

Macintyre School

Leighton Road, Wingrave, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 4PA

Inspection dates

13–15 June 2017

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal wants the very best for everyone. With the strong team, she has made valuable changes to the school. As a result, the quality of education is good and all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders develop the skills of staff effectively and share leadership responsibilities widely. This has ensured that teaching meets pupils' needs well.
- The school's approach to managing pupils' challenging behaviour is highly effective. Over time, pupils' behaviour improves significantly.
- Staff build warm relationships with pupils and develop a deep knowledge of each individual. This leads to rapid gains in pupils' personal development.
- Teaching is good. Staff across the school work together to help pupils achieve important next steps set out in their individual learning plans.
- Staff use assessment information well to provide tasks that are just at the right level for pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress across the curriculum and against their individual targets.
- Students in the sixth form achieve well in English and mathematics. They develop important skills for life and supported work.
- High expectations of pupils' behaviour ensure that they demonstrate good manners and listen to each other carefully in class.
- The proprietor has ensured that there is an effective system of governance in place to support improvements to the school.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs effectively. However, leaders have rightly started to develop it further to help accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in English.
- Leaders and board members do not yet have a sharp understanding of the sixth form's effectiveness. This means that opportunities to enhance the provision are missed occasionally.
- Staff promote pupils' communication skills well. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that this aspect of teaching can be developed further.
- Sometimes staff do not develop pupils' independence and problem-solving skills as much as they could.

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?

- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that leaders and board members have an incisive understanding of the effectiveness of the sixth form and use this to enhance the provision further
 - continuing to refine the curriculum so that it enables pupils to achieve as strongly in English as they do in mathematics.
- Raise pupils' achievement so that it is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - opportunities to increase pupils' independence and problem-solving skills are fully exploited
 - staff further their use of strategies to promote pupils' communication skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal and deputy principal want the very best for everyone in the school. Together with their caring and committed staff team, they have built on existing strengths and made important changes to the provision. One member of staff said, 'It is a phenomenal team who are all passionately keen to drive this school forward.' As a result, the quality of education is good and all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leadership is shared widely. Staff at all levels are encouraged to bring new ideas and lead improvements to teaching and learning. For example, one learning support assistant has introduced a new and effective technique to enhance interactions between staff and pupils. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection.
- In this calm and supportive school, the well-being of pupils and staff is rightly a priority. Leaders have ensured that the system to manage and decrease pupils' challenging behaviours is highly effective. The behaviour support team coordinates this work and provides practical help that is much appreciated by staff. The high expectations and careful guidance in place have secured significant improvements in pupils' challenging behaviours and has enabled them to succeed at school.
- Leaders wisely place a strong emphasis on developing the skills of staff. There is a valuable programme in place to train new staff and managers. Appraisal is used well to promote improvements to teaching and learning. Leaders at all levels provide helpful feedback to staff that develops their practice. As a result, staff are motivated and confident, and pupils benefit from good teaching. One staff member said, 'I'm doing things I never thought I could do.'
- Pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities are addressed well so that they make good progress. Staff take the time to get to know each pupil very well and start as soon as they join the school. The team of teachers, support staff and therapists work closely with families and other professionals to provide appropriate support to pupils that matches their needs. Detailed plans set out what pupils need to learn next. Staff across the school work together to help pupils take their next steps.
- Leaders make effective use of additional pupil premium funding. Pupils benefit from equipment that enables them to communicate with others. As a result, those pupils who receive this funding achieve at least as well as their classmates.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values are promoted well. Strong personal development, the school's values of kindness, helpfulness and independence, and the school's citizenship curriculum underpin this learning. Pupils learn about mutual tolerance and respect through studies of the festivals such as Diwali. They start to develop an understanding of democracy through the work of the school council. Consequently, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is effective in meeting pupils' needs. Pupils learn a broad range of subjects through topics such as 'my family' and 'on the beach'. In the sixth form, students learn important life skills alongside English and mathematics and are prepared well for the next step in their learning or life. Nevertheless, leaders rightly recognise that they can

further enhance the curriculum to accelerate pupils' rates of progress, particularly in English. Work to develop this is already underway.

