

Inspection of Aurora White House School

Quidenham, Norwich, Norfolk NR16 2NZ

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 June 2025

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	Outstanding
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	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 love coming to school. They flourish here. The relationship between pupils and staff is strong. They happily meet at the gate and walk together through the spacious grounds up to the white house, ready for a day of learning.

There is a highly bespoke curriculum for every pupil. This is enhanced by additional support from therapy teams, as and when needed. This helps pupils to gain strong communication skills and learn to work with others. Pupils learn to be confident and independent.

The school has exceptionally high ambitions for what pupils can achieve. Pupils are taught very well. Many can read at the stage expected for their age or higher by the time they leave for the secondary school. The school has taken on more pupils with greater cognitive needs and some of these are staying on for Year 7. They feel well supported and appreciate being part of the white house family.

Pupils access a wide range of activities that enhance their curriculum. Everyone goes on trips, such as undertaking a large-scale beach clean. There is a wide range of clubs, led by pupils' interests, for example dinosaurs, model cars and modelling. Parents and carers are highly positive about the provision for their children.

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

Pupils in this school are highly valued as individuals. The school takes time to understand them and their interests. It identifies any unmet needs, working closely with families. The school plans and delivers tailored curriculums to create the right conditions for success.

Reading is taught precisely and enables pupils to make rapid progress. As a result, pupils quickly catch up if their reading is not at the expected stage for their age. Pupils are interested in the other books that they read, often linked to themes from other subjects. The school identified that pupils who had finished the phonics programme had a less well-designed programme to develop their reading further. Pupils taking part in this programme were not making as strong progress as when learning phonics. A revised, improved, programme is in place, but this is at an early stage.

Most teaching and learning is of a very high standard. Pupils who start the school refusing to put pencil to paper become confident writers, producing high-quality work. Pupils talk with knowledge about the science they have learned.

The school has reviewed its curriculum. There are a few subjects that are still being refined. In these subjects, the concepts and vocabulary to be taught and in what order are less well defined. Teachers are collaborating on this work so that the end product is precisely aligned with what will work for their pupils.

There is a strong sense of empowering pupils to take their own place in the world. Pupils learn to work as a team. They develop many practical skills in their challenging outdoor learning. Pupils go swimming weekly, helping them be healthy and active. Pupils who are reluctant are supported with clear achievable steps such as getting their feet wet, until they are ready to participate fully.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught directly, but also woven through all that the school does. Pupils take part in democratic activities, such as voting on the 'question of the day'. Pupils get the opportunities that others their age do, such as going on residential and the chance to be pupil leaders. Their behaviour shows how they have been taught to be respectful and kind.

The school is a really calm and happy place. Pupils energetically swing and jump on the play equipment at playtimes. They invent challenging games and chat with staff and peers. Pupils rarely struggle to manage their behaviour, either in class or play, because of the strong attention to their individual needs. When pupils are upset or frustrated, staff support them warmly and positively. The robust pastoral offer supports those pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs exceptionally well.

There is a comprehensive programme of staff development. This ensures staff are knowledgeable about how to meet the different pupils' needs. Staff feel motivated and well supported working in the school. The school links with other schools and specialists to continue developing staff knowledge and expertise. Leadership from the wider proprietorial body challenges and supports to a high standard.

The proprietor and school leaders are clear on their responsibilities under the independent school standards (the standards) and have ensured that all of the standards are met. The school meets its responsibilities under 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 overall planned curriculum is not as clear as it could be on which knowledge, core concepts and vocabulary should be taught or revisited when. This means that pupils do not remember skills and knowledge as well in these subjects. The school should ensure that the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn are identified clearly and sequenced in a way that supports highly effective teaching in all subjects.

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	148360
DfE registration number	926/6031
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10374846
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Aurora Group
Chair of proprietor	Sharon Pearson
Headteacher	David Clarke
Annual fees (day pupils)	£47,297 to £73,070
Telephone number	01953 887217
Website	theauroragroup.co.uk/whitehouseschool
Email address	whitehouseschool@theauroragroup.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 to 13 October 2022

Information about this school

- The school is registered to take up to 80 pupils, from age five to 16. There are currently no pupils in the key stage 3 or 4 provision; this is opening in September 2025.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and an education, health and care plan. All pupils are funded by their local authority.
- The school shares a site with Aurora Eccles School. The school accesses some of the facilities at the other school, such as the swimming pool.
- Some staff work across both schools, such as the site principal, and business and therapy staff.
- Since the previous standard inspection, a material change inspection has taken place to adjust the age range. This was in April 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is based at: Quidenham, Norwich, Norfolk, NR16 2NZ

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 education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher and other leaders. They met with the site principal and the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors checked the premises and documentation linked to the independent school standards.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading; personal, social and health education; physical education and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steve Woodley

His Majesty's Inspector

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