

Inspection of Venture Learning

19A Forester Street, Netherfield, Nottingham NG4 2LJ

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 July 2025

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Venture Learning offers pupils a calm, nurturing and stimulating environment in which to learn. Pupils feel safe and value the time they spend with staff talking about their lives and their concerns, as well as their learning. Pupils settle quickly at the school, achieve well and attend well. This is because the school focuses exceptionally well on understanding individual pupils' educational needs as well as their social, emotional and mental health. Staff put in place highly personalised education, including the use of therapy and pastoral care that meet the needs of all pupils.

Highly effective routines help pupils to learn and to build strong, trusting relationships with staff. Pupils are respectful of others and conduct themselves maturely around school. Staff notice when pupils experience distress and respond sensitively to pupils' emotional needs. They are successful in helping pupils to manage their behaviour and feelings. One pupil commented on the impact the school has had on his life: 'It's a game changer for me. I get on with people.'

Pupils are challenged to do their best and demonstrate resilience when they find work hard. They thrive at this school and develop self-esteem and self-confidence.

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

The school has thought carefully about the content of the curriculum, the order in which it is taught and the way it is taught to meet the needs of its pupils. This is because many pupils join the school having experienced a disrupted education. They, therefore, have significant gaps in their knowledge. Staff expertly identify the gaps in pupils' prior learning on entry to the school. As a result, they are well informed about each pupil's needs. For many pupils this includes highly personalised goals in line with their education, health and care (EHC) plans. As a result, pupils achieve well.

The school is ambitious for each pupil to receive a high-quality education. Pupils study an appropriately broad range of subjects, including mathematics and English. The curriculum for each subject focuses sharply and consistently on developing the important knowledge, skills and qualities that pupils need to be successful. Personalised study pathways prepare older pupils for appropriate qualifications, including GCSEs.

Staff have very secure subject knowledge. They use clear explanations to engage pupils in their learning. Pupils learn a wide range of subject-specific vocabulary, which they use confidently, particularly in mathematics. Staff support pupils in regularly recalling what they have learned. This includes the use of online quizzes, which pupils enjoy greatly.

The school prioritises reading so that pupils develop their comprehension skills, confidence and fluency. Pupils read often from an interesting range of books in

English lessons. Staff use audio books to engage pupils who are more reluctant readers. Some pupils talk about books with enthusiasm. However, many have not yet developed fluency in their reading, nor the comprehension skills they need to be secure, independent readers.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. This is because staff set out clear boundaries and teach pupils to be respectful. The school identifies any barriers that may affect pupils' attendance and helps pupils and their families to overcome these. As a result, pupils are rarely absent.

The provision for personal development prepares pupils for the opportunities and challenges of modern Britain. There is a sharp focus on the reliability of online content, the risks of financial exploitation and being safe when using social media. Pupils learn about the importance of good mental health and healthy relationships. They have a secure understanding of a range of faiths and the fundamental British values. Extra-curricular activities broaden pupils' horizons and develop their character. A detailed careers programme provides pupils with the information they need when making decisions about their future.

The chair of the proprietary body ensures that the independent school standards are securely and consistently met. This includes rigorous safety checks for staff and detailed risk assessments for the school site. He also ensures that the school's statutory duties are carried out fully, including compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders are relentless in their focus to identify where provision is not strong enough. Consequently, they are taking prompt action to strengthen pupils' reading through a comprehensive training programme for staff. This is beginning to have an impact. Staff say that leaders consider their well-being. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- The school has not ensured that pupils' reading fluency and comprehension skills are as secure as they could be. As a result, pupils do not read confidently or widely independently. Therefore, they do not increase their general knowledge or their specific knowledge of different subjects across the curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils have frequent opportunities to develop both their reading fluency and comprehension skills by studying a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts.

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	147949
DfE registration number	891/6043
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10381510
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Venture Learning Limited
Chair	Rhys Griffiths
Headteacher	Rich Hill
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,700
Telephone number	07587408996
Website	www.venturelearning.co.uk
Email address	rich.hill@venturelearning.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 to 10 November 2022

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place on 8 to 10 November 2022.
- The school received a material change inspection on the 21 August 2023.
- Many pupils who attend this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Around half of these pupils have an EHC plan. Pupils' needs include autism, behavioural and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- There are 13 pupils on roll at the school. The school presently has an agreed capacity with the Department of Education (DfE) for 22 pupils.
- At the time of this inspection, there were no Year 7 pupils on roll at the school.
- The school does not currently use any forms of alternative provision.

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.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and teaching staff in the school.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietary board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science and personal, social, health and economic education. 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. They also considered other subjects as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed on Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. Inspectors also considered the views of staff during meetings with them and through the staff survey.

- 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

Stephen Long, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

George Huthart

Ofsted Inspector

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