

Progress monitoring inspection report

24 and 25 October 2024

Overstone Park School

Overstone Park

Northampton

NN6 0DT

Inspection outcome

The school meets all the relevant Standards that were checked during this inspection.

Inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR Paragraphs 2(1a),2(1)(b)(i), 2(2)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h), 3(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and EYFS 1.4 -1.11, 1.16 – 1.18 and 2.1 - 2.5

1. The school has a suitable curriculum policy which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. A focus on ensuring that pupils have secure literacy and numeracy skills supports them in accessing learning across the curriculum. Schemes of work are continuously adapted to meet the individual age and needs of the pupils. Pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans are monitored closely by relevant staff to ensure that statutory requirements are met, and that parents and pupils have contributed to the plan.
2. Leaders have recently updated schemes of work for personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE). These reflect statutory guidance and prepare pupils for life in British society. They support the school's ethos of promoting respect for others. Older pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of the principles of equality and inclusion. They are keen to celebrate their own achievements and those of others on a daily basis.
3. Through a wide range of therapy activities including caring for animals on the school farm and boxercise led by a qualified mental health professional, pupils develop their confidence and communication skills. Work-related experiences including engagement with local business leaders and visits to local colleges enhance the school's careers provision, enabling pupils to develop an aspirational vision for their future. Pupils are well supported in accessing a range of GCSEs and vocational qualifications including animal care, business, art and design. Consequently, most pupils progress to college where they study subjects that interest them and support their career choices. The school effectively supports former pupils in returning to work at the school including in caring for the farm animals and catering. These former pupils provide positive role models and are valued members of the school community.
4. Detailed individual provision plans that combine academic and personal targets are implemented effectively by well-trained and highly skilled staff. Pupils value their mentors because they provide continuous support and understanding as well as motivating them to achieve their academic and personal targets. The main emphasis throughout the school is enabling pupils to learn in the classroom. Pupils who are too anxious to stay in the classroom are supported by highly skilled staff to re-regulate their behaviour in the sensory room or in the farm area. The sensory room is located in the centre of the school. It is an open and welcoming space with a range of equipment including a reading area and tables to work at. Pupils are supported sympathetically by trained staff who know and understand them. This enables pupils to continue their work and to return to the classroom as soon as possible. During the inspection, records of pupils using the sensory room were extended to show in more detail what interventions had been put in place, their impact and what learning the pupil achieved whilst out of the classroom.

5. A combination of personal and behavioural support and adaptive teaching that takes into account the individual needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enables pupils throughout the school to have the opportunity to learn and make good progress.
6. Lesson plans consistently take into account curriculum schemes of work, examination requirements and the needs of individual pupils. Teachers have secure subject knowledge which enables them to extend the understanding and skills of their pupils.
7. Teachers and support staff work well as a team, continually supporting pupils in achieving their personal and learning targets. Pupils appreciate the way teachers use a range of strategies to enable them to understand, learn and think for themselves. These include providing notes so that pupils can discuss and understand their work rather than trying to write down questions and information that takes up valuable time.
8. Pupils use the comments and next steps that teachers write on their work to do corrections and they understand what to do to improve their work. They appreciate being able to go to their teachers for clarification and support at any time. There is a comprehensive assessment and tracking system in place that identifies a series of small steps against learning outcomes. This enables teachers to implement and evaluate support and to assess progress including as pupils move on to taking external examinations.
9. The curriculum in the early years includes the required areas of communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development, literacy, mathematics and understanding the world. Planning takes into account the needs and interests of individual children. Children develop their communication and language skills, gross and fine motor movements and social and emotional skills through extensive indoor and outdoor play opportunities where they interact confidently with each other and their key persons.
10. The progress and attainment of children in the Nursery is tracked diligently across the areas of learning using a system to record observations and on-going assessments. These are shared effectively with parents who contribute to identifying children's next steps for learning.
11. The school meets the standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b), 11, 14, 15, 16(a) (b), EYFS Safeguarding and welfare requirements 3.4 - 3.7, 3.9, 3.24 – 3.28, 3.34 - 3.36, 3.45, 3.61, 3.72, 3.74 - 3.76

