

# Pegasus School

Main Street, Caldwell, Swadlincote, DE12 6RS

**Inspection dates** 10–12 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good school.

- Good leadership, including from the proprietors, provides a caring and challenging learning environment which improves students' behaviour and personal development.
- Well-targeted training for teachers and therapists benefit students. Students improve their communication skills. They are provided with therapies and subjects matched to their stage of development.
- Students learn democracy as they vote for roles on a committee to raise funds for the school's music festival.
- Students learn tolerance of each other's disability and culture.
- Behaviour is good. Most students work as part of a group, which they could not do in their previous schools.
- Students are safe at school.
- Teaching prepares students, by the time they leave, to cope as independently as possible in the community.
- Students make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Sixth form provision is good. Students make good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not make sufficient use of what they know about what students can do to challenge them in lessons.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is not always accurate enough.
- Students do not always have sufficient a say about what they should be taught to enhance their chances when they leave school.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014 ('the Independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons to observe the learning of students. These were taught by a range of different teachers and therapists. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Students' work was examined and the inspector listened to students read in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the proprietors, senior and middle leaders and other members of staff. Discussions took place with students (in a signing session) and the inspector observed three students on an interview panel to appoint support staff. In addition, a meeting was held with the Chief Operations Officer for the SENAD Group of Schools.
- A range of inspection activities was carried out to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. Before the inspection started, the inspector checked policies on the school's website and evaluated safeguarding policies. When at the school, documents relating to students' academic and social progress and the school's self-evaluation and development plan were reviewed. The inspector also looked at curriculum and assessment policies and records of teaching and policies relating to students' safety.
- There were insufficient responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents) for reliable analysis. However, the inspector spoke with a few parents. The inspector also looked at 12 Ofsted questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Pegasus School provides education for students aged eight to twenty years with severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and extremely challenging behaviour. There are very few primary-aged students on roll at present, but this number is increasing.
- All students have statements of special educational needs; these are currently being converted into education, health and care plans. Their additional needs include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, social communication difficulties, pathological demand avoidance, obsessive compulsive disorder and motor coordination difficulties. Some students have mental health conditions.
- The school takes students from the following local authorities: Barnet, Bexley, Birmingham, Coventry, Essex, Hertfordshire, Islington, Leicester City, Leicestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Wrexham.
- The school is located in a converted manor house with a post-16 college in the extensive grounds.
- There are significantly more boys on roll than girls.
- Over half of the students are from White British backgrounds. Very few students come from backgrounds where families speak English as an additional language.
- Every student has an allocated key worker within a core team of familiar staff who oversee pastoral and learning support. Each key worker also has responsibility for liaising with families and guardians.
- There have been a number of changes since the last inspection:
  - a new college building for delivering a post-16 curriculum
  - the previous head of education has been replaced with a head of learning who looks at outcomes across subjects and year groups
  - a full curriculum review has taken place resulting in a revised curriculum offer at post-16.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in all subjects, so as to raise achievement, by ensuring that:
  - teachers consistently mark students' work accurately and use their marking to improve students' achievement
  - teachers consistently use assessments about what students know and can do to set them work at the correct level of challenge to move them on to new learning.
- Improve students' voice in what they want to be taught to best help them realise their full potential in the community when they leave school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's vision to create a nurturing and challenging culture to enable students to overcome anxiety to learning, so that they achieve well, is shared by all staff.
- Therapists and education staff work in an effective partnership to get students ready to learn. Every student is given an equal chance to succeed and there is no discrimination of any kind.
- Senior leaders check the impact of teaching on learning. They provide good coaching, where a senior leader works alongside a teacher in the classroom, and external training for teachers from monitoring their needs. Teachers respond well and improve their teaching, which benefit students.
- The Head of Learning moderates teachers' marking. Evidence from this shows that some teachers should improve the accuracy of marking so as to improve their practice and raise students' achievement further.
- The headteacher monitors attendance and behaviour against targets set. If there is a concern, immediate action is taken resulting in high attendance and much improved behaviour. The system for tracking students' academic progress over time is clear and it is used to plan for even better academic performance.
- Leaders and proprietors know their school. Analysis of what is going well, and indeed what is not going so well, is frequent. From evidence found, there is decisive action to bring about improvement. For example, it was recently found that students were not doing as well with their care targets as they were with their academic ones. This led to the improvement of writing care targets. Now students do equally well in, for example, washing their hands before lunch as they do in improving their communication skills.
- Assessment is mostly used effectively. In the best examples, teachers set work precisely matched to students' needs and so accelerate their learning. However, this is not yet consistent and sometimes students are not sufficiently challenged in lessons. Occasionally, teachers plan specific learning outcomes for students but then do not give them tasks to reach them.
- Leaders ensure that the welfare needs of students and their families are met. They support parents in taking their children to medical appointments and help them in managing their children's behaviour. Parents are delighted with the support they receive.
- A creative topic-based primary curriculum has recently been planned and is starting to be implemented as the number of primary-aged students increases. A recent innovative approach to planning the post-16 curriculum is aimed at providing more independent choice for students in the community, but it is too early to evaluate its impact.
- The curriculum is relevant, broad and balanced. Students are given good guidance to fulfil their potential and to move on to the best placement when they leave school. Careers guidance is in place, but the school is currently improving it so that students have a greater voice about what they are taught to support them later on in adult life. A range of after-school clubs and educational visits enhance students' development of social skills, alongside promoting their enjoyment of learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. At the end of each day, students reflect on how their day has gone in 'circle time' and what they could do better. Cultural diversity is promoted through enrichment activities, when students learn about the customs, dress, foods and religions of a wide range of countries. After a behaviour incident, students think about what they have done wrong and how they can make amends; a number say sorry on such occasions.
- The school promotes students' awareness of the British values of tolerance and liberty. Students take turns, participate in group work, tolerate each other's disability and exercise democracy as they vote about who should take on what role on a decision-making committee. Within capability, students begin to

