

# Inspection of The Loddon School

Wildmoor Lane, Sherfield-on-Loddon, Hook, Hampshire RG27 0JD

---

Inspection dates: 29 April to 1 May 2025

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

---

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils flourish here because of the school's culture which places positive relationships at its heart. Parents and carers praise how the school helps their children feel safe and happy. Indeed, the joyful interactions between staff and pupils are testament to the mutual trust and respect which are developed over time.

Pupils' behaviour and motivation are typically exemplary. Indeed, some make incredibly rapid improvements in these areas. Staff thoughtfully support pupils to develop their resilience and independence over their time at the school. Staff skilfully address pupils' communication challenges, so that they learn to express their wishes and feelings, and their individual personalities come to the fore.

The school is unwaveringly ambitious for all pupils. It carefully adapts the curriculum for each pupil and ensures that all staff understand precisely the strategies which support each individual's learning. This empowers staff to make the most of every moment to support learning. For example, pupils practise counting when feeding the goats and horses, activities in the forest area reinforce vocabulary from reading books and pupils rehearse communication skills in the shop and 'café'. Many pupils have found their previous school settings extremely challenging. However, once settled here, they make striking progress and are very well-prepared for the future.

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

Communication, numeracy, understanding the world and preparation for adulthood are pillars of the school's thoughtfully designed curriculum. Staff carefully sequence knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. Overarching themes ensure that learning and activities are connected. For example, the current theme of 'fantasy and adventure' was evident in the reading books, the arts activities and outdoor learning. Each pupil has learning goals which are both appropriate and ambitious. They ensure effective progression over time. In the sixth form, there is a sharp focus on developing independence. Students transfer skills they have learned in school to activities in the community, such as trips or volunteering.

Staff understand pupils and their special educational needs and/or disabilities extremely well. The school identifies pupils' learning gaps accurately and reviews this information regularly. Staff receive high-quality training and use their networks with similar schools to support their work. This ensures that they implement the precise plans in place to meet pupils' academic and pastoral needs highly effectively.

Staff skilfully introduce new learning and use interactions throughout the day to reinforce this. Their modelling of key language and numeracy is excellent. For example, cooking or sorting the recycling become learning opportunities. Staff check pupils' understanding constantly and adjust or repeat approaches as required. Supporting pupils to attend and persevere with learning is a priority. Where their motivation wavers, staff alter the activity or timing. 'Opting out' is not an option for

pupils. In this way, their engagement is high, and they make strong progress. Pupils leave the school with the knowledge and independence they need for their futures.

Reading is often a huge challenge for pupils. However, staff are trained to use a range of approaches to help pupils to recognise and use sounds and words. This includes phonics. Books have pride of place throughout the school and staff nurture a love of stories and rhyme. Some pupils read books and magazines independently, and pupils generally enjoy being read to by staff. This exposes pupils to a range of vocabulary and cultural references, including Shakespeare.

The school's personal development and preparation for adulthood programmes are exemplary. Pupils learn about right and wrong. They are taught about consent and given strategies to 'say no' or ask for help from trusted adults. They learn about different cultures through carefully chosen stories and celebrations. Staff support pupils to nurture their personal religious and cultural heritage. Pupils practise social and employability skills in school, through helping around the site, interacting with visitors and managing their personal spaces. As they gain confidence, there are a range of opportunities to put these skills into practice outside school, through participating in community events. Older pupils have increasingly age-appropriate activities. They go to restaurants and have short off-site residential. Some do supported work experience.

The school's help for pupils' well-being is exceptional, supported by highly effective therapeutic approaches. Staff work patiently and calmly with pupils to pre-empt or de-escalate any issues very effectively. Where necessary, the school manages more significant incidents impressively, with a minimum of intervention, so that calm returns quickly. The school is committed to nurturing links with families. The school supports parents with advice and resources so they can continue some of the strategies from school. There are also community events, such as the family picnic. These activities contribute to helping pupils grow in confidence and learn to express their sense of self. They are highly valued by pupils and parents alike.

The school understand the demands of working in this context. It is extremely mindful of staff well-being. Staff and trustees receive regular training on all aspects of their work, not least safeguarding. It is clear that staff value their time spent with the pupils, and in turn feel valued themselves. Staff enjoy working at the school. They are proud of what they do.

The proprietary body has robust oversight of the school. It has supported staff to navigate recent changes in senior leadership and major building works smoothly. It ensures that staff have the required expertise to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently. This includes the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Relevant and appropriate policies are published on the school's website. They are implemented effectively. The school and therapeutic areas are very well maintained. The grounds provide varied social spaces and outdoor fitness equipment. There is also a very well-maintained swimming pool.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116589
<b>DfE registration number</b>	850/6005
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10374993
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	30
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	13
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Loddon Foundation
<b>Chair</b>	Graham Day
<b>CEO of the proprietorial body</b>	Richard Kennett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanna Emerson
<b>Annual fees</b>	£287,045 - £343,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 884600
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.loddonschool.org">www.loddonschool.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@loddonschool.co.uk">info@loddonschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 to 3 November 2022

## Information about this school

- The Loddon School is an independent school which also provides residential provision. The inspectors only inspected the education provision at this school.
- The school is registered to accept 30 pupils between the ages of 8 and 19. There are currently 30 pupils on roll aged between 11 and 20 years.
- The school is operating above the registered age range. The Department for Education was informed during the inspection.
- All pupils are referred to the school by their local authority and have an education, health and care plan. All pupils have severe communication difficulties.
- The school provides a range of therapies, including occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and music therapy.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's last standard inspection was in November 2022.

## 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the chief executive officer and other leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with two representatives of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and communication, mathematics, outdoor learning and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions with subject leaders and staff, visited a sample of learning sessions and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during visits to learning sessions, during social time and as pupils moved around 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.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- There were very few responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. The lead inspector spoke to a sample of parents by telephone.
- There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire, but inspectors spoke to a sample of pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors toured the school site to gather evidence about compliance with the standards. Inspectors also reviewed a range of other documents and policies, including on the school's website.

### **Inspection team**

Mary Davies, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gary Regan

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2025