12. Leaders have ensured that the school now meets the Standards for safeguarding. They have an appropriate policy for safeguarding and a staff code of conduct that are in line with statutory guidance. These include the restriction of the use of mobile phones, cameras and devices in the early years. In addition, they have responded positively to good practice advice provided by the local authority (LA) in a recent audit of safeguarding. There is now a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school which includes supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing.
13. The recently appointed designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has been allocated sufficient time for the role and is a senior leader. The proprietor has enhanced the support for the DSL by engaging an independent safeguarding adviser to assist with the monitoring and reporting of safeguarding at a governance level.

14. The early years leader is also a deputy DSL and an integral part of the safeguarding team. Children in the early years have an identified key person. There are two members of staff in the setting and the required adult to child ratios are maintained consistently. There is a suitable meeting room in the main school where staff can discuss any concerns with parents.
15. The DSL and the deputy DSLs are trained to the required level including in inter-agency and partnership working. They meet regularly to monitor any concerns, particularly taking into account the contextual needs of pupils at the school, including pupils who have SEND and looked after children. They ensure that appropriate and timely action is taken including referrals to early help, the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and the local safeguarding designated officer (LADO).
16. Appropriate safeguarding training, induction and updates are in place for staff and the proprietor including about the risks of radicalisation and the appropriate action to take. Leaders provide appropriate supervision for staff in the early years, which helps to support staff to do their jobs well. Staff in the early years meet regularly to discuss the needs of children and any training or support that is required. Staff know the actions to take if they are worried or concerned about a pupil or the behaviour of a member of staff. They are knowledgeable regarding the updates to government guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), including their responsibilities for children absent from education and those in alternative provision. They are highly aware of the vulnerabilities of children who have SEND including enabling them to communicate any worries or concerns that they may have, particularly through their individual mentors.
17. The school has recently installed suitable systems for filtering and monitoring internet use, recording concerns about pupils and low-level concerns about staff. Staff have been suitably trained in these systems and are confident in using them. Records are now appropriately kept. Leaders ensure that records have sufficient detail, including actions taken, assessment of risk and any referrals and have put suitable levels of security in place. Files and paper records are locked in a separate office and there are appropriate security levels on the electronic system. Records are scrutinised continually by the DSL team and are used effectively for monitoring, including for the identification of any patterns.
18. The DSL monitors low-level concerns diligently, discussing these with the proprietor as appropriate. Immediate action is taken to address any concerns, including providing staff with additional support and training and referral to the LADO where required. Staff understand what constitutes a low-level concern. They refer themselves and others if there are any concerns as part of ensuring that a strong safeguarding culture permeates the school.
19. Pupils identify a range of adults they can talk to if they are worried or concerned. They particularly appreciate the support they receive from their mentors. Pupils are given guidance about how to stay safe, including online, through their PSHE and RSE lessons. They know a range of actions to take including not sharing personal information and not responding to people they do not know. Videos and discussions in assemblies help them to understand the dangers they may be exposed to and the importance of talking to a trusted adult straight away. Pupils understand the different forms bullying can take, including online. Leaders have thought carefully about how to prevent the misuse of electronic devices in school.
20. The school has a suitable health and safety policy that is implemented effectively. Health and safety checks, including those in relation to fire safety, are carried out regularly and recorded accurately. The health and safety committee ensures that any health and safety issues or concerns are discussed, and suitable action taken without delay.
21. The school has recently implemented an electronic system for admission and attendance in line with LA recommendations and the latest statutory guidance. Any absence is monitored closely, and

appropriate action taken to support pupils back into school. The DSL ensures that regular health checks are conducted, and action taken if there are any concerns. The LA is notified appropriately when pupils leave or join the school. During the inspection, the school clarified the accurate recording of notice periods and provision for pupils with EHC plans, where pupils remain on the school roll whilst the LA is arranging an alternative placement.

