

Inspection of Grow Independent School

Lower Clough Business Centre, Pendle Street, Barrowford, Lancashire BB9 8PH

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 October 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **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 appreciate the safe, calm and nurturing environment that the school provides. They enjoy attending school and benefit greatly from the positive relationships that they have with staff. Adults help them to recognise their feelings and cope with their emotions. The school's values of achievement, belonging and compassion are palpable.

Pupils get on well with each other. They are respectful of each other's needs and show empathy and tolerance. They embrace the many opportunities that they have to develop new talents and interests. For example, they take pleasure in visits to a farm, local heritage centre and library. Pupils also appreciate the time they spend in a music and arts studio where they write and record their own music. Additionally, pupils enjoy outdoor activities such as climbing, archery and den-building. These wide-ranging experiences help pupils to develop self-esteem, confidence and resilience.

The school is ambitious for pupils. Many pupils have had significant periods of time out of education. However, they develop a love of learning at this school and rise to its high expectations for their achievement. Pupils are keen to gain the qualifications that they need to be ready for the next stage of their education.

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

The school's curriculum plans and schemes of work identify the essential knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. However, the curriculum is not broad enough for all pupils, particularly at key stage 3. For example, the curriculums for design technology, modern foreign languages and music are in their infancy. This means that some pupils do not acquire a sufficient breadth of knowledge within these subjects.

The additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early. Staff are highly skilled at adapting their delivery of the curriculum to meet the individual needs of pupils. This means that pupils get the help and support they need to learn the curriculum well.

Mostly, teachers have the expertise that they need to help pupils to build knowledge successfully over time. Staff choose suitable teaching approaches and learning activities that engage pupils. This helps pupils to develop confidence and a sense of achievement. Teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and use this information effectively to shape future learning. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has not provided sufficient subject-specific support for some staff to help them to implement the curriculum as effectively as they should.

The school has fostered a love of reading among pupils. It is rich with books that are of high quality and ignite pupils' interests. The school is in the early stages of implementing systems to identify and support pupils who have gaps in their reading

knowledge. It has taken appropriate action to ensure that these pupils get the help they need to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They are committed to their education and have positive attitudes to learning. Many pupils have had previously high levels of absence. The school takes effective action to improve the attendance of pupils. This has brought about significant and sustained improvement in how well pupils attend.

The school has developed a comprehensive personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education curriculum. It fully reflects the school's ethos and values and pays particular regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. For example, pupils learn about respectful relationships and the cultural influences that shape modern Britain. Additionally, they learn about healthy lifestyle choices and wider life skills such as shopping, gardening and cooking. This helps pupils to develop independence and prepares them well for their future lives.

The school has designed an appropriate impartial careers information, education, advice and guidance programme. For example, pupils learn about a broad range of careers and visit colleges. Furthermore, some pupils have the opportunity to gain accreditation through work placements at local businesses.

The school has ensured that the education it provides has a positive impact on pupils. The proprietor is fully involved in the life of the school and knows the school well. It has a clear oversight of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a secure understanding and knowledge of the independent school standards ('the standards'). It has ensured that these are consistently met, including compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Moreover, the proprietor has appointed a local governing body. Governors provide effective support and challenge to the school.

The school has taken effective steps to reduce staff's workload. For example, staff are given time during the school day to work together and to focus on their teaching. The school engages positively with parents and carers to further support pupils' education. The school is held in high regard by parents.

The school meets the health and safety and premises requirements. The building is maintained to a high standard and teaching spaces are bright, clean and well-resourced. There is a safe outdoor area that pupils can spend time in at breaktimes.

Policies, including an effective safeguarding policy that meets the current statutory requirements, are made available to parents on the school's website and also on request.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school has not ensured that the curriculum is broad enough for all pupils. This means that some pupils do not acquire sufficient knowledge within some subjects. The school must ensure that pupils learn a broad curriculum so that they can gain the knowledge that they need to be fully prepared for the next stage of their education.
- In a small number of subjects, the school has not ensured that the curriculum is implemented consistently well. This means that some pupils do not build knowledge as securely as they should over time. The school should ensure that staff have the subject-specific knowledge and pedagogical support that they need to implement the intended curriculum consistently well.

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	149952
DfE registration number	888/6132
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10342212
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Grow Schools Ltd
Chair	Sarah Hawthorne
Headteacher	Sarah Hawthorne
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,000
Telephone number	01282 541949
Website	www.growschool.co.uk
Email address	office@growschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is located at Lower Clough Business Centre, Pendle Street, Barrowford, Lancashire BB9 8PH.
- One of the proprietors is also the headteacher.
- All pupils who attend this school have an education, health and care plan, mostly for autism. Additionally, some pupils have specific learning needs or other neurodiverse conditions.
- The school was registered by the Department of Education on 25 September 2023. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- 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.

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the proprietors, one of whom is also the headteacher, and the deputy headteacher, other school leaders and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including those relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses from the Ofsted survey for staff. There were no responses from the Ofsted survey for pupils. However, inspectors spoke with a range of pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, in lessons and around the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and art and design. They met leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects. They also considered the curriculum across some other subject areas and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school premises to check the suitability of the premises and accommodation against the relevant standards.

Inspection team

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Hazzard

Ofsted Inspector

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