

Inspection of School for Inspiring Talents

College House, Ashburton Road, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 1NH

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 January 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They are keen to learn and know that staff are there to support them. Pupils are safe. Through a well-developed personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, pupils learn to stay safe online and learn to identify risks in the wider community.

Pupils who attend this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is calm and pupils know that staff have high expectations for what they can achieve. Pupils rise to these expectations and achieve well in most subjects. Pupils are polite and respectful to visitors. They conduct themselves in an exemplary way around the school and in lessons. Pupils say that everyone is treated fairly at the school. Pupils are empathetic to each other, appreciating that everyone has different needs.

Pupils benefit from a rich range of personal development experiences that are woven into the school's curriculum. For example, pupils visit different cities and places of worship. This helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Opportunities to go rock climbing and paddle boarding help to build pupils' resilience and confidence. Career guidance and work experience help pupils to learn important life skills that prepare them well for adulthood.

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

The school is ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Warm and caring relationships between staff and pupils help to fulfil this vision and support pupils to reach their potential. Regardless of when a pupil joins the school, staff take the time to get to know the needs of individuals. This helps pupils to form trusting relationships with staff that form the foundation of their learning.

The school has developed a curriculum that provides pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to ensure they are ready for the next stage of their education. However, some areas of the curriculum are more developed than others. For example, in reading, writing and mathematics staff ensure learning is personalised to meet the needs of pupils. Staff are skilful at knowing how to adapt learning in these subjects to help pupils engage so that they remember what they have learned in the long term. This means pupils achieve well and their work is of a high standard. However, in some other subjects the delivery of the curriculum does not have the same level of rigour. As a result, some pupils do not build on what they already know and develop gaps in their understanding.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils of all ages read books that match their ability. For those pupils who are still developing their phonics knowledge, staff are expert at ensuring pupils learn the sounds and words they need to know to become fluent and confident readers. Pupils read a wide range of books that help them build a love of reading over time.

The school has the highest of expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff are well trained to understand the triggers and causes behind pupils' behaviour. This helps the school to meet each pupil's needs. Consequently, behaviour has improved over time. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils understand that attending school helps them to be prepared for the future world of further education or employment. For those pupils who struggle coming to school, the school works closely with families and carers to ensure there is personalised support. This means pupils attend well. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. If pupils dysregulate then learning expectations are tailored to each pupil's needs while maintaining a steely focus on learning. Older pupils know that they are role models to younger pupils and try their best to set an example.

Opportunities for pupils' personal development are exceptional. The school's initiative of '10 good deeds in 10 days' helps to provide a framework for pupils to contribute to supporting others in their school community. At the school's Christmas performance, pupils have the opportunity to perform their skills and talents in front of an audience. The school has embedded an aspirational careers pathway that identifies pupils' interests from an early age. The school reaches out to the wider community to help provide pupils with meaningful experiences and transferable skills that prepare them for when they leave the school.

Governors and the proprietor body provide an effective balance of support and challenge. The proprietor ensures that all the independent school standards are met. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Staff are proud to be part of the school. They appreciate the ongoing professional development and know that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A few subjects in the wider curriculum are not as well developed as others. Consequently, in these subjects pupils do not develop their understanding or build effectively on what they already know. The school must ensure that these subjects are fully developed and embedded so that teaching prepares pupils effectively for future learning.

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	141515
DfE registration number	878/6064
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10342097
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Pete Jenkins
Annual fees (day pupils)	£62,775 – £92,775.
Telephone number	01626244086
Website	www.sfit.org.uk
Email address	admin@sfit.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–25 November 2021

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one alternative provision.
- All pupils who attend this school have an EHC plan. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school has a new proprietor since the previous inspection.
- The school is located on two sites at College House, Ashburton Road, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 1NH and Place House, Place Lane, Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7EP.

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 evaluation 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PSHE and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, the chair of the governing body and the managing director of the proprietor board of Acorn Care and Education Ltd.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and by talking to parents. The inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Heather Barraclough

His Majesty's Inspector

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