grasp liberty as they access the local community with expectations that they must conduct themselves in accordance with British law. They learn to obey rules and to acknowledge that, if they break these, there will be consequences.

- Safeguarding arrangements are good and meet all requirements. Senior leaders spot risky behaviours quickly and plan to keep students safe. Safeguarding procedures are suitably robust. All safeguarding training, including safe-recruitment training, is up to date. The school is familiar with the safeguarding procedures in all of the local authorities it serves and this is reflected in the school's safeguarding policy.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

There is no governing body. The proprietors, all directors of the company, ensure that all statutory requirements are met, which includes the independent school standards. The directors have a wide skills set. They are able to interpret students' progress data, presented to them in the headteacher's reports, and ask challenging questions. They moderate students' work and hold teachers to account for their performance. They set the headteacher targets for improvement and monitor her progress in meeting them. In addition, they set behavioural and attendance targets and monitor them.

Parents and carers receive all of the information required, and careful attention is paid to ensure students' welfare. Risk assessments, like the fire risk assessment and bacterial checks, have an action plan to address deficiencies; these are addressed fully. The complaints procedure is compliant.

The proprietors are improving the accommodation. Since the last inspection, they have built a post-16 college on site and provided an outstanding outdoor gym.

The proprietors, in consultation with the headteacher, have implemented new approaches to behaviour management and systems for tracking student performance: these approaches are effective. They monitor the budget carefully.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. When students start at the school, they are invariably anxious and present very challenging behaviours. Some have come straight from hospital. Others have not attended school for a long time. Therapists and teachers are skilled in helping students overcome their anxiety and, as they become less stressed, their behaviour improves.
- Some students are frustrated because they cannot express themselves. Speech therapists help them to communicate. As they begin to do so, they become less agitated and ready to learn. Students are encouraged to self-regulate their behaviour and, as they manage their feelings of anxiety, they get back to learning quickly.
- Students mostly have positive attitudes to learning and usually they concentrate well on interesting activities in lessons. When students are distracted by noise, teachers adjust their classrooms to minimise this. For example, they separate the work area of a student who is noisy away from the work area of one distressed by noise.
- The school is calm and orderly most of the time. There is no litter and property is respected. Students are proud of their outdoor gym equipment and look after it well.
- Students value being rewarded for behaving well. Increasingly, they say sorry when they have upset another student. Since the recent implementation of a new behaviour policy, the number of behavioural incidents has decreased significantly.
- There are no racist incidents. No students are excluded.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting students' enjoyment of school.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Potentially risky behaviours are rigorously assessed and inform personalised plans to ensure students' safety. When, occasionally a student has an outburst because of frustration, staff move speedily so that the student and everybody else present at that time are kept safe. This is meticulously recorded and the students' behaviour plan is altered to help

further improvement.

