

The Pivot Academy LS East

Unit 12 Killingbeck Drive, York Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS14 6UF

Inspection dates

25–27 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Directors, leaders and staff are highly ambitious for their school. They have passion and commitment to do the best for their pupils. They have created an environment where pupils who have had unsuccessful experiences in mainstream schools move back into learning, and many make strong progress.
- Safeguarding is particularly effective because leaders have a strong understanding of the risks that pupils may face in their community. Staff are vigilant, and staff support pupils and teach them how to keep themselves safe.
- Parents and carers comment that the school has greatly improved their children's lives. They value the regular communication and support that the school provides. They say that their children are now happy and want to learn.
- Leaders have devised a relevant curriculum which provides pupils with a range of appropriate learning opportunities. A programme of visits enhances pupils' appreciation of the world.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well.
- Directors and leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- Teachers and support staff plan lessons to meet pupils' needs. They build strong relationships and show great patience with pupils.
- Pupil assessment information shows that pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, often from low starting points. However, leaders are aware that their system for assessing progress across the wider curriculum is not as refined.
- While many pupils read well, the school has limited resources for reading. Pupils who are weak readers require additional support in order to become more proficient.
- Staff have many opportunities for professional development, particularly in safeguarding and behaviour management. There are fewer opportunities for further developing teachers' skills in deepening pupils' understanding and improving writing.
- Following a period of rapid progress, leaders continue to refine their self-evaluation processes in order to set precise targets for future development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - refining the school’s system for assessing academic work across the wider curriculum, so that leaders are astutely aware of the impact of their actions on pupils’ progress over time
 - developing the school’s self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning so that leaders have a more accurate view of what the school does well and set precise targets for school improvement.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by:
 - providing training for staff to broaden and sharpen their teaching skills, particularly to develop strategies to deepen pupils’ thinking, and provide opportunities for pupils to write at greater length.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - providing additional support for pupils with low reading ages so that they can become confident readers
 - providing a wider range of reading resources for all pupils
 - ensuring that teachers provide more real-world contexts in mathematics and develop pupils’ strong understanding of mathematical processes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school opened, leaders have made significant progress in developing a school that reflects their vision of engaging young people in activities that challenge and support them. They are succeeding in their aim to help pupils become responsible for their own choices. As a result, pupils' confidence, behaviour and academic progress are improving.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Parents who made their views known value very much the work that the school does for their children. They comment on the transformations that have taken place in a relatively short period of time. One parent spoke about how her son is now well mannered, has a smile on his face, wants to be in school, is learning, and loves sports.
- Staff form a cohesive team. They greet pupils at the start of each day, play games with them at break and lunchtimes, and are very supportive of each other during lessons. Regular meetings ensure that information about pupils' progress, needs, behaviour and attitudes is passed on appropriately. Staff morale is high. They feel well supported by leaders and value the opportunities they provide for continuing professional development.
- Staff training has strongly focused on safeguarding, mental health and behaviour management. In addition, the school is successfully developing pupils' oracy education, where children are taught to talk and also learn through talk. However, not all staff have a broad enough range of teaching skills to meet pupils' needs as their academic success grows.
- A range of therapeutic and specialist professionals are employed by the school, in line with the school's aims, to provide a service 'wrapped around the child'. These include a specialist social worker and an educational psychologist. Another member of staff provides mindfulness sessions which help to address pupils' emotional and mental health needs.
- A range of motivating visits help to broaden pupils' experiences and contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and emotional (SMSC) development. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about regular visits to a local leisure centre, where they participate in skills-based activities and sessions to promote togetherness, teamwork and fitness.
- Leaders have developed a flexible curriculum and assessment approach, designed to meet individual needs. They aim to build pupils' trust, confidence and engagement. There is a strong focus on English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE). British values, careers education and development of pupils' understanding of the protected characteristics, identified in the Equality Act (2010), are skilfully woven through the curriculum.
- Leaders have been developing their assessment system and now have strong processes for recording pupils' progress in English and mathematics. In addition, they have a sophisticated system for tracking pupils' social and emotional health, which is valuable in assessing their readiness to return to mainstream education. However, assessments of progress in the wider curriculum are underdeveloped.

