

Fountain House School

Fountain House School, c/o Five Rivers Child Care Ltd, 47 Bedwin Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3UT

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders keep an unerring focus on securing pupils' well-being and safety. They enable pupils to achieve the highest levels of personal development and exceptional rates of progress.
- Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards are met consistently. They use their excellent knowledge of the school and highly effective leadership skills to review and refine continually how they help pupils excel.
- Leaders seek to sustain continual improvement in staff skills. For example, they are currently seeking ways to enable staff to achieve qualified teacher status.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are of the highest quality. They are underpinned by detailed knowledge of pupils' learning and personal development needs. Teachers use their well-developed understanding of how their pupils learn to plan lessons very effectively.
- Very occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking to consolidate and extend their learning, for example in reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Leaders and staff collaborate highly effectively, so that each pupil's curriculum is adjusted to best meet their needs and interests. This approach is a particular strength of the school.
- Leaders fully integrate the very well-considered programme for personal development and well-being, including appropriate therapies, into pupils' everyday experience.
- Pupils behave impeccably. They use their very positive relationships and their rapidly increasing self-confidence to improve their learning and make excellent progress.
- All staff actively promote pupils' well-being. Pupils feel safe and cared for well.
- Pupils learn very effectively about others who come from backgrounds different to their own. They show thoughtful consideration for others in their community, for example, older citizens or those with learning difficulties.
- Pupils acquire very well the skills and dispositions they need to continue to thrive in the next stages of their education, and as young people in modern Britain.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of leadership and management further by:
 - providing professional development that sharpens the skills of teachers to challenge pupils further, and develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics in particular
 - developing the current framework of continuing professional development, so that staff who seek to attain qualified teacher status are supported to do so.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher models, in all he does, his unfailing commitment to pupils' well-being and excellence in their achievement. Together with those responsible for the governance of the school, he has brought to life a culture of excellence that enables staff and pupils alike to excel.
- Staff are fully committed to bring the headteacher's vision to life in their day-to-day work with pupils. They feel valued and know that they make an important difference to the lives of pupils. Leaders continually seek further ways to develop adults' professional knowledge and skills to refine their work with pupils. Leaders look to the future needs of the school. For example, they are currently exploring how they can enable those staff who wish to attain qualified teacher status to do so. As a result, the school continues to improve.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally strong. They are based on adults' determination to provide the very best experiences for pupils, and build pupils' trust that staff will help and care for them. As a consequence, pupils respond very well to adults' high expectations of them. Pupils thrive in all aspects of their school life.
- Leaders and the proprietor ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently. They use the well-organised system of checks to maintain these standards. Leaders use compliance with the independent school standards as a cornerstone to build excellence. It underpins a framework for highly effective personal development and excellent achievement of all pupils, including for those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a rich range of learning experiences. It integrates a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, with exciting and engaging learning across a wider range of subjects. Curriculum planning is carefully personalised to offer a deeply considered pathway for each pupil. It incorporates therapeutic support and learning that enable pupils to make excellent progress. Alongside these, the personal development opportunities provided help pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need to flourish in modern British society very effectively.
- Teachers' careful use of the information about pupils' needs, interests and their prior learning supports teaching that helps to fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Leaders' careful use of their checks on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment and the personal, health, social and economic (PHSE) programme to organise professional development for staff is highly effectively. Staff discuss very frequently how well pupils are achieving and developing. They use the detailed information recorded about pupils' progress to adroitly shape future learning. As a result, teaching is first rate.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to grow in confidence as learners, by guiding them to complete successfully a wide array of unit awards, alongside their core learning in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are motivated by their successes and feel proud of their achievements.
- The very well-considered programme for PHSE successfully promotes pupils' understanding of the needs and rights of others who come from different backgrounds to

their own, or who hold different beliefs. Pupils learn to appreciate the important role played by public services and democratic processes. As a result, pupils develop a strong understanding of key values that underpin the school's work to promote equality and diversity.

- The PHSE programme equips pupils very well with knowledge and understanding that effectively supports them to lead healthy lifestyles and maintain healthy relationships. It teaches them about the potential risks that might cause them harm, including the use of digital technologies and the harm that bullying causes. This helps to keep pupils safe. It is a key part of adults' intense focus on safeguarding pupils.

Governance

- Those responsible for governance have a detailed knowledge of how well the school provides for pupils' well-being and achievement. They constantly seek to maintain and extend the excellent outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that all the required checks and service schedules to maintain the safe functioning of the school are carried out regularly and recorded
 - checking that the school is kept clean and tidy
 - reviewing regularly each pupil's academic progress, well-being and attendance and taking pupils' views into account
 - appointing staff with the appropriate skills and knowledge
 - providing well-focused professional development that underpins their drive for continual improvement, including their current plans to develop an initial teacher training pathway
 - setting a clear strategic direction for further development and improvement.
- Governors challenge school leaders effectively. Equally, they support leaders, for example, in providing training on the use of questioning to sharpen the effectiveness of teaching.

