

Pegasus School

Main Street, Caldwell, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE12 6RS

Inspection dates

19–21 June 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The recently appointed headteacher has quickly developed a good understanding of the school's strengths. She has responded effectively to the need to improve the curriculum and to manage significant staff changes.
- Senior leaders, with dedicated support from the staff, have created a culture of cooperation and teamwork. They place the highly individual needs of pupils at the heart of the school's aims and actions.
- The proprietor and governors provide a sharp vision of excellence. They support and challenge senior leaders to manage change effectively.
- The quality of teaching is good because staff have a good understanding of the individual learning characteristics of pupils. They plan creatively and diligently to engage pupils in effective learning.
- Pupils learn to overcome their anxieties and to focus on the meaningful tasks and activities provided for them. Many pupils develop commendable independence and the ability to make choices and decisions for themselves.
- Despite their substantial barriers to learning, pupils make good progress in small steps. They enjoy school and respect the staff with whom they work.
- Pupils are safe in school. Staff are well trained to understand the risks to which pupils may be exposed. Leaders assess risks effectively and continuously improve all aspects of their safeguarding practice.
- Appropriate recent improvements have been made in the arrangements for assessing pupils' progress. More work remains to be done to ensure that pupils' targets are set consistently, and external accreditation fully developed.
- Pupils enjoy practical activities, including off-site, work-related learning. Senior leaders have begun to consider how these experiences may be extended.
- Staff have limited opportunities to learn from good practice beyond their individual classrooms.
- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

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?

- Implement plans to extend the range of activities available for practical and off-site activities.
- Enhance the assessment of pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that individual pupils' targets are always sufficiently challenging
 - introducing additional opportunities for pupils' work to be externally accredited.
- Provide further opportunities for staff to:
 - share examples of best practice in teaching, learning and the management of behaviour
 - learn from similar schools how they implement the curriculum, assess pupils' achievement and promote pupils' independence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They have created a culture of continuous review and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work.
- The headteacher provides clear and decisive leadership. She is approachable and engages effectively with pupils and staff throughout the school. Staff enjoy working at the school and show considerable resilience in addressing the challenges presented by the complexity of pupils' needs.
- The curriculum meets the diverse needs of pupils. Daily timetables, the range of subjects studied and the quality of teaching and learning are kept under continuous review by senior leaders. Staff at all levels of responsibility work tirelessly to provide relevant and engaging experiences for all pupils.
- Senior leaders, supported by the proprietor and governors, provide good training for staff to develop their personal qualifications. Staff keep up to date with their awareness of how to manage learning and to develop pupils' personal and social skills.
- The school promotes effectively the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Staff give careful attention to supporting pupils through periods of emotional uncertainty and turmoil. They learn to recognise the individual triggers to anxiety and potential misbehaviour. They are extremely resourceful in helping pupils to develop social relationships and an awareness of the impact of their actions on others.
- The school promotes British values and equality of opportunity for all pupils. All pupils, for example, contribute to the school council 'elections'. Pupils are continuously helped to distinguish between right and wrong decisions and actions. They are assisted to develop alternative means of communication, for example through picture exchange, to ensure that no views or concerns are overlooked.
- Communication with parents and carers is effective. Staff work effectively to ensure ever-more-detailed exchange of information with pupils' families and carers. All staff attend a daily briefing meeting, which includes exchange of information about any concerns or requirements related to individual pupils.
- Senior leaders continuously seek to improve practice in all aspects of the school's work. The complex nature of pupils' needs often requires unique and imaginative actions on the part of staff. At present, staff have limited opportunities to visit other schools with a similar intake, to share and learn from effective practice.
- The school demonstrates good capacity for continuous further improvement.

Governance

- The proprietor demonstrates dedication and commitment to ensuring excellence in all aspects of the school's work. He communicates this effectively through high expectations for what pupils can achieve and the quality of teaching required to achieve the school's aims.
- The governors provide effective arrangements for monitoring and review of all aspects of

the school's work. They ensure regular audits of the quality of teaching, learning, pupils' personal development and outcomes. These findings inform and contribute to effective management by senior leaders.

