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher and senior teacher set high expectations for pupils and staff alike. They are building on the success of the existing alternative provision by providing a safe and secure environment to which pupils attend frequently, and where they behave well and achieve relevant qualifications.
- The headteacher knows the strengths and development areas of the school very well. The school improvement plan identifies the right priorities and the plan shows clearly who is responsible for completing certain actions within realistic and appropriate timescales.
- The headteacher has ensured that there is an appropriate curriculum in place that contains detailed schemes of work in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and various vocational studies. Pupils are offered a bespoke curriculum that meets their individual needs extremely well.
- School leaders ensure that transition arrangements before pupils start at the school are effective. Staff make home visits and receive information about each pupil from a wide range of services, including schools and social care. When appropriate, pupils receive home tutoring or a reduced timetable initially, in order to foster positive relationships between themselves and staff. Pupils therefore settle quickly into the school routines and make good progress.
- The leader responsible for careers advice ensures that pupils receive independent guidance and support. Pupils are given the opportunity to visit local colleges and explore apprenticeship opportunities. Pupils are therefore well prepared for their next stage of training, education or employment.
- The headteacher ensures that communication between staff is good. For example, a daily 'closure' meeting gives staff the opportunity to share any events or issues at the end of the day. Teachers can then alter their plans for the following day accordingly.
- The leader responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is knowledgeable and well qualified. Pupils' progress is checked carefully and discussed frequently with parents. Staff have received training in such areas as welfare and social care, psychotherapy and cognitive behavioural therapy. This impacts positively on the progress pupils make, both academically and emotionally.
- Staff are proud to work at the school. They share leaders' determination to provide opportunities and a safe environment for pupils to succeed. Staff told the inspector that they enjoy staff training and are keen to learn and develop professionally.
- The headteacher has ensured that parents and carers receive detailed reports on their child's progress, attainment and attendance. There are frequent telephone calls between staff and parents to ensure that information regarding pupils is as up to date as possible.
- The headteacher has ensured that the school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents on the school's website. The policy meets the required independent school standards.

- Leaders do not always identify the specific weaknesses in pupils' learning accurately. Pupils' provision is therefore not as well targeted as it could be.
- The headteacher has not ensured that the school website contains accurate and up-to-date information for parents and carers.

Governance

- The school committee meets frequently to help support the headteacher in the running of the school. The committee members are knowledgeable and experienced. They offer advice and guidance to the headteacher as well as holding staff to account for their performance. The committee monitors pupils' academic performance, attendance and behaviour as well as ensuring that the school building is safe and secure.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead is well trained, as are other members of staff. They are knowledgeable in such areas as equality and diversity, e-safety and spotting the signs of neglect and hidden harm.
- There are strong systems in place for staff to report any safeguarding or welfare concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. Serious incident report forms are completed diligently and extra support from outside agencies, such as social care, is sought promptly should it be required. Adults are clear about their responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns regarding staff to the designated officer.
- The single central record meets current requirements. The headteacher understands the importance of ensuring that potential applicants have two references and their employment history is checked thoroughly, before their employment at the school commences.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Adults are skilled in building positive relationships with pupils quickly and gaining their trust. Pupils respond well to these relationships and enjoy the range of appropriate activities that are planned for them.
- Practical activities are planned well to supplement the wider curriculum. For example, pupils enjoyed the opportunity to develop word processing skills by typing out a recipe and method for making 'panacalty', before then making the dish in the kitchen. This was served to the inspector and was delicious.
- Teachers possess good subject knowledge. During a chemistry lesson, the teacher was correctly using the terms protons, neutrons and electrons to enable pupils to successfully calculate the atomic mass of various elements.
- Adults provide opportunities for pupils to work together and to develop communication and language skills. In one activity, pupils were asked to blow up balloons and stick them together before seeing how much weight the balloons could hold. Pupils enjoyed the challenge of this and worked together well.
- Pupils work well independently as well as in groups. One pupil, when using descriptive

language to describe the weather, had written, 'The wind came in gusts, rocking the car like a drunken man.'