Safeguarding

- Leaders ensure that the arrangements to safeguard pupils are up to date and effective.
- Leaders ensure that procedures for safer recruitment of staff are adhered to fully. They carefully carry out all the required pre-employment checks on staff. Leaders ensure that the safeguarding policy is up to date and provides clear advice for, and expectations of, staff. It skilfully reflects leaders' understanding of the risks that pupils may face. The policy is available on the school's website.
- Leaders make sure that all staff are well trained to identify and report any concerns they may have about pupils' well-being. Staff are vigilant. They use the constant conversations they have with pupils throughout the day to keep a watchful eye out for any concerns.
- Senior leaders tailor the school's work to keep pupils safe by adjusting the curriculum and putting in place risk assessments, in order to take into account the needs and vulnerabilities of pupils in their care. They ensure that staff work effectively with other

agencies and teams, such as social care, to make sure early help is provided when it is needed.

- Leaders ensure that the PHSE programme helps pupils to understand risk and keep themselves safe. In particular, leaders help pupils develop their self-esteem and confidence, so pupils can use their understanding of right and wrong to manage risks.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in the care of the staff. Pupils know that if they are worried or upset, there is always a trusted adult with whom they can talk. This contributes to pupils' emotional well-being, which is further supported through regular access to a range of well-judged therapies and counselling.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The highest quality teaching consistently enables pupils to make excellent progress, taking into account their individual starting points. Staff are determined that all pupils can achieve very well with the right levels of support and challenge. Their skills and high expectations are reflected in pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons, and as a consequence, try hard and apply themselves very well.
- Staff are highly skilled in bringing together their knowledge of pupils' prior achievement and wider information about how each pupil learns, including the challenges they face, to plan interesting lessons that thoroughly engage pupils. Accurate planning and effective teaching and assessment carefully build pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. As a result, once pupils settle into the school, the rate at which pupils learn accelerates quickly and is maintained over time.
- Staff use their deep understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in learning to quickly identify moments when pupils have misunderstood or have an insecure grasp of their learning. Staff adjust lessons seamlessly, giving further explanations and examples, and using questions highly effectively to ensure that pupils do not falter in continuing to make excellent progress.
- Staff have established very positive working relationships with pupils, where pupils offer and try out ideas, and seek help when they feel unsure. Benefiting from the open discussion pupils have with staff about their learning, teachers provide timely support. Similarly, teachers provide pupils with focused feedback about how they can capitalise on their current learning to improve it further. This engenders a sense of shared learning, which is of personal support for the pupils. As a consequence, pupils do not fall behind in their learning, and are keen to keep improving. They close the gaps they have and extend their learning rapidly.
- Staff are skilled in using pupils' responses to tasks to pose additional questions that draw out pupils' thinking. In particular, pupils' work across a range of subjects demonstrates how staff challenge them to connect ideas from one topic to another and from one subject to another. As a result, pupils consistently deepen their understanding, making sense of the interconnectivity of their activities. However, in mathematics, the challenge for pupils to develop their reasoning skills is less secure.
- Homework is used effectively so pupils can demonstrate how well they have grasped key ideas. Tasks develop research skills, allowing pupils to extend their learning and follow

their interests. For example, pupils developed their knowledge of the solar system to include an understanding of how the universe is continually expanding.

- Staff underpin pupils' wider learning with a sharp focus on their literacy and mathematical skills. Pupils enjoy reading and do so fluently. Teachers are effective in developing pupils' comprehension skills and higher order skills, such as inference. By considering their own and other's emotional responses to texts, pupils develop greater awareness of others and how to interact with them.
- Despite some relative shortcomings in staff's promotion of pupils' mathematical reasoning skills, they are highly effective in promoting pupils' number work, calculation and word-based problem-solving. Staff make frequent reference to real-life situations, so that pupils can more readily see the purpose and value of their learning.
- Parents and carers are provided with detailed information about how well pupils are progressing in their learning periodically throughout the year. Additionally, very frequent communication, often on a daily basis, ensures that parents know how they can play a valuable role in their child's learning and development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are very proud of their achievements, because after a period of settling in, they develop self-confidence and self-esteem in their relationships with others and in their learning.
- Pupils grow in self-awareness and understanding of how best they learn. They discuss their approaches to learning with staff and develop skills and attitudes to learning that enable them to make excellent progress. Pupils demonstrate the ability to work effectively by themselves or with others in a variety of contexts, both in the classroom and, for example, on their regular educational visits to a farm.
- During such visits, pupils use a range of prior learning, for example in English, mathematics and science, by relating it to the world of work as they prepare produce for a local restaurant. As a result, pupils develop a strong understanding of how their attitudes, behaviour and endeavours at school help them prepare for the next stages of their education and adult life.
- The behaviour modelled by all staff and the direct teaching within the PHSE programme have developed in pupils a very strong understanding of right and wrong. Pupils learn to manage themselves very well, as they develop their sense of place and self-worth in the community.
- Pupils know that bullying of any kind is wrong and hurtful. Their understanding of the needs, backgrounds and beliefs of others, such as the vulnerabilities of those with disabilities, or who dress differently or have learning difficulties, helps them contribute to the school's work to keep pupils safe from bullying. Pupils could not remember any instances of bullying, but are confident that staff will help them whatever concern they might have. Bullying and behaviour logs confirm that pupils' behaviour is of the highest order.

