

# Inspection of Emerge School

Elgin Chambers, 22-24 Cemetery Road, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2DL

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Inspection dates: 4 to 6 June 2024

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**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils grow in confidence at Emerge School. It is a unique place to be. Pupils achieve the school's vision of 'learning today for a better tomorrow'.

Pupils feel valued, listened to and cared for. Pupils and staff describe the school as a family. They genuinely care about each other. Staff know the pupils well, and they get to know their likes, dislikes and interests. Staff use this information to hook pupils into learning effectively. As one parent said, and inspectors agree, 'Pupils are safe, happy and learn well.'

Pupils' attitudes to learning are commendable. Staff use many creative and thoughtful strategies to support behaviour effectively. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. The wealth of expertise and support wrapped around each pupil helps them feel well prepared for learning.

The school pays serious attention to developing self and mutual respect. As pupils learn to accept rules and believe in themselves, they grow in confidence and learn to develop empathy. Pupils embrace the opportunity to take on school jobs. They are especially pleased to be the pupil employee of the month. Pupils develop a sense of belonging and pride.

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

The proprietor body, ably supported by a strong leadership team, focuses on getting the best outcomes for every pupil. Leaders have successfully established a positive ethos that is seen and felt in every part of the school. As part of this work, leaders prioritise staff training around the school's therapeutic approaches. This is making a positive difference to pupils' experience of school life and their learning.

Leaders are developing an ambitious curriculum. They have been particularly successful in core subjects such as mathematics and English, resulting in positive outcomes for the pupils. However, the school is still defining precisely what pupils will learn and in what order in some other subjects. Leaders recognise there is more to do, especially in bridging the gap between key stages 2 and 3. Furthermore, leaders are not yet monitoring how well curricular programmes are taught. Consequently, leaders are not fully aware of what curriculum is working well and what needs improving across subjects and classes. However, there are a range of holistic measures which analyse pupils' attitudes to learning. This captures the school's ethos of prioritising pupils' well-being to enable them to reach a place where they are ready to learn.

Leaders prioritise reading for pupils in all year groups. Staff check pupils' reading skills on entry to check for any gaps in their phonics knowledge. The books pupils read closely match the phonics they are learning, and those who need extra help receive effective support to help them catch up. The reading areas in classrooms are

attractive and include a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Staff promote a love of reading, and many pupils show enjoyment as readers.

All pupils who attend school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) to address their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff skilfully adapt learning through individual learning programmes. Leaders regularly review progress with pupils, parents and carers.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They hold doors open for each other, staff and visitors. Many pupils' previous school experiences include struggling with self-esteem, confidence and behaviour. At Emerge School, they shine. This is because of the school's carefully planned and comprehensive approach to behaviour and well-being. Staff are consistent in their approach to managing behaviour. Pupils are taught successfully to think about their well-being and the well-being of their peers and staff. Learning spaces are calm and inviting. Pupils have space to relax and unwind indoors and outdoors. Pupils want to come to school. Many pupils said the best thing about school is the staff and their new friends.

Pupils learn about equality. They understand what bullying is, and pupils name staff they would go to if they were worried about anything. Leaders recognise there is more work to do to strengthen careers guidance.

Staff value the proprietor body's support. They say their well-being is prioritised and their workload is managed well. Pupils, staff and the proprietor body are all proud of the school. Many parents and carers speak highly of their child's induction into the school and the positive transformation in their behaviour and learning.

The proprietor body and leaders share a vision for the school. They ensure pupils are at the heart of decisions. They ensure that all of the independent standards are met.

The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In some subjects, the school has not set out what they want the pupils to learn. This means that teachers are unclear about precisely what to teach and in what order. As a result, pupils' learning does not always build logically and this slows their learning. The school should ensure that plans for the curriculum are developed well across all subjects and all key stages so that the key knowledge to be taught is carefully set out.

- Although the school is developing subject and curriculum leadership, it is not currently monitoring the curriculum effectively enough. This means leaders are not aware of what is working well and where further improvements are needed. The school should ensure they take steps to identify how well the curriculum is being delivered.
- The school is at an early stage of developing careers education, information, advice and guidance. Some aspects of practice are relatively new. This means that pupils' experiences are inconsistent and variable. The school should enhance its careers provision so that pupils have well-planned and coherent opportunities to engage with impartial advice and careers guidance in preparation for their transition at the age of 13.

### **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149668
<b>DfE registration number</b>	861/6038
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322621
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	32
<b>Proprietor</b>	Emerge Care and Therapeutic Solutions
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Scragg
<b>Headteacher</b>	Danielle Clowes
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£48,750 to £58,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 890121
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.emergeschool.co.uk">www.emergeschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@emergeschool.co.uk">office@emergeschool.co.uk</a>

## Information about this school

- This is the school's first full standard inspection. The school opened in June 2023.
- The school is an independent day school registered for up to 40 pupils between the ages of five and 13.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of SEND, including pupils with autism. Some pupils have been out of education for prolonged periods before joining the school.
- All of the pupils at the school have an EHC plan.
- Pupils are referred to the school by two local authorities.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.
- The school does not use any 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

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

- 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 has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting with two representatives of the proprietor body. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and other staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic education and communication and language. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and support staff, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including history, geography, art and design and science.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons, at breaktime and lunchtimes and the start and end of the day and spoke to pupils,

with an adult present, during the inspection.

- 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 took account of parents' free-text comments through Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Pamela Matty, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kirsty Foulkes

His Majesty's Inspector

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