

Inspection of The Luccombe Hub

Unit 12, East Luccombe Farm, Milton Abbas, Dorset DT11 0BD

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form 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 talk with passion about the difference the school makes to their lives. They appreciate staff taking the time to understand their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and getting to know them as individuals. After significant breaks in their education prior to joining the school, pupils thrive at The Luccombe Hub.

Pupils learn to recognise their emotions through a range of therapies. For example, they learn how to be calm and care for others in their work with horses and farm animals. Pupils say the therapies on offer 'allow us to focus on our learning'. There are clear routines and expectations for pupils' behaviour. Bullying is not tolerated.

The school's enterprise project ensures that pupils learn important life skills such as cooking and managing money. Pupils work with community members to sell their products in shops and at local events. They show determination to complete learning activities. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.

Parents and carers are extremely happy with the support their children receive. They describe the school as being 'an incredibly caring and nurturing environment'. Parents say their children's improved mental health and well-being positively impact their family life.

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

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and personal development. Leaders and staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour support. Staff use their extensive therapeutic knowledge to ensure pupils feel safe and ready to learn. They agree strategies to meet pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs effectively. Leaders pre-empt difficulties and make the necessary changes. For example, pupils' timetables and curriculum are adapted to ensure that they learn successfully. The progress made by pupils to recognise and manage their own behaviour is excellent. The school's high-quality therapeutic offer means that pupils can learn and remember important curriculum content.

Leaders' ambition for pupils extends to their academic achievements. They prioritise pupils learning to read well. Some pupils have missed several years of education before joining the school. Staff ensure that these pupils secure their phonic knowledge. Regular practice helps pupils to remember the letter sounds well. This builds their confidence and interest to read. Staff create reading nooks and the 'Land of Narnia' (library) to develop a love of reading and encourage pupils to read independently.

There is a clear and coherent mental health, therapeutic and academic curriculum in place. Pupils begin on the 'care and connect' curriculum pathway. Some move to the 'hands-on' or 'incite' pathways. Leaders and staff regularly check the curriculum pathway and individual timetable to meet needs. Pupils may change between

pathways. Their next steps are carefully considered. This ensures that staff have shared expectations for pupils' personal and academic development.

Teachers' assessments help them identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Some staff do not yet have an in-depth knowledge of the curriculum's core content. Leaders support staff to break down the learning into small, achievable steps. This includes ideas to meet pupils' education health and care (EHC) plan targets. With guidance from leaders, staff fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge to successfully move through the curriculum. Leaders and staff make sure that pupils reach their potential and leave school with relevant qualifications.

The post-16 employability curriculum ensures that students repeat and revise important concepts, such as interview techniques, to embed learning. The employability curriculum helps students to successfully develop their resilience, skills and knowledge to join the workforce.

Pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is important in the school. Leaders and staff are passionate about providing a broad and appropriate curriculum. Pupils learn how to build positive relationships and to value the diversity and differences of others. As they develop their discussion and debating skills, pupils understand that people may hold opinions different from their own. Pupils learn right from wrong and the relevance of British values, such as respect.

Leaders are proactive and ensure that teachers adapt learning to swiftly address concerns, such as online safety. Staff and experts from outside agencies speak with pupils to ensure that important messages are heard and understood.

Pupils attend school regularly. Effective communication and positive working relationships with parents help to remove barriers that prevent pupils from attending school. Leaders are quick to secure additional support for pupils when needed.

The school's governing body is new. Nevertheless, it provides appropriate support and challenge to help leaders check that the independent school standards are consistently well met.

Staff say they are 'fully supported' in their roles. They benefit from activities that support their own mental health and well-being, such as art sessions. Staff are not afraid to ask for help as this is encouraged across the team. Communication from leaders is clear. Decisions are always made as a team for the benefit of the pupils. Staff are immensely proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Before staff begin work at the school, they undergo a thorough induction process. This includes health and safety and safeguarding training. Staff roles and responsibilities are clear.

Leaders and staff use an online program to record concerns. Staff are trained to record factually accurate information. This helps leaders to build a precise picture for each pupil. Leaders act swiftly to secure support for pupils and their families when needed. They escalate concerns with external agencies when appropriate.

Clear risk assessments are in place to safeguard pupils when in school and when travelling by taxi or in centre vehicles.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Staff do not have an in-depth knowledge of the school curriculum's core content. Therefore, leaders support staff to plan and write pupils' next steps linked to their EHC plan targets. Staff now need to secure their knowledge of the curriculum's core content to independently write small-step, achievable, individual pupil targets accurately.

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	147906
DfE registration number	838/6012
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10254696
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Luccombe Hub Limited
Principal	Henri Monier-Williams
Chair	Nick Entwistle
Headteacher	Lucie Wharton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£43,000 to £45,000
Telephone number	07772 000845
Website	www.luccombehub.com
Email address	office@luccombehub.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Luccombe Hub Limited is the proprietary body.
- The school opened in February 2022. It provides places for pupils in receipt of an EHC plan.
- Pupils from Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, and Wiltshire counties and Jersey attend the school.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider, Dorset Trade Skills.

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the principal, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils and governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and PSHE. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also observed pupils during social times, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding practices.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour management, exclusions and attendance.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Leahy

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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