- Pupils enjoy a well-considered integrated programme to help them understand how to lead healthy lifestyles, including for their physical and emotional well-being. For example, they understand the potential risks of using digital technologies, and how to keep themselves safe. They also learn how to assess risks and act safely, for example when using tools on visits to the farm. Similarly, they learn about water safety in their visits to the local swimming pool.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy their experiences at school and attend very well. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils who entered the school with very low attendance rates have been supported effectively, so that they too have high attendance. Others have maintained their already high levels of attendance. Pupils very rarely miss school.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent at all times, both during lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes. They have settled well since entering the school and have adopted the school's high expectations of behaviour. While some pupils needed close supervision and support to help them behave well on arrival, this is no longer the case.
- Pupils use their strong sense of self-awareness and confidence to manage themselves very well. When they need extra support, they are ready to ask for advice from staff to help them continue to do so. This contributes strongly to the calm, positive climate in the school and pupils' readiness to settle to their learning. They waste no time in lessons and try hard to achieve as well as they can.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make excellent progress from their various starting points, irrespective of whether they come from disadvantaged backgrounds or have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a consequence, pupils who have a disrupted history of education close the gaps in their previous knowledge. They quickly extend their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subject areas, including English and mathematics.
- In English and mathematics, pupils' progress is rapid. They acquire the skills and knowledge they need very well to make sense of their learning. Learning in lessons and the work in pupils' books show that pupils settle into patterns of learning that underpin their consistently very strong progress. Pupils correct and develop their work and use their own ideas to illustrate their understanding, for example by comparing how different characters would respond emotionally at particular points in a story.
- Pupils read fluently, and with effective intonation which conveys good understanding. Their reading and work with staff continually expand the range and sophistication of their active vocabulary, so they are able to articulate their ideas very well, both when they discuss their work and in their writing.
- The frequent use of real-life situations in mathematics cements pupils' basic skills very well. As a result, they demonstrate strong fluency in number work and calculation, and solve word problems very well.

- Pupils' learning and progress in a wider range of subjects are equally strong. They use their basic skills in English and mathematics very effectively to capture their learning in other areas. Their work shows that they consistently develop and build on their knowledge and skills, and demonstrate their ability to transfer and combine understanding from different elements of their learning. For example, pupils put their strong mathematical skills to effective use in their navigation and orienteering work outside school. Similarly, pupils make practical use of science in developing their understanding of the workplace. For example, they learn in very practical ways how produce is grown, cultivated, harvested and transported to local restaurants.
- Pupils gain a greater understanding of what they learn through a carefully planned combination of classroom preparation and follow-up activity after visits. For example, pupils not only learned about the Vikings in class, but during a visit to the Jorvik Viking Centre undertook excavation activities. They followed up the visit up by using knowledge and skills to design and construct model Viking long ships.
- Pupils are effectively supported and guided to challenge themselves further by sitting for a wide range of unit awards. As a consequence, they have significant experience of meeting success criteria overtly in assessments, and know how to capture their learning. This contributes very well to their achievement, their confidence as learners and to their future academic success.
- The broad range of effective learning sustains pupils' rapid progress. Particularly impressive is pupils' ability to connect their learning and understanding across different subject areas. As a result, they are very well prepared for the next steps in their education. Their prowess in learning is matched by their personal growth. This puts pupils in very good stead for their future as young people in modern British society.

School details

Unique reference number	142068
DfE registration number	383/6003
Inspection number	10055382

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	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Five Rivers Child Care Ltd
Chair	David Howard
Headteacher	Matthew Palmer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,724
Telephone number	0113 276 1711
Website	www.five-rivers.org
Email address	mark.barcroft@five-rivers.org
Date of previous inspection	23–24 February 2016

Information about this school

- Fountain House School is small independent special school for pupils aged seven to 11.
- Situated in south Leeds, it provides full-time day education for pupils from the city and its surrounding area, all of whom all have identified SEND.
- The school is part of the Five Rivers organisation, which runs a number of schools across the country.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher took post in the spring term of 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector talked with pupils informally throughout the inspection and met with them in two small groups.
- The inspector toured the premises and visited lessons, together with the headteacher. The work completed in all pupils' books was reviewed.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, staff and officers from Five Rivers. He spoke with the chief executive officer of Five Rivers by telephone.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents expressed in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those expressed verbally.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including those relating to health and safety, records of pupils' achievement and progress, and the arrangements to safeguard pupils.

Inspection team

Chris Campbell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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