- They take active responsibility for the regular appraisal of the headteacher's work and ensure that staff at all levels are supported and challenged by similar arrangements. Staff are aware of their individual targets and value the regular opportunities provided to discuss and evaluate their performance with school and team leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's safeguarding policy takes full account of the latest government guidance. It is reviewed and updated regularly and made available to parents through the school website.
- Staff are trained regularly in all required aspects of safeguarding, including awareness of the range of risks to which pupils may be exposed. All staff are trained, for example, to respond to any indications of online abuse, child sexual exploitation or potential radicalisation.
- Staff awareness of the vulnerability of pupils is very evident in their thorough planning for post-16 students' transition to supported or semi-independent living and, for some, appropriate future employment.
- The headteacher has created a team of senior leaders, trained to the level required to act as designated lead persons for safeguarding. All staff are suitably trained and required to use the school's electronic recording system to report any safeguarding concerns or disclosures. The senior safeguarding team receive instant alerts to any reports and have clearly documented procedures to follow up and investigate appropriately.
- Members of the senior safeguarding team maintain effective working relationships with external agencies, including children's social services, the local authority designated safeguarding person and the police. Safeguarding records are maintained to a high standard and reviewed regularly by senior leaders.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Good teaching throughout the school is based on effective planning. Staff are alert to the changing behaviours displayed by pupils. Excellent communication between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that staff knowledge and understanding are continuously updated. This detailed knowledge is used to develop suitable individual lesson plans and activities.
- Tasks prepared for pupils are creative and imaginative. Pupils focus very well on learning because they enjoy the activities. Key stage 3 pupils, for example, understood the moods and feelings of the creature in their story because of expressive reading by the teacher and careful exploration of the pictures provided.
- Staff pace learning activities well, giving pupils time to reflect and consider the information or idea being explained. Key stage 3 pupils worked carefully and thoughtfully as they selected number equipment correctly in response to the teachers' questioning. They arranged these in sequence and were able to match items of similar value.

- Staff intervene to provide support and guidance if pupils become anxious or agitated. They judge these interventions skilfully, encouraging pupils to take responsibility to the extent that they are individually able to. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly reinforce learning with positive encouragement and praise.
- Staff are resilient and patient when working with pupils of all ages. They allow pupils to 'take time out' for short spells to relieve frustrations and to re-focus their attention. They maintain a calm environment and re-engage pupils effectively, even when an individual might be experiencing a brief personal 'crisis'.
- Pupils develop their basic literacy skills at individually appropriate levels. Post-16 pupils, for example, were able to recall the sequence of events in a familiar story. Those with sufficient verbal communication skills could remember what happened next, while others could identify appropriate pictures to tell the story.
- Pupils at key stage 4 and post-16 students experience an integrated curriculum in which their individual life skills are developed alongside their mastery of literacy and numeracy. For example, post-16 students enjoy activities that develop their life skills and elements of independence at an appropriate level.
- Staff are successfully developing an off-site curriculum through which pupils have carefully managed opportunities to engage with adults beyond the school. The minority of the most able pupils in this school have carefully managed work experience and vocational activities. Post-16 students have refurbished a cabin in the grounds which is about to be launched as a school café.
- Individual pupils enjoy, for example, ordering a meal at a café using picture exchange and, under the guidance of supporting staff, paying and collecting the change. These small steps build pupils' confidence and help them to manage their anxieties in everyday environments.
- Staff demonstrate a continuous commitment to providing meaningful experiences for all pupils. They are patient in providing time, visual resources and regular encouragement for pupils to try new things.
- Senior leaders have reviewed arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress. They have used commercial schemes and school-based resources to provide staff with descriptors to identify the small steps in learning experienced by pupils. Staff assessments of pupils' progress across the full range of learning are becoming increasingly accurate.
- Current developments in the curriculum and assessment have created a sound platform for further improvement. Pupils do not all have sufficient access to a sufficient variety of practical activities, and assessment targets are not always sufficiently challenging.
- The school makes increasingly effective use of externally accredited courses. There is scope for further development of such courses at levels of accreditation appropriate to all pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The high quality of relationships with staff encourages pupils to trust adults and contribute to their increasing self-confidence.

