

Inspection of Norton College Tewkesbury

International Way, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 8UQ

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

Sixth-form provision

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 attend well. Leaders and staff forge caring and supportive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils like coming to school and make progress within the curriculum.

The school has a high number of staff to pupils. Staff know pupils' precise needs, and this helps them to learn well. For some pupils, this is the first time that they have engaged with learning. Several expressed the view that the school has, 'Turned their life around'.

Staff organise an impressive range of activities and visits beyond the classroom. These actively support pupils' personal development and are very popular with pupils. Bullying is rare at the school. If it does happen, it is quickly and effectively managed by staff.

Pupils are positive about the support they receive to progress into, and through, post-16 education. They benefit from well-planned opportunities to raise their aspirations. Many post-16 pupils have strong ambitions for their careers and lives in the future. Many of these pupils have overcome significant barriers to learning.

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

The proprietor and school leaders have a clear vision for the school. They are ambitious for the school's development and have created a strong ethos within it. The premises are attractive, well maintained and have good resources. Pupils appreciate the school's environment. Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are fully met. Leaders have effectively implemented the statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education.

Leaders have acted on the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Most subjects now have curriculum plans in place and leaders have broadened the curriculum. As a result, pupils know and remember more over time. However, a few subjects remain less well developed. Pupils do not make as much progress through the curriculum as they should in these subjects.

Teachers provide good support for pupils. As a result, pupils develop confidence in themselves as learners, sometimes for the first time. Pupils do not mind making mistakes. This helps them to learn. Staff ensure that teaching is well matched to the learning needs of pupils.

Reading is taught effectively. Staff support pupils who find reading difficult and they make progress. Leaders have put in place a reading programme. Accessible books are popular with the pupils.

Staff use assessment well. They know pupils' individual needs. Staff give them valuable feedback on how to improve their learning. Pupils are well prepared for the

next stages of their education, employment or training. Pupils are increasingly successful in gaining nationally accredited qualifications.

Staff listen to and understand pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. They provide support to help them overcome any barriers to learning. Therefore, many of them re-engage in learning at the school. Pupils and parents speak positively about the school and its culture. One parent commented that, 'The school has changed my son from angry and isolated to smiling and social'.

Pupils behave well. The school is a calm and settled community. Staff know their pupils well. They work effectively with them and help them to manage their own behaviour. Staff emphasise the need for pupils to show respect for each other. This leads to a positive and supportive ethos, in which pupils flourish.

Across the school, staff share a strong spirit of inclusivity. This brings out the best in the pupils. Careers education is well organised. Pupils benefit from taster events and careers interviews. These raise aspirations and motivate pupils to succeed on their curriculum pathways.

The programmes of study at post-16 include English and mathematics for all pupils. Teachers provide courses that match pupils' individual needs and aspirations. Pupils follow vocational courses across a wide variety of disciplines. Work experience is well matched to their needs. Leaders are ambitious for their pupils. As a result, pupils move to positive destinations when they leave the school.

Leaders have created a culture at the school that is supportive of staff. Staff turnover is low as they enjoy working at the school. They appreciate the actions that leaders take to help them to manage their workload. Staff feel well supported. They undertake regular training.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and a suitable accessibility plan is in place.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain a strong focus on keeping pupils safe. There are well developed systems to support this. The school has the required range of appropriate and contemporary safeguarding policies. Staff understand what actions to take if they have safeguarding concerns. The school's curriculum supports the safeguarding of pupils. Training is well organised, monitored, up to date and well-matched to the needs of the pupils and staff. Leaders work closely with local authorities and external agencies to good effect. Safer recruitment training has been undertaken. Staff who have received this training are involved with each recruitment process.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum sets out the content that pupils need to learn and the order in which it should be taught. As a result, pupils do not learn the knowledge they need to be successful. Leaders need to identify the key knowledge in the right sequence so that pupils learn well in these subjects.
- At times some pupils find it hard to remember their learning. Leaders should develop approaches that help pupils to know more and remember more.
- Pupils are benefiting from the school's increasingly ambitious curriculum. However, there is still work needed to develop this further. Leaders should ensure that the school's curriculum is widened to incorporate all areas of learning.

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.

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	146519
DfE registration number	916/6021
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10230029
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent 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	40
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	8
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Norton College (Tewkesbury) Limited
Chair	Edward Morris
Headteacher	Helen Ferguson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000 to £45,000
Telephone number	01684 423163
Website	www.nortoncollege.org.uk
Email address	tewkesburyoffice@nortoncollege.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 to 28 November 2019

Information about this school

- Norton College Tewkesbury is situated in a former vocational training centre located on an industrial estate in Tewkesbury. The site includes the main school building, a yard, and a multi-use games area.
- The school opened in February 2019.
- The college is equipped to cater for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs, communication and interaction needs, moderate learning difficulties and/or autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils who attend this college have an education, health and care plan. Admission to the college is through a referral from the local authority where the pupils live.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision. The school does not use any unregistered alternative providers.

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.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils was considered as part of this inspection.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, the proprietor, directors, senior leaders and staff.
- Inspectors examined the school's arrangements for safeguarding by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead. They also scrutinised policies, procedures and record-keeping. Inspectors reviewed the safeguarding checks that are made on staff when they are recruited.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, personal, social, and health education and construction. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.

- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils around the school site, talked with them during lessons and met them in small groups.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour management, exclusions and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with several parents and carers. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The lead inspector took a tour of the premises to check that they were compliant with the requirements of the Independent School Standards.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the DfE to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request the inspector checked whether the school meets the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**

- Inspectors considered the school's proposal to increase the maximum number on roll from 40 to 50 pupils. Inspectors evaluated the suitability of the premises and the welfare, health and safety arrangements at the school.

Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Elizabeth Farr

Ofsted Inspector

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