Governance

- Directors are an integral part of the life of the school. They are passionate about their school. They work hard to give young people, who have had very poor educational experiences, opportunities for personal development, to learn and to move to better futures. They know pupils and their needs well.
- A governing body has been established, which currently benefits from significant experience, particularly in the business sector. Governors are bringing in additional expertise to add rigour and challenge to their work.
- A framework for monitoring and evaluation has been established. Directors and governors are fully aware of the strengths and areas for development of the school at this early stage. However, not all targets set are precise enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. The safeguarding policy is available to parents on request and is compliant with the latest government guidance.
- An experienced designated safeguarding leader has established a strong safeguarding culture. He has ensured that all staff are vigilant and have a secure awareness of local safeguarding issues. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, including about the 'Prevent' duty.
- Pupils spoken with say that they feel safe and know that they have staff to speak to if they need help. The school has established its own 24-hour, all-year-round helpline for pupils, which has repeatedly proved valuable in protecting vulnerable young people from harm. The school also provides pupils with a very comprehensive education about the risks that they may face as they grow up. They have a strong awareness about knife crime, criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation.
- The Pivot Group provides human resources expertise which supports the school in ensuring that there is a rigorous process in place to check on adults who work with children. Leaders record these checks on a single central record.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and support staff are effective at managing pupils' behaviour. They build strong relationships and have high expectations. They are patient, encouraging, and skilled at using their voices, humour, questioning and body language to maintain a peaceful working atmosphere and to draw pupils back on task if their attention wanders.
- Teachers' planning provides different activities in order to meet the individual needs of learners. Teachers also address misconceptions and ensure that pupils are challenged in their learning.
- In many lessons, teachers' passion for their subject, knowledge and approach to learning blend together in a way that engages and motivates pupils to learn. This was particularly evident in an English lesson where pupils were learning about Lewis Carroll's nonsense verse 'The Jabberwocky'. Pupils enjoyed reading the poem and were fully involved in

debate about the possible meanings of the words used.

- Teachers and pupils work together to ensure that pupils make good progress, for example checking that pupils learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers are accomplished at blending SMSC themes into their lessons. In a science lesson about diet, the teacher skilfully introduced discussion about how Muslims manage fasting during Ramadan.
- The school provides parents and carers with detailed reports about their child's progress. Parents value the comments, which are personal to each pupil. In addition, parents say that they receive regular communications from the school about their child's academic progress by telephone or email.
- With the exception of creative writing lessons in English, pupils have limited opportunities to write longer pieces of work. Teachers sometimes move a lesson on quickly and do not capitalise on opportunities for pupils to think more deeply about an issue. In a few lessons, tasks are too highly structured, and pupils become over-reliant on adults to help them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's activities. Pupils with previously unsuccessful experiences of school are helped to overcome the barriers that exist and successfully re-engage in education. School records show that all of the pupils who have so far returned to mainstream schools have had a successful transition. Pupils' records show that they have increased confidence and resilience and that their social skills have improved.
- Therapeutic activities contribute towards the identification and meeting of pupils' needs. Mindfulness sessions help pupils to stay calm and to regulate their behaviour. Space is available where pupils sit and can talk about problems or concerns and they learn techniques to help them cope with stress.
- Pupils say that there is little bullying and school information confirms this. The school takes bullying very seriously. Teaching focuses strongly on racist, sexual and cyberbullying. Pupils are very aware of the ways in which mobile technology can be used in bullying. Any bullying is rapidly dealt with by staff.
- The school works hard to prepare pupils for the world of work and adult life. In addition to receiving impartial careers advice and guidance, links with local businesses help pupils learn about different types of employment. Pupils say that they have ambitions where they previously had none and aspire to further their education at colleges or through apprenticeships.
- Pupils take pride in their work and school. During the inspection, several took part in an open evening. They wore their school uniform and engaged in conversations with visitors. They were polite and courteous. Pupils were also delighted about the quality of scones that they had made.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and when taking part in school activities elsewhere. Pupils are very well supervised. Breaktimes are well organised, and staff join in with pupils in playing games and conversation.
- Throughout the school, there are displays both in open areas and classrooms. These often contain the pupils' own work. Displays also promote British values and healthy eating. This reinforces the school's ethos and further extends pupils' appreciation of the wider world.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- School records show that the number of behaviour incidents has reduced rapidly in the short time that the school has been open. Further, incidents have become less serious, and this demonstrates the increased self-control that pupils develop while at the school.
- The lack of damage or graffiti emphasises the success of the school in building an orderly and calm environment. Leaders say that pupils' use of derogatory language is rare, and none was heard during this inspection.
- There have been no exclusions and there has been no need for physical restraint.
- When received, attendance information from pupils' previous schools shows that most pupils had very poor attendance records. In several cases, pupils have not attended school for significant periods of time. Most pupils have now significantly improved their attendance and have sustained their progress. Around one third of pupils now have attendance records that are in line with the national average for mainstream schools. Several pupils say that they now want to come to school and parents have confirmed this.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since they have not been fully engaged in education for some time, most pupils start at the school considerably behind the standards attained by their peers nationally. Many do not arrive with accurate records of their prior attainment and so the school works hard to establish reliable assessment information, which teachers can use to plan their lessons.
- Due to the time that the school has been open, there are no external tests or examination results to compare pupils' progress to that of their peers nationally. School assessment information and pupils' work seen during the inspection shows that pupils make strong progress in their English and mathematics lessons. This information also shows that pupils who are disadvantaged make progress at a faster rate than their peers.
- The school is also able to show that pupils make steady progress across other curriculum areas. However, leaders are aware that this information is not as strong and does not allow teachers and leaders to fine-tune planning or set precise enough targets.
- In English, there is a focus on developing pupils' literacy skills. Work in their books shows that they rapidly improve in their use and understanding of language. In creative writing there is strong use of adjectives and adverbs. Pupils with special educational needs are making the strongest progress in English and their rate of progress is now accelerating.
- Pupils enjoy their PSHE lessons and their written work demonstrates that their analytical

