Inspection of Holme Court School

Cherry Hinton Hall, Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge, Cambridge CB1 8DW

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 July 2025

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
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?

Many pupils join Holme Court with negative previous experiences of education. Clear and precise induction processes ensure the school quickly helps pupils to settle in. Pupils behave well and are very happy here. They arrive eager to start the day and begin learning.

Pupils value staff taking the time to know and understand them as individuals. This helps to motivate pupils to work hard during their lessons. Pupils develop both their independence and resilience. They keep going even when they find work difficult. This ensures pupils achieve well and reach the high expectations the school has of them.

Pupils value the wider opportunities the school provides for them. Visits to the pantomime, outdoor pursuits centres or a local animal shelter help to enrich the curriculum on offer. In-school sessions, such as workshops from West End performers, help to ignite pupils' interests and ambitions for their future. Pupils develop a strong sense of why supporting those who are less fortunate than them is important. Litter picking in the park, or fundraising to purchase a community defibrillator, are examples of this. All of this instils the immense pride pupils feel as members of the Holme Court family.

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

In most subjects, the school has identified the important knowledge pupils need to understand. It has placed this knowledge into a logical order. In these subjects, teachers are adept at helping pupils to make connections between previous and current learning. For example, in science, teachers recap pupils' prior knowledge before introducing new content. This helps pupils to secure their understanding and achieve well. In a few subjects, the school has not identified the key knowledge pupils need to learn, or the order they need to learn it in, as clearly. Here, pupils do not routinely make connections between what they are learning and what they already know. In these subjects' pupils do not secure their understanding as well as they do in others.

Pupils join the school with severe and persistent literacy difficulties. Careful and precise checks on pupils' learning helps the school to identify the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. The school uses these checks alongside information contained in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to create pupils' individual learning plans. These provide staff with the specific targets pupils need to achieve. Staff are skilled at matching the work they set pupils to these plans. For example, morning sessions are meticulously designed to help pupils secure important reading and writing knowledge. They help pupils to develop their fluency, confidence and understanding when reading. They also support pupils to master useful life skills such as how to

touch type when using a laptop. Pupils value story time as part of these sessions. They love to settle down to read, or listen, to a good book.

Classrooms are calm places where pupils can concentrate on their learning. Pupils value the positive learning environment that exists at school. Staff are consistent in their approaches to managing behaviour. Pupils appreciate this consistency. They enjoy being at school and, as a result, most attend frequently. Where pupils have difficulties in attending, the school supports families to remove the barriers pupils have. They have success with much of this work.

Pupils are well prepared for adulthood. This begins with personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education which is a cornerstone of the curriculum. Pupils understand important PSHE content. They know what constitutes a healthy relationship and the changes they go through as they mature. Themed events, assemblies and the wider curriculum help pupils to understand and value the diverse world they live in. Pupils are highly respectful of differences. This is shown in the way pupils respectfully listen to each other when debating opposing views during lessons. Pupils receive useful careers information. This helps them to make informed decisions such as when choosing relevant work experience. Pupils are grateful for the way staff help them to identify what they want to do in their future. This helps pupils to secure appropriate destinations for when they leave.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the independent school standards (the standards) including schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Staff implement policies and risk assessments well, such as when supervising pupils taking part in offsite activities. The proprietor acquired the school in March 2025. It is only just starting to get to grips with what the school does well and where improvements need to be made. The school has not established clear and systematic ways to check the impact of their work across key areas. This means the school, and the proprietor, do not have a clear picture of where to target future school improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- In a few subjects, the school has not precisely identified the important knowledge pupils need to learn or the order they need to learn it in. In these subjects, pupils do not build on their knowledge or make links between prior learning and current learning as well as they do in others. The school should ensure it clearly identifies the knowledge pupils need to learn, and the order they need to learn it in, across all subjects.

- The school, and the proprietor, have not established a systematic approach to evaluate the impact of its work across key areas. This means leaders do not consistently have the information they need on where to target future school improvement priorities. The proprietor should ensure there are clear systems in place to accurately evaluate all areas of the school's work. This is so leaders at all levels better understand where improvements need to be made.

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	108886
DfE registration number	873/6051
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10391706
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Inspired Learning Group (UK) Ltd
Chair	Amit Mehta
Headteacher	Anita Laws
Annual fees (day pupils)	£17,996 to £19,908
Telephone number	01223 778030
Website	www.holmecourt.com
Email address	admin@holmecourt.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 November 2022

Information about this school

- The school operates from one site located at Cherry Hinton Hall, Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge, CB1 8DW.
- In March 2025, the proprietor changed from a single proprietor to Inspired Learning Group (UK) Ltd. Inspired Learning Group (UK) Ltd own other independent schools.
- There is an advisory board which is responsible for monitoring the performance of the school.
- The school is registered to admit up to 55 pupils between the ages 7 and 16.
- All pupils who attend have SEND needs linked to severe and persistent literacy difficulties. Most pupils have an EHC plan and/or a diagnosis of dyslexia.
- Most pupils are referred to the school by their local authority.
- The school does not currently 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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the proprietor body, the headteacher, staff, and a representative from a local authority that commission places at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects; English, mathematics, science and PSHE. Inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, considered curriculum information, visited lessons, reviewed evidence of work and spoke with pupils.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans, reviewed evidence of work and spoke with leaders and pupils about some other subjects.
- 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.

- To check compliance with the standards, inspectors spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. They visited classrooms, toured the school site, reviewed pupil information, school policies and records relating a range of aspects of the school such as behaviour and health and safety.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. Inspectors also met with staff and pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nerrissa Bear	His Majesty's Inspector

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