- There are many opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. Visits to Cadbury World, Tring Museum and visits from a small animal workshop help to extend pupils' knowledge and social skills. Extra-curricular activities, including climbing, skiing and a residential trip to Dartmoor, further enhance pupils' abilities, enjoyment and personal development.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They use this to select and make the right changes that improve pupils' learning. However, there has been less emphasis on considering the impact of sixth-form provision. Leaders and advisory board members cannot always demonstrate the full impact of this aspect of the school and, therefore, plans to develop it are not as sharp as they could be.
- Parents are positive about the school. They recognise that the staff know their children well and have helped them to make good progress. One parent said, 'I've seen so many changes since she started here – it's great!'

Governance

- The proprietor has ensured that there is an effective system of governance in place. The local advisory board meets regularly to hold senior leaders to account. The education committee oversees this work well. Members are ambitious for the school and have relevant skills and expertise. Minutes of meetings show that board and committee members check pupils' progress information and challenge leaders appropriately.
- Board members play an active role in improving the school. They wisely draw on the advice of external advisers to identify appropriate actions with senior leaders. For example, an adviser has helped leaders to identify where the curriculum can be strengthened. Resources and expertise within the Macintyre group are used well to support improvement work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff prioritise pupils' welfare. There is a culture of vigilance because leaders ensure that staff know that they can raise any concerns, however small. Staff are thoroughly committed to ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. They recognise and value the open culture that puts pupils' needs first and share concerns appropriately as a result.
- Staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil. They receive regular training and updates that includes pertinent issues such as radicalisation. The safeguarding policy meets current requirements and is published on the school's website. This sets out clear guidance for staff.
- Leaders take the right actions to keep pupils safe. This includes challenging other professionals when necessary. Safeguarding records are detailed and updated carefully. Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching enables pupils to make good progress from their different starting points. This is because staff have a good knowledge of pupils' needs and provide appropriate support to each individual. Staff across the school know the targets set out in pupils' individual learning plans and maximise opportunities to help them to take their next steps.
- Staff have a secure understanding of pupils' abilities and check their learning often to adjust tasks to just the right level. In a key stage 5 enterprise lesson, pupils completed activities such as counting single sweets or groups of sweets to create packets to sell at the upcoming school event, 'MacFest'. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including the most able pupils, and ensure that activities are suitably challenging, particularly in mathematics. As a result, pupils, including the most able, make good progress across the curriculum. Progress in mathematics is particularly strong.
- Teachers plan suitable lessons for pupils that take into account the advice of therapists. For example, a physical education lesson for pupils required them to practise stepping over hurdles and throwing a ball. This activity wisely built in recommendations from the occupational therapist. Time is used well to help pupils make good progress in a range of areas.
- Pupils benefit from opportunities to practise what they have learned before and consolidate their skills. One pupil enjoyed making his Victoria sandwich cake with greater independence because he could recall what he had done before and read a recipe written in picture signs to remind him. With gentle prompting, he successfully noted that he needed to crack the eggs. He completed this task with great pleasure!
- Staff use a range of systems to support pupils' developing and varied communication needs. They communicate using speech, sign language and picture signs. Pupils are supported to develop their communication using an appropriate method and make good progress with this. Nevertheless, leaders rightly recognise that staff can make even greater use of these techniques and accelerate pupils' rates of progress.
- Staff build very effective, warm relationships with pupils in small class groups. These help pupils to succeed and follow the very clear expectations for their behaviour. However, on occasion staff provide pupils with solutions too readily. This reduces the opportunities for pupils to work and solve problems independently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff make pupils' personal development a priority. They take time to get to know what pupils like and do not like as well as their strengths and anxieties. This deep understanding of pupils starts before they even join the school. As a result, strong relationships prevail and staff help pupils to take the next steps that accelerate their personal development considerably.
- Pupils relish the opportunities that they have to take responsibility and be more independent. The school council is excited to be leading a project to build a new play

area. Others enjoy acting as the register and milk monitors, using their swipe cards to get to the reception desk. Over time, strong personal development increases pupils' confidence and their ability to regulate their own behaviours grows significantly. This enables them to undertake these roles with much pride.

