

Inspection of Aurora Summerfields School

Summerfields Village Centre, Dean Row Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 2TA

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
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Personal development	Outstanding
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Leadership and management	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are well looked after in the school's safe and nurturing environment. Staff prioritise supporting pupils' emotional well-being. Many pupils have experienced a disrupted education prior to joining this school. Pupils settle well into school life. This is in part because staff spend a significant amount of time getting to know each pupil and to understand their special educational needs and/or disabilities and interests.

Pupils are remarkably courteous and considerate towards each other, staff and visitors. Skilled staff support pupils to better manage their emotions and behaviour. Over time, pupils learn to make positive behaviour choices. On the rare occasion that pupils fall out with their classmates, staff expertly support them to resolve their differences.

The school is resolute that pupils will achieve the best possible outcomes. This is a challenge as pupils have many gaps in their knowledge and understanding. However, this does not deter the school. Staff support pupils to catch up with their missed learning across the curriculum. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps into education, employment or training.

Pupils enjoy an extensive, coherently planned range of opportunities beyond their academic learning. Pupils develop important life skills through activities such as shopping at the nearby supermarket. They value the roles and responsibilities that they have as school councillors and eco-councillors. Pupils feel that these roles give them a real voice in day-to-day school life.

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

The school has a broad and balanced curriculum. This covers a range of academic and vocational subjects. The school has taken pupils' needs and interests into account when designing the curriculum. The school has thought carefully about what knowledge pupils need to learn in many different subjects. It has ensured that pupils build their skills and knowledge from their individual starting points. Pupils who in their previous schools were reluctant to learn develop positive attitudes to education. This enables them to achieve well.

Many pupils have substantial gaps in their learning. The school has effective assessment strategies in place that help staff work out pupils' starting points and identify any additional needs that pupils may have when they join the school. In many subjects, staff use this information well to ensure that pupils build on what they already know and can do.

In a very small number of subjects, the curriculum that the school developed prior to its registration could not meet the needs of some of the pupils admitted to the school. These curriculums did not set out the knowledge that pupils needed to learn in small enough steps and did not take sufficient account of some pupils' low

starting points. The school is in the process of refining these curriculums. In the meantime, some pupils are requiring additional intervention to learn as well as they should in these subjects.

Staff prioritise reading at the school. Many pupils come to school with negative views of reading. The school is successful in changing these views. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the different texts that they study in class or read at home. Pupils enjoy reading, many for the first time. For those pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read, the school has put a suitable programme in place. This is helping these pupils to become confident, successful readers.

The school prioritises pupils' attendance. This focus begins from pupils' transition into the school. The school works with each pupil and their parents and carers to identify the pupil's barriers to attending school previously. It puts tailored support in place to help pupils to attend more often. This approach is successful. Most pupils improve their attendance when they join the school.

The school has crafted an exceptional personal development programme. Pupils learn to appreciate and respect people who have different faiths and beliefs. They gain an understanding of the legal system and healthy relationships. Leaders engage with an array of professionals to work with pupils, for example mental health workers, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. Pupils receive high-quality advice and guidance to help them make informed choices about possible careers. This information helps them to decide appropriate next steps when they leave the school. Pupils' contribution to their local community is admirable. For example, they turned used crisp packets into blankets which they donated to a charity which supports people who are homeless.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's provision for their children. They appreciate the frequent communication from the school about how their children are getting on.

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards (the standards) are met consistently. The proprietor and governors provide effective challenge and support to the school to ensure it continues to improve. They ensure that the school operates in the best interests of pupils.

Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being. They value the training that they receive. This helps them to build their subject expertise. Staff particularly value the regular opportunities to discuss any worries or concerns that they may have about their work with their senior leaders.

The proprietor carries out its statutory duties. It ensures that key policies are in place and regularly reviewed. The proprietor ensures that the school building is maintained to a high standard. It carries out regular checks on firefighting equipment. Also, it schedules frequent fire drills to ensure that staff and pupils understand what to do in an emergency. Nevertheless, the proprietor and leaders have not ensured that their oversight of the quality of education has kept pace with

the increase in the size of the school. On occasion, these leaders have not resolved some emerging issues with the curriculum design as quickly as they should.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- In a very few subjects, the previous curriculums did not fully meet the needs of pupils admitted to the school. This may have hindered how well some pupils achieved in these subjects. The school should finalise their curriculum thinking in these subjects so that pupils learn successfully.
- The proprietor has not ensured that its procedures for checking on the quality of education have kept pace with the growth of the school. It has not addressed some weaknesses in the school's curriculum as quickly as it could. The proprietor should ensure that its arrangements enable any emerging issues to be dealt with as swiftly as possible.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

School details

Unique reference number	149594
DfE registration number	895/6028
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10299280
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Beechkeys Limited
Chair	Sharon Pearson
Headteacher	Tracy Whitehurst
Annual fees (day pupils)	£67,984
Telephone number	01625 786290
Website	www.theauroragroup.co.uk/services/schools/summerfields-school
Email address	summerfieldsschool@the-aurora-group.com

Information about this school

- This is the school's first standard inspection. The school was registered by the Department for Education on 24 March 2023.
- The school is located at Village Way, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 2GH.
- All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with autism.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school did not have any pupils in the early years or in the post-16 provision at the time of the inspection.
- The school is registered to admit up to 50 pupils.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's provision.

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 the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the head of school, the principal and members of the proprietor body, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including early reading), mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of the school, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and honest culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined school policies and other documents to check the school's compliance with the standards and other requirements. These included minutes from the governing body; information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation

of its own performance; and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records were also scrutinised.

- As part of their checks on the standards, inspectors toured the school premises accompanied by the head of school.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sanjay Patel

Ofsted Inspector

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