and decision-making skills improve over time.

- Mathematics lessons are highly productive. Pupils' mastery of number work is particularly strongly developed, although problem-solving, for example, is not well grounded in real-world examples. Pupils with special educational needs make slower progress in mathematics. This is partly because insufficient time is given to helping pupils develop a deeper understanding of mathematical processes.
- Many pupils read well and volunteer to read out loud. Most are fluent and pay attention to punctuation. However, few read for pleasure and the school's resources for reading are limited.
- A number of pupils come to the school with low reading ages and have made relatively small amounts of progress. Several require additional support as they are reluctant to engage with the school's reading programme and are anxious about their weak reading skills.

School details

Unique reference number	146339
DfE registration number	383/6006
Inspection number	10093660

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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Number of part-time pupils	9
Proprietor	The Pivot Academy Ltd
Chair	Linda Baines
Headteacher	Cheryl Lotherington
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,375 to £33,000pa
Telephone number	01484766350
Website	Not available
Email address	info@pivot-academy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Pivot Academy Leeds East is a secondary school with a focus on alternative education provision for up to 55 pupils aged 11 to 16.
- The school was first registered by the Department for Education in November 2018. This inspection was its first standard inspection.
- The school is located in the east of Leeds in a refurbished office building which has been adapted to create classroom and learning spaces.
- This school is part of a network of Pivot schools that provides alternative provision for

pupils. Their mission statement is 'putting children at the centre of everything that we do'.

- Most of the pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and have been excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion from their mainstream school.
- Pupils access local leisure centre facilities for physical education activities.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out over two and a half days with a day of notice.
- The inspector toured all buildings currently used by the school, both inside and outside.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons and made some shorter visits to classrooms. The headteacher observed some lessons jointly with the inspector.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, executive headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader, pupils, the chair of governors and the managing director of the Pivot Group.
- The work of several pupils was reviewed.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school was observed. The inspector met formally and informally with pupils. No pupils responded to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.
- The inspector evaluated a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the effectiveness of the school and development plans, admissions and attendance registers, policies, monitoring information, child protection and safeguarding information, and minutes of the governing body. The inspector also looked closely at all other documents and policies required as part of the independent school standards.
- Consideration was given to the school's evidence of its communication with parents. There was one response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, the inspector spoke with several parents and a representative of one referring school. Nine staff responded to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Steve Rogers, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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