

Inspection of The Fitzroy Academy

Cruckton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 8PR

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 October 2024

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 coming to school. They are safe and happy. They communicate this in a range of ways. This includes thumbs up, big smiles, making happy sounds, high fives and pointing to activities they enjoy.

Pupils trust the adults. No matter where you turn, indoors and outdoors, pupils and staff enjoy strong attachments and positive relationships. Staff know every little piece that makes up the whole child. They use this knowledge well to get the best out of the pupils' learning, behaviour and social time. This is a school where every pupil matters.

The school sets an ambitious vision of preparing pupils for a happy and meaningful life beyond school. Day by day, term by term, pupils make steps of development. Over time, pupils meet the high expectations and ambitions that leaders have set out for them.

As leaders say, there are tricky days with ups and downs. Pupils need and receive more help on these days. However, the belief, care and support of all of the 'fabulous Fitzroy' team is continuously evident. Pupils learn to be themselves and be proud of who they are and all that they achieve. They learn to finish their work successfully, make independent choices and raise money to help others.

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

The proprietor ensures that the school consistently meets the independent school standards. The school's grounds, buildings and resources are spacious and well equipped. From a fully kitted-out kitchen area to a kiln; climbing equipment to conker trees, there is something for everyone. Leaders have thought carefully about how the curriculum matches the diverse and complex special educational needs and/or disabilities of the pupils.

Pupils with the most complex needs experience a curriculum that focuses sharply on developing their communication and language skills. It also includes deep consideration of their sensory needs. The daily rhythm and routine build learning across areas into every moment of the day. Staff sing and sign the good morning song. They provide a simple running commentary while going on a bug hunt. Pupils dance, bounce and move in a range of ways to music. They are calmed as touch and music combine to soothe, relieve pressure and settle behaviour.

Some pupils follow a more subject-based primary curriculum. The school has structured and sequenced schemes of work in place for all subjects. These are written in a way that supports teachers to deliver effective lessons and pupils to deepen their learning. For example, the artefacts produced from clay and the control pupils show with a hockey stick are a testament to their learning building over time.

Occasionally, staff look to the teacher to know how to best support a pupil with

learning within a subject. This can mean that there are pauses and delays in a pupil's flow of learning and thinking.

The school places a high priority on pupils learning to read. For those who can read, a range of opportunities across the curriculum provide time to practise. For those who are learning to read, the school's approach to teaching phonics is working well. Pupils who were not able to read previously now read with concentration and pride in their success. This is proof of the school's determination to remove barriers to pupils' learning.

The school's success in reducing and removing these barriers begins early. It starts with the stringent consideration of the pupil's needs, whether the school can meet these needs and if Fitzroy is the best fit for the pupil. Following this, the targeted transition package helps everyone involved in the pupil's life to know what is expected of them, when and why. The school continually reviews the package offered. Leaders are not afraid to refine, change or take brave decisions if it is in the best interests of the pupil. The school's ongoing attention to detail is just one of the reasons that pupils learn to manage their behaviour, make progress and be ready for what comes next. Through specific and carefully chosen mini-enterprise projects and a range of visits to shops, cafes and activity centres, the school opens doors for pupils into the world of work.

Pupils benefit greatly from regular and extensive opportunities to experience life beyond school and make valuable contributions to their community. Playing golf, swimming, trampolining, horse-riding and going shopping are just a few activities on offer. Visits to museums and music recitals in church add to the cultural experiences. Pupils learn to consider others as they bake cakes or wear pyjamas to school to raise money for good causes. Friday's tuck shop is so much more than just a tuck shop. It is an experience in the world of work as pupils budget, price up goods, stock take and calculate the profits.

Pupils learn to keep themselves safe in different situations. The school works on this at every opportunity. Each outing provides time and support to put safety into practice. The school has a communication aid, the 'I am not happy' book, that allows pre-verbal pupils to raise concerns if needed. The school's staff induction and training programme for safeguarding and behaviour is impressive. Staff rate this highly. They, rightly, say it helps them to feel looked after and to get it right for the pupils.

The school complies with 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)

- Some of the staff who support pupils in lessons have not received subject-specific training to ensure their subject knowledge is strong. Occasionally, this limits staff developing pupils' thinking within a subject, and pupils' learning flow is slowed or paused. The school should ensure that all staff have the appropriate teaching knowledge to support, question and extend learning so they can best support pupils' progress.

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	148831
DfE registration number	893/6044
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10342188
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Reflexion Care Group Ltd
Chair	Amanda Clarke
Headteacher	Lydia Swinton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£58,500 to £70,200
Telephone number	01939 210040
Website	www.reflexionseducation.org.uk/the-fitzroy-academy
Email address	enquiries@newreflexions.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January to 2 February 2023

Information about this school

- The Fitzroy Academy is part of the Reflexions Care Group Ltd. The school provides full-time education for pupils aged seven to 18. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by several local authorities from across the country.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities including autism, learning disabilities and associated social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school has fewer than five pupils in the sixth-form provision. Therefore, a separate judgement is not made.
- The school is registered to admit up to 40 pupils.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school's most recent standard inspection was in January 2023, when it was judged to be requires improvement. Since this standard inspection, Ofsted carried out two inspections to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards.

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.
- As part of their work to check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors met with the headteacher and the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and interaction, including early reading, mathematics, art and design 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 also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other

subjects, including physical education.

- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with leaders to consider how they support pupils' behaviour.
- 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.
- The lead inspector carried out a detailed tour of the site and premises to consider how well the school meets the independent school standards. Inspectors considered documents, policies and plans linked to the health, safety and welfare of pupils including the fire risk assessment, checks on fire safety equipment, site safety and tree surveys.
- Inspectors talked with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey of staff. They considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including school policies, curriculum documents and the school's website.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Huw Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024