- Pupils value the carefully managed repetition and routine. They feel secure within the protective environment of the school and gradually develop skills to act more independently at an appropriately personalised pace.
- The school's therapists make an important, positive contribution to pupils' personal development. They contribute to the analysis of individual needs, provide support and advice to staff and work effectively with individual pupils.
- Pupils' individual characteristics and strengths are consistently used as positives for further development. Pupils develop respect for others and learn to appreciate the support and encouragement they receive.
- There is no evidence of deliberate bullying, but staff are alert to any inappropriate actions which may pose a risk to the well-being of others. Care for pupils' emotional and mental health is evident in staff actions throughout each day.
- The development of pupils' self-regulation is given a high priority in the organisation of the school day. Transitions between lessons and breaks, and movement between various locations, are managed sensitively. Pupils benefit from these carefully managed situations to feel comfortable and to respond positively to change.
- Pupils are safe in school. If they feel stressed, they can find personal spaces and relax.
- All pupils are included in activities and supported individually to take a full part in the community of the school. The most able individuals are encouraged and supported to contribute to the school community by taking on additional responsibilities. For example, individual pupils have contributed very effectively to recent staff appointments, exhibiting responsibility and pride in their involvement.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' moods and feelings are very sensitive to changes in their environment, including diet, medication, physical location and staff changes. All staff pay careful attention to the management of changes and support pupils effectively to respond.
- The behaviour of individuals varies considerably, often from day to day. The behaviour of some individuals has to be tightly managed. However, over time, pupils respond positively to school and learn to adapt to changing daily demands.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. There are no unauthorised absences and no persistent absentees.
- Most pupils develop an increasing awareness of others and increased tolerance of differences. Many develop positive relationships with other pupils and value their company.
- Pupils learn to respond increasingly positively to staff instructions. Their behaviour in lessons improves, often gradually, so that they benefit more fully from the learning experiences provided. Overall, pupils make good progress with the management of their own behaviour.
- The small number of pupils who spend a part of their week attending alternative provisions take their responsibilities seriously and demonstrate a high level of behaviour and commitment.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All pupils enter the school with levels of attainment considerably below that expected for their age. Their previous educational experience has been characterised by anxiety, frustration and negative behaviour, which restrict their learning.
- Pupils' rates of progress are diverse and individual. Progress from their various starting points is often uneven, with peaks and troughs in their achievement. Overall, they make good progress towards the personal development and learning targets set for them.
- The school's systems for assessing small steps in progress provide a successful basis for identifying and celebrating a variety of elements of progress. Staff expectations that all pupils can make meaningful progress contribute effectively to pupils' responses.
- Pupils make good progress in their use of literacy and numeracy skills. These skills are very variable but provide an appropriate basis for pupils to manage important aspects of their future environment.
- Overall, pupils' attainment remains well below the average for their age but this is not a barrier to the high expectations expressed by staff. Small steps of progress are regularly celebrated and rewarded.
- Pupils have increasing opportunities to achieve external accreditation, using nationally recognised awards, including awards for classroom learning and practical outdoor activities.
- Pupils are prepared and supported extremely well as they move on to future educational or employment opportunities and supported living arrangements. All partners involved in the pupils' education and personal development contribute to the development of transition plans, including independent advice and guidance tailored to individual needs. School leaders and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to doing the right thing for each individual pupil or post-16 student.

School details

Unique reference number	132120
DfE registration number	830/6024
Inspection number	10048633

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.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Senad Group
Chair	Dr Mark Flynn
Headteacher	Kerry Jefferson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£96,348.00
Telephone number	01283 761352
Website	www.senadgroup.com
Email address	info@pegasusschooluk.com
Date of previous inspection	10–12 June 2015

Information about this school

- Pegasus School occupies a former manor house near Swadlincote, Derbyshire. The manor house has been converted for use as a school. Additional teaching space for key stage 4 and post-16 pupils is provided within the extensive grounds of the school.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 26 pupils aged eight to 19 years. There are currently 15 secondary-aged pupils on the school roll with complex autism, sensory processing disorder, visual impairment and complex communication needs.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils' additional needs include

attention deficit disorder, pathological demand avoidance, obsessive compulsive disorder and motor coordination difficulties. Some pupils have mental health conditions.

- The school provides an integrated education programme for key stage 4 and post-16 students. There is no separate sixth form.
- The school uses the services of another local school, Bladon House, to provide vocational and work-related experience for a small number of post-16 students. This school is also under the proprietorship of the Senad Group.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2018.
- The previous standard inspection of the school was in June 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the full age range of the school. He scrutinised pupils' work in a variety of subjects, including externally accredited projects.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietor, who also leads the school's governance arrangements. He discussed all aspects of leadership and management and the implementation of policies with the headteacher, senior leaders and staff.
- The inspector considered a small number of responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire and held conversations with a small number of parents, carers and pupils. He also considered response to an inspection questionnaire submitted by 15 members of staff.
- The inspector scrutinised several school policies, procedures and records to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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