

Inspection of Marchant Holliday School

North Cheriton, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 0AH

Inspection dates: 28–30 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. All staff care for the pupils. There is a strong sense of community. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. They believe teachers support them to be better learners. Staff ensure that there is a calm and organised atmosphere. As a result, lessons are purposeful. Pupils make strong progress. Parents, carers and pupils say they love the school.

Pupils enjoy the range of opportunities that staff provide. For example, pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular experiences. Staff make very good use of the well-resourced facilities. For example, pupils enjoy using the school's swimming pool and learning to cater in the cookery room. There are extensive grounds for pupils to explore and learn in outside. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the 'quarry' where they learn to build fires and about the world around them.

Pupils arrive having had a disjointed experience of education, because their behaviour can be challenging. Leaders ensure that they get to know pupils quickly and work out what they need. Staff then get to know their pupils exceptionally well. Individual behaviour plans are well considered. They lead to significant improvement to behaviour over time. Consequently, pupils learn to manage their own behaviour and to value education. Many succeed in the next stage of their education.

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

Leaders have created a shared moral purpose among staff. Leaders take staff well-being very seriously. They value the contribution of every single member of staff. Leaders ensure that they are always readily available. As a result, staff feel valued and very well supported. Staff say leaders help them to manage pupils' behaviour and ongoing needs effectively. Consequently, everyone ensures that there is a strong focus on improving pupils' holistic outcomes. The school meets the requirements of the independent school standards and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The governing body has been through a recent period of instability. This has included appointing a new chair of the governing body. Nevertheless, governors have worked hard to improve how they support and challenge leaders. For example, they now visit the school more regularly to see for themselves the impact of leaders' work. Leaders recognise that there is a need to embed these recent improvements. They also recognise that senior leaders are sometimes too available to staff. Leaders get drawn into the day-to-day management of behaviour. Consequently, they do not step back and analyse trends in behaviour and sanctions as well as they could.

Leaders' work on the curriculum has been effective. Curriculum planning is strong. Leaders have ensured that teachers link the knowledge pupils need to remember with how they learn best. Staff know to ensure that pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences to make learning interesting and fun. These experiences happen within and beyond the classroom and the school. Pupils visit local historic landmarks

and contrasting places of interest, such as Bristol, as part of their studies. For example, staff engaged pupils' interest and enthusiasm successfully by visiting Shepton Mallet prison when learning about crime and punishment. Teachers helped pupils make links with Stuart and Victorian history by looking at how the prison changed from when it was built. Pupils report that visits and visitors help them to remember what they are learning about. Pupils' writing has improved, because they enjoy writing about these experiences.

Lessons are typically engaging and purposeful. Pupils' needs are met well. Where leaders have provided the best training and support, teaching is very effective. Where there is less guidance from subject leaders, teaching is more variable. Consequently, pupils typically do well and particularly in subjects where leadership is secure. For example, the teaching of reading is consistent, strong and secure. Staff are familiar with the school's approach to teaching phonics. Many deliver phonics lessons skilfully. Promoting a love of reading is central to the curriculum. As a result, pupils learn how to read successfully. Many pupils chose to read in their own time.

Pupils' personal development is promoted very well. Curricular and extra-curricular opportunities are abundant. In lessons, pupils study other cultures through art and geography. British values are promoted by learning about fair trade and through opportunities to vote on school improvements. The range of opportunities to learn socially within and beyond the curriculum are excellent. For example, pupils learn how to interact with others at every opportunity, including during mealtimes, when sharing 'elevenses' and at breaktimes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff take responsibility for keeping pupils safe. Positive relationships are at the heart of the school community. Consequently, pupils learn to trust those who care for and teach them. Every child has a key worker, which means every individual has their welfare considered. As a result, staff know pupils exceptionally well. Parents agree that staff look after their children very well.

Safeguarding leaders have appropriate training and experience. The designated safeguarding lead is well versed in local safeguarding arrangements. Similarly, she is knowledgeable about the various systems local authorities use, as children come from a wide area.

Safer recruitment systems and processes are sound. Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on new staff. Checks are recorded on a register. Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training, including on managing complex, challenging behaviour. Staff follow the school's safeguarding procedures appropriately.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The governing body has changed a lot over the last year. Although there have been recent improvements to how the governing body holds leaders to account for the quality of education, the improvements are recent. Therefore, leaders should focus on building on the good start of new governors by establishing the new arrangements.
- Leaders have developed the skills of middle leaders since the last inspection. However, some leaders are much more skilled and established in their roles than others. Where subject leadership is at its strongest, the curriculum offer is consistent and secure. However, some leaders are newer to their roles. They need training and support to be as effective as the best. In these subjects, teachers do not provide an offer that is as secure as in other subjects. Therefore, senior leaders should ensure that relevant subject leaders are trained to be more effective. These subject leaders can then provide training for teachers, so that the teaching of content knowledge is consistent and secure across all areas of the curriculum.
- Senior leaders are readily available for staff. They know pupils' individual needs very well. However, leaders can be drawn into the day-to-day running of the school too often. This means that they do not make the best use of the records they keep for checking trends and patterns in behaviour across the whole school cohort. Therefore, leaders should establish better ways of collecting, recording and analysing big-picture trends and patterns of behaviour, restraint and rewards to make the overall provision even better for pupils.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	123920
DfE registration number	933/6089
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10107530
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 12
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Marchant-Holliday School Ltd
Chair	Jacqui Scholes
Headteacher	Danny Kitts
Annual fees (day pupils)	£61,830
Telephone number	01963 33234
Website	www.marchantholiday.co.uk
Email address	office@marchant-holiday.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–23 March 2017

Information about this school

- Marchant-Holliday School is an independent residential special school, located in rural surroundings in Templecombe, Somerset. The school offers full-time education to boys between the ages of five and 13. The school is registered for 42 pupils. There are currently 48 pupils on roll, of whom 17 are resident. This means there are currently more pupils on roll than the school is registered for.
- The school was founded in 1952 as a registered charity. The proprietor of the school is the company Marchant-Holliday School Limited. The governing body also acts as trustees of the company. The current chair of governors took up post in January 2020. She is currently taking on the role in an acting capacity.
- The school caters for boys with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). The main primary need is SEMH, although several pupils have a range of secondary needs, such as autistic spectrum conditions and speech and language delay.
- The school uses one alternative provision setting – Willow Bank Forest School.
- All pupils have statements of special educational needs and/or education, health and care plans and are funded by local authorities.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- This was an inspection of education provision. The inspection was aligned with a social care inspection of the residential provision.
- We met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the teaching and learning lead, the head of care and the deputy head of care, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. We also met with two representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- We did deep dives into four subjects: English and early reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education and geography. We met with senior and subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work and talked to pupils. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read.
- To inspect safeguarding, we met with those responsible for safeguarding, teaching staff and other key leaders. We spoke to pupils and observed how the school was organised during the day and in transitions. We analysed documentary

evidence, including the records kept by leaders, recruitment records and training logs.

- We also met with leaders to discuss the wider curriculum, how they manage behaviour, and records of bullying and behaviour incidents. Inspectors analysed eight responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parents' survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.
- We analysed school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, reports completed by local authority representatives, the school's self-evaluation and tracking information about pupils' behaviour, attendance and exclusions. We also scrutinised policies and procedures relating to how leaders respond to complaints, maintain the school grounds and ensure health and safety are a priority.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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