

Demeter House

Bigby Street, Brigg, N Lincs, North Lincolnshire DN20 8EF

Inspection dates

6–8 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including the proprietor, make sure that teachers and pupils are challenged to achieve high ambitions and that all the independent school standards are met. Pupils say they are proud of their school.
- Teaching delivers good academic and social progress to pupils with low starting points. An innovative assessment scheme has captured pupils' interest but is yet to reach its rich potential.
- Personal development and welfare are outstanding. Pupils develop strong self-confidence and self-esteem from very low levels. Outstanding behaviour leads to a learning environment that pupils themselves describe as 'calm'.
- Outcomes are good. Pupils succeed in being the best they can across a wide range of learning. All pupils make good progress from their starting points. All pupils leaving the school since the last inspection have gone on to suitable further education or work.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress in their studies and in their personal development. They are well prepared for adult life.
- Pupils' attendance rates shoot up once they settle into Demeter House. They progress from home schooling, through part-time attendance to full-time attendance at school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is broadly good but occasionally lacks sufficient opportunities to understand fully the multi-cultural nature of British society.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the programme of assessment by establishing common practice throughout the school.
- Raise the levels of pupils' attendance further.
- Increase pupils' appreciation of how people from a wide range of cultures lead their lives in modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders are committed and ambitious to meet the social and academic needs of every individual pupil.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary. Mutual respect makes a significant difference to pupils' all-round progress.
- Leaders know the school well. They have recorded their understanding accurately in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Leaders celebrate the school's strengths, for example the provision of meaningful work-related experiences for older pupils, while recognising the need to develop the school's assessment systems and procedures further.
- The school has good procedures to evaluate and develop the quality of teaching. Leaders have identified effective practice and shared it with colleagues. Therefore, the quality of teaching is consistently strong and is having a positive impact on pupils' social and academic progress.
- Teachers value the support given by the school to their professional development. Leaders have supported a high proportion of staff to obtain qualified teacher status and other relevant qualifications.
- The school is a nurturing and caring environment following the example set by the proprietor and leaders.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to pupils' needs and containing a range of vocational strands. It contributes most successfully to pupils' mental health, behaviour and academic progress.
- The proprietor holds leaders to account by being part of the leadership group and understanding the school's strengths, ambitions and areas for development.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils show good sensitivity, moral understanding and outstanding social development. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to fully develop pupils' cultural understanding and awareness.
- Pupils make significant progress in self-confidence and self-esteem through the 'mindfulness' strand of the curriculum. They develop a sense of fair play, recognise the consequences of their actions and understand the principles of right and wrong.
- Pupils develop British values of democracy and the rule of law and learn to reject extremism.

Governance

- As the school has a sole proprietor, there is no governing body.
- The proprietor plays an active part in the day-to-day management of the school and holds leaders effectively to account. He has appointed a strong team and all the staff in it are active and visible in the day-to-day operation of the school and have good relationships with pupils and adults. He oversees the efficient use of resources and understands the strengths of the school along with its areas for development.

- Together with leaders, the proprietor ensures that policies are reviewed and refreshed regularly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy is provided on the school's website. There is good practice in the suitability of the proprietor and employees to work with children. Regular training ensures that all staff are fully aware of reporting procedures and the required response to a disclosure.
- Safer recruitment certification is held by those leaders involved in recruitment processes.
- All staff are trained to at least the appropriate level and have confirmed their reading of the latest version of 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- All pupils say that they feel safe in the school and that they know how to report concerns.
- Pupils are trained to keep themselves safe online. The use of mobile phones in school is not permitted.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers deliver well-planned lessons which result in learning time being maximised. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good because of teachers' effective implementation of the behaviour policy.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good across a wide range of subjects. This enables them to probe pupils' understanding with skilful questioning and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Pupils say, 'We like challenging work.'
- Teachers intervene swiftly to tackle misconceptions and ensure secure progress. For example, in a science lesson, the teacher realised that pupils did not have prior understanding of the three states of matter and re-shaped the learning quickly to address this.
- Other adults support pupils' learning and social development in the classroom and around school. Pupils use the word 'calm' repeatedly to explain how the school compares with their previous schools. They told inspectors that their small class sizes are 'amazing' and help them to learn well.
- Pupils with long periods out of education and previous poor attitudes to learning are re-engaged to make good progress because of the nurturing environment and strong support in lessons.
- Parents are well informed about their children's progress through regular, at least fortnightly, contact and termly written reports.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills are applied successfully through a range of activities including pupils' work placement at a local indoor bowling club. This placement enables pupils to prepare for the world of work through food hygiene and health and safety training.
- The school is developing an innovative approach to the assessment of all curriculum subjects. Staff have developed subject-based variations of this work. Assessment procedures are stronger in English and mathematics than in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils know what they have achieved and understand their next targets because they have progress sheets inside the covers of their workbooks.
- At this stage, the procedures do not enable leaders to have a whole-school understanding of the progress of individuals and groups.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's ethos and culture promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils with fractured or unsuccessful previous experiences of school now expect that they are coming to school to learn and enjoy school. They value the positive relationships they develop with adults and other pupils. Pupils are taking great strides in overcoming significant barriers to successfully re-engage in education. Pupils report: 'It's not like a school. That's what's so good about it.'
- Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem have been developed to a high degree through all that the school does. Pupils, many of whom have complex needs, are supported well to express mature views, showing respect for others' ideas and points of view. The school's 'mindfulness' programme has a beneficial effect on pupils' ability to articulate their views.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements and proud of their school.
- The school's work to prepare pupils for the world of work and adult life is exemplary, for example by providing imaginative opportunities for pupils to engage in work experience.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is a significant contributor to pupils' ability to grow into caring active citizens.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and on school activities elsewhere. They know how to keep themselves safe online.
- Leaders ensure that regular checking of all alarms, lighting and firefighting equipment ensure fire safety. All relevant activity, including practice in evacuating the building, is recorded in a fire log.
- The risk assessment policy and procedures for off-site visits, areas of the practical curriculum and individual pupils are detailed and thoughtful. Consequently, pupils have access to a wide and rich range of experiences which help to prepare them for adult life.
- All staff and several pupils are trained in first aid.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- There are sustained and impressive improvements in pupils' behaviour over time. In many cases, there is dramatic improvement in pupils' behaviour in a short time since joining the school.
- From the moment they join the school, pupils' attitudes to learning improve rapidly and have a positive impact on their progress. The good relationships pupils have with adults help them to behave appropriately or to manage their own behaviour. Consequently, pupils' learning and the learning of others are not unduly disrupted
- Pupils say there is little or no bullying and, if it were to occur, it would be quickly resolved by staff.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and as they move around the school at break and lunchtimes is positive. Pupils move sensibly around the school, even where there are narrow corridors and staircases. Outside during break, staff and pupils were observed chatting together.