- Visitors to school are carefully checked. Educational visits are checked against risk factors to ensure the safety of students. The school is robust in keeping students safe when using computers.
- The premises are kept safe with all of the appropriate fire, water and electrical checks in place. All staff are vetted to ensure their suitability for working with children. All welfare, health and safety requirements are met. Steps are taken to ensure that students are not radicalised. Students experience a range of customs and cultures that are different but equally valuable.
- Using pictures and signs, students say that they are safe and happy at school. Bullying is rare, with no instances recorded this year, and any incidents are dealt with swiftly when they occur.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- The impact of teaching on students' learning over time is good. Throughout the school, the teaching of English and mathematics, including in the sixth form is good.
- Teachers know the wide range of special educational needs, anxieties and emotional difficulties of students in their classes. Based on good relationships, teachers use this knowledge to plan and effectively accelerate students' learning. They capitalise on students' interests, for example when teaching information and communication technology. This motivates students to learn.
- There is a strong emphasis on teaching communication skills and this prepares students to access all of their subjects. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught through all subjects, such as cooking and preparing for a walk through the forest to identify landmarks.
- Teaching focuses on promoting students' self-help skills to prepare them for living in the community as best as they can when they leave school. Teaching of reading prepares students to recognise signs for the toilet and social stories equip them on how to behave in the community. The teaching of writing helps them, according to capability, to write shopping lists. Numeracy teaching supports students in handling coins when shopping and how to measure and weigh ingredients for cooking. The most-able students are taught how to travel safely, with the intention that they may travel into town without being accompanied.
- Key workers in lessons quickly bring students who wander off task back to their learning. This makes a valuable contribution to students' learning.
- Most teachers make use of their assessments of what students know and can do to provide new and challenging work to lead them into new learning. This is not always the case; sometimes, the work is too easy for some students and too hard for others.
- Marking of work is sometimes not accurate enough and on such occasions it is not used effectively to improve students' learning.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Attainment is different for each student, reflecting their wide range of needs. Throughout the school, students make good progress in English and mathematics and other subjects, measured from their individual starting points.
- Students make rapid gains in communication due to the effective support of speech therapists working alongside teachers. Students express themselves using pictures, signs and words. Similarly, students' receptive language is well developed.
- Students make good progress in writing and reading. One, with teacher guiding their hand, makes a mark on paper while another writes profound questions to use in interviewing a support worker for a job at the

school. Reading ranges from interpreting symbols to reading simple text.

- Progress in mathematics is good. Attainment varies from trying to fit the number one into a jigsaw puzzle through to working out change when shopping and telling the time. Students develop good problem-solving skills in the context of their capability.
- The most-able students progress at the same good rate as their peers. Often they excel in a particular area, such as information and communication technology, reflecting 'spiky progress' in the context of their autistic spectrum disorder.
- Students looked after by their local authority and minority ethnic students make faster progress than their peers in certain subjects. Both groups progress faster in numeracy and information and communication technology. In addition, the children looked after by the local authority also progress faster in literacy and numeracy. There is no difference in the rate of progress between girls and boys.
- Year 11 students gain good functional skills as part of their Transitional Challenge Award (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network - ASDAN). They make good literacy and numeracy gains across a range of subjects.
- Progress in personal, social and health education is rapid throughout the school, and students are speedily made ready to learn. The occupational therapist makes a valuable contribution to enabling students to self-regulate their behaviour and so keep learning. One may take time out to swing, another put on a weighted jacket and yet another go for a ride on a 'bike', but all then quickly return to learning.

### The sixth form provision

is good

- The leadership and management are good. The post-16 curriculum has recently been reviewed and re-structured to enable each student to have the best chance of living as an adult when leaving school. It looks relevant and exciting, but it is too early to measure its impact on progress.
- Leadership and management are successful because the provision improves the communication skills of highly dependent students. Leadership also increasing instils confidence in higher achieving students to develop skills for paid or unpaid work in the community when they leave school. The needs of each individual student are known and catered for well. Students receive good advice but, under the direction of the head of learning, there is a plan to improve students' voice about planning for their own future. Again, it is too early to evaluate this.
- Behaviour is good. Students are responsive to all that is offered to them. They take on responsibility for jobs around the school, such as picking up litter and distributing the post to different areas of the school. Recently, the most-able students planned interview questions for candidates who wanted to be support staff at the school. Then they sat on the interview panel and asked these questions confidently.
- Teaching is good. It is typified by developing students' life skills. For example, teaching of reading prepares them on how to move around in the community for when they leave school. They write shopping lists using pictures and words. Every opportunity is made to develop students' practical mathematical skills, like counting out money and understanding the time it takes to cook rice.
- Currently, progress in functional skills is good. Attainment currently achieved demonstrates good progress from students' starting points. New planning will enable some students to progress towards the ASDAN 'Towards Independence' qualification. Expectations are high that a few in the future will work towards a diploma awarded by this accreditation body.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the GOV.UK website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132120
<b>Inspection number</b>	462921
<b>DfE registration number</b>	830/6024

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School status</b>	Special school for students with autistic spectrum disorder
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–20
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	20
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	11
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	The SENAD Group
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Mark Flynn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzanne Pennington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 February 2012
<b>Annual fees</b>	£85,092 to £256,446
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