- Staff are thoroughly committed to the pupils and keep their best interests at heart. This is particularly evident as they start to prepare for students leaving the school. The school is a strong advocate for pupils at this time. They work closely with families and challenge other professionals to help secure the most appropriate placement for students.
- Pupils say that they like school and that they are happy. Staff ensure that they understand how pupils relate to each other and support them to develop friendships. They also ensure that pupils behave safely and appropriately towards each other so that bullying is extremely rare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Most pupils join the school with very challenging behaviour. Leaders ensure that pupils have extremely effective behaviour support plans in place that staff implement successfully. The proportion of serious behavioural incidents reduces significantly for each individual as they settle into school.
- Pupils have high levels of attendance. Rates of absence are well below those of other special schools nationally. On the rare occasion that a pupil has a high rate of absence, leaders act decisively and persevere to find the right solution so that their attendance increases substantially.
- Staff rightly have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils show respect for each other, listen well and take turns during lessons. For example, in the school council meeting, pupils showed high levels of patience and were able to listen to other pupils' ideas.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join the school at different times of the school year and with severe learning difficulties and have complex needs. From their varied starting points, they make good progress across the curriculum.
- Most pupils have challenging behaviour. Over time, their behaviour improves significantly because staff take the time to get to know them well and plan and provide support that enables pupils to meet and exceed their high expectations.
- The most able pupils have the strongest rates of progress. The large majority of these pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects. This is because leaders set high expectations for these pupils and, consequently, staff set them challenging activities that extend their learning very well.
- Most pupils are making good progress against the targets that staff set in their individual learning plans. The very large majority of pupils meet their targets. Staff set pupils

appropriate goals and ensure that they receive the right amount of challenge and support across the school to achieve them.

- The school supports pupils to acquire skills for life particularly well, including ensuring that pupils are ready to learn. Pupils benefit from dedicated personal, social, health and economic education and citizenship lessons, and through day-to-day interactions with staff. In all key stages, the majority of pupils are making sustained progress in this aspect of learning.
- Pupils who benefit from pupil premium funding make similar or better progress than their classmates. Leaders make good use of this extra help.
- Pupils' achievement is slightly stronger in mathematics than it is in English. Leaders have correctly identified that the current curriculum is not enabling pupils to demonstrate as well their progress in communication and writing.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Students in the sixth form make good progress from their different starting points. They achieve well in English and mathematics, make good progress against their personal targets, and develop important skills for life and supported work. Consequently, they are well prepared for their next steps into supported training, living and ongoing education.
- Students' behaviour is excellent. High levels of personal support and very clear expectations for all pupils are consistent throughout the school.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form. The leader knows what to do to keep students safe and ensures that there are opportunities for students to learn how to start to keep themselves safe in a range of environments. For example, staff help pupils to plan and undertake journeys on the bus safely.
- The curriculum is appropriate and fit for purpose. Students have the opportunity to develop work-related skills and prepare for their future lives. At the same time, there are opportunities for students to continue to develop essential communication, reading and mathematics skills. However, leaders know that they can make further improvements to the curriculum so that it provides more flexible pathways that are tailored to students' different abilities.
- The post-16 leader knows each student well and is committed to developing provision that meets their needs as well as possible. Nevertheless, leaders know that they can sharpen their understanding of the provision's effectiveness and use this to refine the sixth form further.

School details

Unique reference number	110564
DfE registration number	825/6011
Inspection number	10025975

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 special school
Age range of pupils	10 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	17
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Macintyre
Chair	Sumerjit Ram
Headteacher	Fiona Veitch
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000
Telephone number	01296 681274
Website	www.macintyrecharity.org
Email address	wingrave@macintyrecharity.org
Date of previous inspection	17 March 2015

Information about this school

- Macintyre School is an independent special school for up to 45 pupils aged between 10 and 19 years of age.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans and have severe learning difficulties. Many have been diagnosed with autistic spectrum conditions. Many have challenging behaviours and/or communication difficulties and require a high level of support.

- The large majority of pupils are children who are looked after. The school receives pupil premium funding for approximately one third of the pupils.
- The previous inspection of the school took place in March 2015. At that time, the school was judged to require improvement.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The aim of the school is 'to achieve excellence in everything we do'.
- The school is part of the Macintyre charity, which provides education and care for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities, complex needs and autism.
- There is a local advisory board in place. The director of education for the Macintyre charity is currently the interim chair of the board. The board reports to the education committee of the trustees of Macintyre.
- The principal joined the school in January 2015 and took over the leadership of the school in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons in all classes, most jointly with the deputy principal. Pupils' work was also scrutinised.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and support staff. A meeting was held with the executive headteacher and two members of the local advisory board, including the interim chair. The inspector spoke on the telephone with a special educational needs placement officer from a local authority.
- There were five responses, and two written comments, to Ofsted's online, Parent View, survey. The inspector met two parents. The 31 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspector examined a wide range of documents. These included the school's improvement planning, information about the curriculum, safeguarding documents, records of behavioural incidents, individual learning plans and pupils' achievement information.

Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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