- While pupils' attendance rates remain below average, rates improve rapidly once pupils arrive and settle into school life. A high proportion of pupils start the school having had either little education for many months or periods of prolonged absence. Thoughtful admissions procedures build pupils' trust and confidence. The attendance of pupils with high rates of absence at their previous schools has significantly improved because the school re-engages them on a home-based learning and a part-time basis until they feel secure in full-time school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school is effective in meeting its aims and the aspirations of its pupils. Successful outcomes are measured in terms of academic progress together with pupils' social and emotional gains.
- Pupils in all key stages make significant gains in self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Almost all pupils make good progress across the curriculum from very low starting points. Some make exceptional progress, although attainment is generally low. Pupils understand that success is measured on 'how far you've come'.
- Good progress is confirmed by the quality of work seen in pupils' books and observed in lessons. Pupils enjoy mathematics and make sustained progress. They work hard, learn new concepts and apply their knowledge to complete past examination questions successfully.
- All leavers have continued in education or training since the last inspection. A significant number enter further education.
- All pupils gain a GCSE qualification in English and most in mathematics.
- Evidence shows that pupils read widely, with fluency and with comprehension at least appropriate to their age. The school successfully encourages reading for pleasure.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of life through flexible academic pathways and vocational opportunities including construction, horticulture, enterprise, mechanical and hospitality. Pupils obtain the relevant qualifications to access further courses and apprenticeships.
- Pupils have the opportunity to study a range of accreditation including GCSE, BTEC and functional skills to gain qualifications reflecting their interests and ability.
- Pupils also obtain first aid, forest leader and sports leader awards. In these activities, pupils also make valuable gains in self-confidence and self-esteem.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Students in the sixth form make good progress, often from low age-related starting points, largely because of effective individual tuition. Their variable performance is as a result of long-term attendance issues at previous schools.
- The sixth form is an integral part of the school and leadership of this key stage is equally as strong as it is in the main school.

- As a result, students are working successfully at a range of levels from vocational programmes to A level. Most are following vocational courses such as horticulture, construction and motor vehicle studies, all based on unit accreditation. This results in training for adult life: from basic skills in using public transport to reach a place of study or work to the job-specific skills in the workplace.
- Students are also making good progress in their social relationships, particularly with people they have not previously met. The school's market stall, selling items made by pupils in school, develops good skills in dealing with the general public. Students calculate customers' change mentally before checking their calculations using the till.

School details

Unique reference number	135247
DfE registration number	813/6005
Inspection number	10020916

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	5
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Mr R Wardlaw
Headteacher	Mrs L Wardlaw
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,000–£32,100
Telephone number	01652 654 251
Website	www.demeterhouseschool.com
Email address	mel.marris@demeterhouseschool.com
Date of previous inspection	15–17 October 2013

Information about this school

- Demeter House School is an independent day special school which is registered to admit up to 60 boys aged from five to 19 years.
- Pupils have social and emotional difficulties including autistic spectrum disorders, which may lead to challenging behaviour.
- The school opened in Scunthorpe in September 2006 and in November 2009 relocated to its current site in Brigg.

- There are currently 53 full-time and three part-time pupils on the roll. The youngest is five years of age and the oldest is 19.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Most have previously experienced a disrupted education and poor attendance at other schools.
- Pupils have been placed at the school by four local authorities.
- The school makes use of alternative provision to extend the curriculum, particularly for older pupils. This includes partnerships with Act Fast, a motorcycle company, a Study Skills Centre and the café at a local indoor bowling club.
- The school was last inspected in October 2013.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- He viewed the school's policies and examined schemes of work and other relevant documentation. He considered pupils' records of both social and educational achievement, scrutinised a selection of pupils' work and heard two pupils read.
- The inspector observed learning in a range of curriculum areas and all age groups, and spoke with pupils during these observations. He was accompanied by a senior leader in one of these observations. He observed one senior leader feed back to the teacher concerned.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, the headteacher, the members of the leadership team, several teachers, a group of pupils and two parents. He also visited an off-site provision.
- The inspector analysed 53 staff questionnaires and 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and had a telephone conversation with two parents.

Inspection team

Peter McKenzie, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017