

Inspection of More Than Ed Independent Special School

Cherry Tree Court, Woodfield Park, Weston Road, Balby, Doncaster, South Yorkshire
DN4 8QN

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **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?

'More Than Ed is a small school with a big heart', commented one pupil. Remarks such as this reflect the feelings of other pupils well. The school, set in parkland, is an oasis of calm for the pupils that attend. Staff know and understand pupils well and see no limits on how much they can achieve. They have high expectations of the pupils in their care.

Learning takes place in a series of small classrooms. Often individual pupils work alone with a member of staff. This helps pupils to remain calm and to concentrate. As pupils grow more confident, some move to working in rooms with other pupils.

Staff collect pupils each morning and take them home at the end of the school day. Learning starts in the car with discussions on current affairs as well as revisiting yesterday's learning. This helps pupils to make the transition between home and school. This also enables staff to recognise how pupils are feeling at the start and end of the school day and helps them to plan learning.

Pupils behave well at school. Kindness and consideration are key values in the school community. Incidents of bullying are rare in school. Pupils know who to talk to if poor behaviour occurs and staff take effective action when it is needed. This enables pupils to feel safe and supported.

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

The school has been open for less than a year. At the start, staff put together a carefully planned and sequenced curriculum. However, pupils found the curriculum too difficult to follow and behaviour deteriorated as they became more anxious at not being able to succeed. Leaders and staff recognised that changes were needed. A new curriculum was designed which enabled pupils to take smaller steps at a pace which matched their needs. A small group of teaching assistants deliver the curriculum to individual pupils, weaving planned learning through the medium of pupils' own interests. This approach helps to reduce pupils' anxiety and increase their confidence.

Subject leaders continue to review and build the curriculum. Pupils' enjoyment of learning has grown and assessment shows that they know and remember more. Leaders feel pupils are now ready to tackle a more challenging curriculum in the new school year.

In mathematics and English, leaders have identified precisely what they want pupils to learn and have put together a sequenced curriculum. This enables pupils to build on previous learning. History and geography are made real for pupils by being taught through the local environment. However, science is not yet as well developed as other subject areas and opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge are missed.

From the outset leaders and staff have been focused on ensuring every pupil can read fluently. This objective has largely been reached. Leaders' next target is to encourage pupils to develop a love of reading. Daily sessions of reading for pleasure for both staff and pupils are in place. New books have also been ordered for the library to entice pupils to try a range of different genres.

School leaders recognise that developing pupils' independence is an important aim for the school. Helping pupils to deal with the stresses and strains of their lives is key to their personal development. Life skills such as learning how to travel independently on a bus or train are essential parts of each pupil's personal development. These skills are taught sensitively and only when staff feel pupils are ready.

Pupils learn about equality and diversity in personal, social and health education (PSHE). This makes certain that pupils are tolerant and aware of the differences in society. Pupils also develop a clear understanding of the groups protected by the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders work closely with a range of different external organisations, including children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). This enables them to increase the effectiveness of the support they give to pupils and their families.

After taking into account pupils' previous experiences and liaising with external partners, leaders have planned that relationships and sex education will start from next term. Learning will be delivered by an external organisation in school supported by school staff.

This year, pupils in Years 10 and 11 received careers guidance from staff in the school and an external careers advisor. This guidance is not in place for younger pupils.

Leaders have ensured all of the independent school standards have been met.

The school is housed in a well-appointed building which is bright and welcoming to pupils. Outside spaces are used well to deliver horticulture and plans are in place for developing play areas further. Adjacent parkland and sports facilities are used to deliver physical education (PE).

Staff describe leaders as being nurturing and caring. Any concerns they may have about workload are listened to by leaders and support is provided.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand the pressures and concerns within the local community. They know that families sometimes struggle to cope. They regularly help families access support and advice. This approach helps to keep pupils safe. Alerts on the school's

online safeguarding systems make sure that any concerns raised by staff about pupils' welfare are followed up quickly. Leaders work very closely with other agencies to make sure pupils are kept safe.

Staff receive regular safeguarding updates which keep them informed about local issues. All staff are trained to a very high standard. Reminders of the importance of the part they play in safeguarding pupils are visible to all staff in corridors. Leaders carry out the appropriate checks on new staff to make sure pupils are kept safe.

The school's safeguarding policy meets requirements and is published on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, transitional arrangements have been applied.
- The science curriculum is not fully planned and sequenced. Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' knowledge and to build on previous knowledge. Leaders should ensure that key scientific information is identified and sequenced across the curriculum.
- Secondary pupils are required to receive independent careers education. This year, only pupils in Year 10 and 11 have received independent careers information. This has reduced the opportunities for younger pupils to access information about future career opportunities. Leaders need to increase the number of secondary pupils receiving careers information and put in place a secure system by which pupils can access work experience.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	148181
DfE registration number	371/6014
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10220891
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Karen Holmes
Chair	Karen Holmes
Headteacher	Karen Holmes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,000 to £54,000
Telephone number	07852699040
Website	www.morethaned.org
Email address	karen.holmes@morethaned.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first standard inspection the school received after it was registered by the DfE in September 2021.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school caters for the needs of pupils with a diagnosis of social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils who attend have an education, health and care plan. Many pupils also have a diagnosis of trauma and the school works very closely with CAMHS in order to support these pupils.
- The school is currently operating within its 'Get Information about Schools' description.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the headteacher and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PSHE, and technology. For each deep dive inspectors met 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.
- Inspectors also looked at the wider curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including history, geography and PE.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL. The quality of recording of safeguarding records on the online system used by the school was checked. Discussions were held with staff on training and checks were made on their knowledge of current government legislation. Checks were also made on the systems the school uses to recruit staff. Pupils were asked how the school helps them to stay safe online.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Garry Stout Ofsted Inspector

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