

Inspection of Best Futures

The Stables, Church Lane, Aylesby, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN37 7AW

Inspection dates: 17 to 19 June 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

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this welcoming and inclusive school. Although pupils arrive with varying experiences from their previous school, they come together to create a close-knit, friendly community. Relationships between pupils, their peers and staff are positive.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school. They are aspirational for pupils to achieve their potential. The school provides an inviting and supportive atmosphere for pupils to learn. It constructs a curriculum around pupils' individual needs and prior knowledge. This enables pupils to make progress through the curriculum, achieving well from their starting points.

Staff know each pupil well. They consider how individual pupils like to be supported with their learning and behaviour. The school has high expectations for pupils. It helps them to realise these. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful environment. Pupils are confident that staff will act in their best interests. This helps them to feel safe and secure.

Pupils enjoy the additional opportunities that the school provides for them. The school has prioritised those that promote pupils' long-term independence and safety, such as learning to swim and water safety. Pupils develop their character through activities such as raising money for a local refuge charity or taking part in community projects.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened the school's curriculum. Staff have increased clarity about the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn from a sequence of lessons. Teachers use their subject knowledge to explain new learning carefully. They routinely check whether pupils have understood the most important content. This allows the school to identify when pupils need additional support. Occasionally, the activities that staff ask pupils to complete do not aid pupils to learn the intended curriculum as well as they could. For some pupils, gaps in knowledge persist, preventing them from catching up quickly.

All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school supports these pupils well, particularly pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. The school works with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, effectively. It ensures that pupils get the additional help that they require. The school site is maintained to a high standard and structured in a way to help staff meet the needs of pupils. In lessons, staff use teaching approaches that ensure that pupils access the curriculum and remain engaged. This contributes to the school's positive learning environment.

Reading is prioritised in the school. Pupils show genuine enjoyment in their reading. While many pupils find reading challenging, they persevere. Staff support this well

through regular praise and positive reinforcement. The school teaches phonics consistently using its established approach. Staff ensure that pupils begin at the correct point in the school's phonics scheme. The school provides effective support that enables pupils to improve their reading over time from their individual starting points.

The school supports pupils to improve their behaviour and attendance well. Staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils and their families. This helps them to identify and address any barriers to positive behaviour or regular attendance swiftly. Consequently, pupils attend school regularly and behave well.

The school provides pupils with a range of opportunities that enhance their learning. For example, pupils have visited a theatre to watch a performance. This strengthened their knowledge of English monarchs. Similarly, during the inspection, pupils excitedly observed chicks hatching as they learned about life cycles. Pupil leaders contribute suggestions about enrichment opportunities. However, there remains work to develop these enrichments further, including allowing pupils to pursue their talents and interests.

The school's relationships and sex and health education curriculum covers all content required by statutory guidance. Pupils study a comprehensive, age-appropriate personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. They learn important knowledge about how to care for themselves and how to keep safe. As a result, pupils' understanding of themselves and the world around them is developing.

Leaders have successfully improved the school since the previous inspection. They have acted to address weaknesses in the curriculum effectively. To ensure this is implemented successfully, the school provides staff with a range of appropriate training. The proprietor body makes regular checks on all aspects of the school's work. As a result, it is well informed about the provision that pupils receive. Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and continuing areas for development.

Staff feel valued and supported in the school. They explain that the school invests in their development and supports them with issues that affect their well-being, such as workload. The proprietor body has ensured that the school continues to meet all of the independent school standards and fulfils the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Sometimes, the activities pupils are set do not focus precisely enough on the intended learning. When this happens, pupils do not gain knowledge and skills securely, and gaps in knowledge persist. The school should ensure that activities help pupils learn and remember the important knowledge identified in the curriculum consistently.
- The school's wider personal development programme is not as coherent as it could be. Opportunities for pupils, including those to develop their talents and interests, are underdeveloped. The school should ensure that all pupils benefit from a clearly structured programme of opportunities that enhance and broaden their education.

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

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| Unique reference number | 142828 |
| DfE registration number | 812/6004 |
| Local authority | North East Lincolnshire |
| Inspection number | 10374860 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent special school |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 14 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Best Futures Community Interest Company |
| Chair | Dawn Best |
| Headteacher | Dawn Best |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £42,690 to £78,726 |
| Telephone number | 01472 278978 |
| Website | www.bestfutures.co.uk |
| Email address | office@bestfutures-school.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 20 to 22 June 2023 |

Information about this school

- Best Futures is an independent special school for pupils with SEMH needs. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- Pupils join the school at non-standard times. The places of all current pupils are commissioned by either North East Lincolnshire or Lincolnshire local authorities.
- The school is registered to provide education for up to 15 pupils aged from five to 11.
- The school does not use any registered or unregistered alternative provision.
- The school operates from a single site. It is located at The Stables, Church Lane, Aylesby, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire, DN37 7AW.

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.
- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the principal as well as directors from the proprietor body. They also met with other senior leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of North East Lincolnshire local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also reviewed curriculum plans, reviewed samples of work and visited lessons to understand the quality of the curriculum in other subjects.

- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. They looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- Inspectors reviewed additional documentation, including the school's health and safety policy, risk assessments and fire safety checks.
- The lead inspector toured the school site with school leaders.
- The views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's online surveys were considered. Inspectors also held discussions with staff and pupils at the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Thomas Wraith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Marian Thomas

Ofsted Inspector

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