

Inspection of ASPIRE: Lifeskills

Town Hall Chambers, Town Hall Passage, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3EB

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 July 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

At Aspire, pupils' needs come first. Staff get to know pupils extremely well, including their likes, aspirations and how they respond to different situations. With consistent kindness and care, staff create an environment where pupils feel safe and valued. Many pupils arrive with a sense of distrust in education or after long periods out of school. Pupils learn that school can be a place of warmth and happiness where they can make meaningful choices about their future.

The school has high expectations of its pupils. Staff collaborate closely with clinical professionals to ensure that each pupil receives bespoke support. As a result, individual needs are well met. From their starting points, pupils achieve well. Over time, they grow in confidence and strive to meet the school's ambitions for them.

All pupils have tailored behaviour plans to help them understand and manage big emotions. Pupils respond well to these. They learn to trust adults, rebuild their self-worth and confidence and respect one another. There is a tangible sense of belonging to the school.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. The school has given them a renewed sense of hope and optimism for their children's futures.

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

The proprietor has created an environment where everyone feels valued. Staff have the necessary skills to meet pupils' needs. They appreciate the help they receive to manage their well-being and workload.

The proprietor ensures that the school meets its statutory duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. School policies align with the latest statutory guidance. The school's quality assurance systems are currently under review, with some structures recently introduced or not fully embedded. Therefore, its work to identify its strengths and some of its improvement priorities is not fully developed. However, as the school moves to its new accountability systems, the proprietor continues to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met.

Pupils follow an academic curriculum alongside one that supports their holistic and therapeutic needs. This flexible approach responds to each learner's individual circumstances. As they begin to feel safe and secure, academic expectations increase gradually. Many pupils go on to achieve recognised qualifications, including GCSEs and A levels. They leave school better prepared for further education, employment or training.

Typically, staff have strong subject knowledge. They know how to adapt the curriculum to keep pupils engaged. For example, they use pupils' interest in gardening to teach parts of the science curriculum. Most lessons are taught on a one-to-one basis. Staff spot any gaps in pupils' understanding quickly and address

them across the curriculum. For instance, when a pupil struggles with mathematical processes, staff teach those concepts through science lessons. This helps pupils to make more meaningful connections to the intended knowledge.

Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened its reading provision. Staff continue to refine the English curriculum to ensure that knowledge builds cohesively across all key stages. Library spaces are filled with books that reflect pupils' interests, and older students enjoy reading with younger pupils in the learning centre. The curriculum gives learners access to a range of contemporary and classic texts. Those at the early stages of learning to read are taught phonics effectively. They read books matched to their development and receive focused support to help them catch up.

The school's post-16 curriculum is suitably ambitious for its students. It prepares them well for their next stage, and many go on to destinations that reflect their interests, aspirations and qualifications. The school's curriculum ensures that it meets students' needs academically, socially and in preparation for adulthood.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They learn to engage in their learning with increasing independence. Staff use detailed information to meet the learning needs of each pupil. They work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

Pupils' attendance improves over time. The school provides timely, tailored support to help pupils build positive attendance habits.

Staff understand that pupils' behaviour is often a form of communication. Significant work is put in place to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence. As a result, pupils learn to take pride in their achievements. Staff have the information they need to support pupils effectively, especially when they face challenges in their emotional regulation.

The school's personal development programme helps pupils to develop essential life skills. For example, they learn to cook, stay safe and understand healthy relationships. They take part in enrichment activities that promote their physical health such as swimming and climbing. They learn practical skills such as planning a shopping trip or studying in a library. Staff also provide tailored support to help pupils explore their future career paths. Former students return to share their successes. This inspires current pupils to understand their potential. However, the school's cultural curriculum is not as broad as it could be. Pupils have limited opportunities to explore and appreciate the diverse influences that have shaped modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some aspects of the school's cultural development programme are not as developed as they could be. This limits pupils' opportunities to explore and appreciate the cultural influences that shape their own heritage and that of others. The school should ensure that its personal development programme helps pupils to understand and respect differences further, as well as recognise shared values across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities.
- The school's quality assurance systems are not fully embedded. As a result, the school does not have a sharp understanding of the impact of all its work and the necessary changes that will lead to further improvements. The school should ensure that all planned quality assurance systems are fully embedded, so it can make informed decisions and continue to improve across all areas of school development.

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	142779
DfE registration number	855/6037
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10374820
Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Vivienne Boulton
Headteacher	Vivienne Boulton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,000
Telephone number	01509269441
Website	www.aspirelifefskills.co.uk
Email address	office@aspirelifefskills.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 June 2022

Information about this school

- The school is based at Town Hall Chambers, Town Hall Passage, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3EB. The school's post-16 provision, 'The Hub', is based in the adjacent building at the same address.
- All pupils that attend this school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Pupils have a primary need of autism and communication, behavioural, social, emotional and mental health needs. The school supports pupils with a history of disrupted schooling.
- Typically, pupils are referred to this school by local authorities. Pupils may join the school at any point during the school year.
- The school is registered for up to 25 pupils aged 11 to 19 years old. There are currently 24 pupils on roll.
- Students that attend the school's post-16 provision receive an education that is relevant to their stage of education. This includes GCSE and A-level qualifications.
- The headteacher is the sole proprietor of the school. There is no governing body.
- The school does not use 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.

- 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 the headteacher, who is also the proprietor, as well as other school leaders.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and science and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, 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.

- Inspectors considered the school's pastoral offer.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, pupils and staff.
- The lead inspector toured the school sites to check compliance against the independent school standards.
- Inspectors also reviewed a range of other documents and policies, including the school's website.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Sheppard

Ofsted Inspector

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