- Pupils are engaged in the activities because they interest and motivate them. Pupils particularly enjoyed calculating the cost and nutritional value of a chicken stir fry, before cooking it to take home and share with their family.
- Classrooms have a wide variety of posters and information displayed on walls to remind pupils of punctuation rules, spellings and tips on how to improve writing. During one English lesson, pupils were learning how to spell various homonyms. One pupil said, 'Over there, there is a sheep eating their grass.'
- Teachers do not always suitably challenge pupils to enable them to make even better progress. This is particularly the case in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar activities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff provide pupils with a daily breakfast. This ensures that pupils are ready to start the school day and gives an opportunity to discuss a particular topic. For example, during the inspection, pupils were maturely discussing the differences between a mainstream school and their current school.
- Pupils told the inspector there are many adults at the school with whom they could speak, should they have a worry or concern. One pupil said that the school felt like 'One big family.'
- During lunchtimes, pupils and adults chat sociably. This opportunity is used very well to further develop positive relationships and allows pupils to discuss any issues they may be experiencing in and out of school.
- The headteacher maintains contact with pupils during the school holidays. This helps to increase their attendance by ensuring that pupils return to the school at the start of the new term.
- Various displays and literature around the school help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, an information stand contains leaflets on the dangers of gangs and sexting and there are displays reminding pupils of British values, drug awareness and Remembrance Day.
- The personal, social, health and economic curriculum provides pupils with a variety of opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding about various topics, including sex education, law and punishment, and the dangers of underage drinking and knife crime.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe when they are online. They are particularly aware of the dangers of leaving a 'digital footprint' when they post a message or photograph on social media.
- Pupils are knowledgeable regarding the benefits of eating a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. There are opportunities for pupils to swim at the local leisure centre,

play football, rounders and cricket and use the gym equipment located at the school.

- Various signs and posters around the school encourage pupils to have a positive outlook on life. One such message reads, 'When you need something to believe in, start with yourself.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils with whom the inspector spoke are unanimous in their view that behaviour is good, and incidents of bullying are extremely rare. Pupils follow adults' instructions promptly, therefore ensuring that lessons run smoothly.
- Adults ensure that pupils are rewarded when they behave consistently well. For example, pupils particularly enjoy visiting local places of interest and cafes.
- Pupils' rates of attendance increase sharply when compared to their previous school or setting.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over recent years, pupils attending the school on a part-time basis have successfully achieved GCSE passes in subjects including English, mathematics and science. Some of these part-time pupils have been successfully reintegrated into mainstream education.
- Pupils enter the school having typically missed large periods of their education. They have missed significant pieces of the national curriculum and, therefore, have large gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Current pupils are achieving well. They are making good progress towards a range of recognised qualifications, including passes in GCSEs and functional skills levels 1 and 2 in English and mathematics.
- Current pupils are making good progress in appropriate vocational qualifications. These include subjects such as midwifery, food hygiene, childcare, animal care, bricklaying and dog training.
- Pupils have the opportunity to attend appropriate work experience placements during their time in key stage 4. These opportunities lead to successful apprenticeships and post-16 college courses.
- Staff carefully check on the progress made by pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Current pupils show strong improvements in behaviour, self-esteem and in their attitudes towards school and post-16 education. One pupil told the inspector, 'I know that every single member of staff would go out of their way to help me.'
- Pupils make less progress in reading and in developing spelling, punctuation and grammar skills than they do in mathematics and the vocational subjects. This is because teachers do not plan activities that sufficiently challenge pupils in these areas.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 145023 |
| DfE registration number | 925/6007 |
| Inspection number | 10053986 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

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| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 9 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 3 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 3 |
| Proprietor | Natalie Myers |
| Headteacher | Natalie Myers |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £35.00 to £165.00 per day |
| Telephone number | 01427 616803 |
| Website | www.goodappleindependent.co.uk |
| Email address | natalie@goodappleindependent.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Good Apple Independent School is a small, independent school operating from premises in Acland Street, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. The school caters for pupils who have been or are on the verge of being permanently excluded from mainstream school. Some pupils have experienced trauma and have behavioural, social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- There are three full-time pupils on the school's roll. However, for this inspection, the part-time pupils have also been treated as pupils on the roll at this school, as this is where they attend for most or all of their education.
- The school opened in September 2018 after a successful pre-registration inspection in

November 2017. The headteacher became the proprietor in August 2018.

- The school is registered to admit 16 full-time pupils in the age range nine to 16.
- The school aims to 'Help vulnerable pupils succeed.' It does not use any alternative providers.
- The proprietor is responsible for a well-established alternative provision that is also called 'Good Apple' and operates from the same premises.

Information about this inspection

- Ofsted announced the inspection to the headteacher the day before the inspection began.
- The inspector observed learning in all key stages and examined a variety of pupils' workbooks from a range of subjects.
- The inspector held a range of meetings, including with the headteacher and senior teacher, four teachers and the office manager. He held a telephone conversation with a member of the committee and spoke with four pupils.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to the curriculum, assessment, pupils' progress, school improvement planning and records relating to safeguarding.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's Parent View free-text service, pupils' questionnaires or to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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