

Inspection of Napier School

Old School Studios, Lynchford Road, Aldershot GU14 6EF

Inspection dates: 2 to 4 July 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are proud to be a part of the Napier School community. Most pupils who are on roll here have not attended school regularly in the past. Since starting at Napier, they are excited to come into school each day, because they know that staff care for them well and understand how to meet their individual needs. Pupils feel safe here and develop warm and trusting relationships with the staff who support them.

Pupils benefit from the school's focus on communicating their emotions and preferences. This empowers them to express themselves and to feel heard. Some pupils are nominated to be part of the school council where they can make contributions to the school, such as helping to decide how money from fundraising events is spent.

Parents and carers are typically very pleased with the school and many comment on the positive impact it has had on their child's well-being and attitude to education. One parent reflected the experiences of many when they told us, 'My child is extremely happy since joining Napier. He cannot wait for school every morning.'

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

Napier School has succeeded in its aim of creating a safe and happy place for pupils to learn. The school recognises that progress looks different for everyone, and has successfully developed a flexible approach to curriculum based on pupils' individual needs. Pupils at this school have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities associated with autism. The school has rightly prioritised the therapeutic inputs that its pupils need to thrive. Clinical therapists work alongside teachers skilfully to ensure that each pupils' needs are well understood and met. There is a strong emphasis on developing communication and interaction because leaders recognise that this will make the greatest difference to pupils' future success. Reading is also prioritised right from the early years.

Since opening in September, the school has adapted its curriculum to meet the needs of the pupil cohort. There are clearly defined end goals in each subject. These are used by teachers to assess the progress that pupils are making and to adapt teaching if needed. This work has generally been successful and pupils learn well here. However, there are some occasions where the tasks chosen by teachers are not precisely matched to the intended learning. In mathematics, for example, the exact knowledge pupils are expected to learn and remember is not always clear.

Most pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and attend regularly. If their attendance declines, leaders work effectively with pupils and their families to address this. Pupils are supported well to regulate their behaviour and engage in their learning. Common routines have been developed across the school, starting in the early years, and these are used effectively by teachers to maintain high expectations.

Personal development is a central component of pupils' learning at this school. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is well planned to cover what pupils need to know while adapting to each individual. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to extend their learning beyond the taught curriculum. They learn to appreciate different traditions and beliefs through cultural days linked to events such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. Through visits to the local shop and library, pupils learn to stay safe in public and develop their independence. For example, they are taught about road safety and interacting with members of the public. The school is in the process of expanding their personal development offer by bringing in more activities to help pupils develop their talents and interests.

Leaders at this school have been successful in creating a happy and positive culture for all. Staff enjoy working here and feel well supported. They benefit from regular training opportunities, which help them to develop their expertise. The leadership team has a strong understanding of the independent school standards and has ensured that these are met. The proprietor body has put in place robust systems to check that the school remains compliant with these standards and fulfils its statutory duties, such as those relating to equalities and accessibility. They have ensured that there is an appropriate safeguarding policy which is published on the school's website. However, governors and the proprietor body are less rigorous in checking that the curriculum is having its intended impact on pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

[If the school is not outstanding] What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum in mathematics is not precise enough about what the school expects pupils to learn. In some lessons the intended learning is unclear. Leaders should continue with their plans to review this curriculum and specify in more detail what they want pupils to know and remember.
- Governors and the proprietor body do not focus enough on the impact of the curriculum. Although they are clear about leaders' actions to develop the quality of education, they do not always check the impact of improvements and changes on pupils' learning. Governors and the proprietor body should ensure that their systems and processes include checks on the impact of the curriculum.

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	149858
DfE registration number	850/6109
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10342200
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	37
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Sara Evans
Annual fees (day pupils)	£63,000
Telephone number	01252 854302
Website	www.napierschool.co.uk
Email address	sara.evans@napierschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Napier School is an independent special school. All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan where the primary diagnosis is autism. Most pupils also have associated speech, language and communication difficulties. Places at the school are funded by the local authority.
- The school is part of the Options Autism family of schools. Options Autism forms part of Acorn Care and Education Limited.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- This was the school's first standard inspection since its pre-registration in August 2023.

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 judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 a range of senior staff including the school's headteacher and deputy headteacher. The lead inspector met with a representative of the proprietor body as well as the regional director for Options Autism, who is also the school's chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, communication, mathematics and personal development. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and support staff, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors carried out other activities to check that the school meets the independent school standards. These included a check of the school premises and specific checks of the school's policies and website.
- Inspectors considered responses to the staff surveys as well as to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura James

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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