22. Detailed rotas are in place to ensure that appropriate supervision of pupils is in place at all times. Staff skilfully support pupils in developing their communication and social skills during breaks and activities. They ensure that pupils are dropped off and collected by the adults responsible for them at the beginning and end of the day.
23. A detailed risk assessment policy is in place which is implemented effectively including for off-site trips. Drivers transporting pupils are checked appropriately and the vehicles suitably insured. Staff contribute to risk assessments including those in relation to SEND, behaviour and safeguarding. Action to mitigate risk is taken promptly and reviewed regularly.
24. The school meets the Standards.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

ISSR Paragraphs 18, 19 and 21; EYFS 3.9, 3.13 – 3.15

25. A suitable single central record of appointments (SCR) is accurately maintained for all members of staff and the proprietor. All of the required checks are now completed prior to adults starting work and having contact with pupils. Staff personnel files are well organised with a checklist to monitor that the required checks have been completed including prohibition from teaching and management.
26. The school meets the standards.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

ISSR paragraph 25; EYFS 3.64 - 3.69, 3.71

27. The buildings are clean and the premises well maintained. The indoor and outdoor facilities for children in the early years are suitable and well organised to meet the needs of young children. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) inspects the areas where animals are kept on a termly basis. The proprietor responds promptly to requirements and advice from the RSPCA. Veterinary services are used regularly to ensure the welfare of the animals, and that health and safety requirements are met.
28. The school meets the Standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c) and 32(3)(f)

29. The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.
30. During the inspection, the proprietor made the number of complaints registered under the preceding school year available to parents by recording these details at the end of the school's complaints policy, which is published on the school's website.

31. The school meets the Standards.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

ISSR paragraphs 33; EYFS 3.83 and 3.84

32. The school has a suitable complaints policy which is published on the school's website. It details procedures and timescales at stages one, two and three. The school keeps detailed records of all concerns and complaints including the stage that they are being managed, actions and outcomes. Stage one concerns are responded to promptly by staff and reviewed regularly by leaders and the proprietor. Formal complaints are managed in accordance with the school's complaints policy.

33. The school meets the Standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c), 34(2)

34. The proprietor and leaders have worked effectively together to implement the school's action plan to address areas where the Standards were not met at the previous inspection. In addition, the school has implemented a range of good practice recommendations highlighted in the recent safeguarding audit implemented through the LA.

35. The proprietor and leaders are reflective, open to scrutiny and determined to ensure that staff demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfil their responsibilities effectively, actively promote the wellbeing of pupils and ensure the Standards are met consistently.

36. The school meets the Standards.

School details

School	Overstone Park School
Department for Education number	941/6063
Address	Overstone Park School Overstone Park Northampton NN6 0DT
Phone number	01604 969232
Email address	office@opschooloffice.com
Website	overstoneparkschool.com
Proprietor	Mrs Marion Brown
Principal	Mrs Marion Brown
Age range	2 to 18
Number of pupils	124
Number of children in the early years	4
Date of previous inspection	November 2023

Information about the school

37. Overstone Park School is an independent co-educational special school located in a rural setting close to Northampton. The school was founded in 1983 and is owned and governed by the sole proprietor who is also the school principal.
38. The school is divided into the prep school which provides for pupils up to Year 6 and the high school which provides for pupils from Year 7. There are four children in the Nursery class and no children in Reception.
39. The school has identified 124 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. One hundred and eight pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
40. English is an additional language for a small number of pupils.
41. The school states that it aims to unlock each pupil's potential, fostering confidence, and enabling them to believe in their abilities. It seeks to provide a supportive and engaging setting that combines academic teaching with therapeutic support tailored to individual needs. The school community strives to celebrate pupils' unique strengths enabling them to showcase their gifts whilst building their self-worth and resilience.

Purpose of the progress monitoring inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the DfE. The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the Independent School Standards, Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and any other requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.

Inspection details

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2024

42. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for two days.
43. Inspection activities included:
 - scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
 - tour of the school site
 - discussions with the proprietor who is also the principal
 - discussions with pupils and staff
 - scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
 - scrutiny of information published on the school's website.