

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Eresby School, Spilsby

Eresby Avenue, Spilsby, Lincolnshire PE23 5HU

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 June 2025

Outcome

The Eresby School, Spilsby has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Claire Hutchinson. The school is part of The David Ross Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stuart Burns, and overseen by a board of trustees chaired by David Ross.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school provides a highly supportive and inclusive learning environment, fostering an atmosphere where all pupils can thrive. From the moment they join, pupils are valued as individuals, with their voices actively heard and respected. Staff provide patient and caring support. As a result, pupils delight in coming to this school. They feel safe and happy.

Across all age groups, the school maintains high expectations, ensuring that every pupil can reach their full potential. Staff possess a profound understanding of pupils' unique and complex needs. This expertise, combined with an aspirational curriculum, ensures pupils, all of whom have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), are very well prepared for the next stage in their life.

Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to nurturing pupils' communication and social interaction skills. The school's consistent and highly effective approach ensures that over time pupils learn to manage their own emotions well.

The school's key priorities, communication, preparation for next steps and independence, shine through all this school does. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to nurture their talents and interests, such as taking part in the Special Olympics, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award

and choir. They also enjoy bespoke experiences in the community, such as barista training. These opportunities develop pupils' confidence and communication.

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

The school offers a thoughtfully designed curriculum that is both ambitious and flexible, tailored to meet the diverse needs of its pupils. Young children entering the early years programme follow a curriculum that allows staff to assess their abilities and development, ensuring they receive the best possible 'pathway' as they transition into the primary phase. The three pathways in school, the pre-formal, semi-formal and formal, alongside bespoke therapeutic support and interventions ensure that pupils are provided with a highly personalised learning experience as they complete their journey through the school. As a result, typically pupils successfully achieve their personal goals.

Staff carefully consider the information in pupils' EHC plans. They ensure that the correct provision is in place to meet pupils' learning, social and emotional needs. The school's curriculum pathway model ensures that, in most cases, staff act quickly when pupils do not understand or need additional help. However, occasionally, staff do not adapt teaching as effectively as they could so that pupils understand the intended learning. This means that, occasionally, some pupils are less well prepared for the next steps of their learning than they could be.

Communication is central to everything the school does. Young children learn to express their needs and communicate their choices. Staff are expert at finding ways to encourage nonverbal pupils to sustain their attention and positively engage with what is going on around them. Older pupils are supported to communicate confidently through use of communication devices and assistive technology. As a result, pupils' interaction and communication skills improve significantly over time.

The curriculum fosters a love of reading through engaging stories, sound recognition, rhymes and songs. Staff use multi-sensory adaptations to bring stories to life and to make them accessible for all pupils. Pupils who are ready to learn phonics are expertly taught to develop early reading skills. As pupils progress, they develop fluency and build vocabulary, aiding their attainment of entry-level accreditations in the sixth form. Learning is extended beyond the classroom, with real-world applications such as recognising signs and symbols in the supermarket.

The school ensures that pupils attend as regularly as possible. Staff take sensitive, effective action to ensure that pupils' attendance, where it needs to, improves over time.

The school supports pupils' personal development exceptionally well. Pupils learn to use public transport, access local leisure facilities and cook as part of developing their independence. Sixth-form students engage in enterprise education, creating and selling arts and crafts at local markets. These activities support the development of students' confidence, independence and communication skills well. Students reinvest their earnings into these projects, including purchasing a 3D printer to diversify the range of products

they create. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions and understand that equality and diversity are important aspects of the community they live in.

Careers fairs, work experience and supported visits to local colleges provide valuable guidance for pupils, sixth-form students, and their parents and carers. This helps all involved to develop a clear understanding of their next steps after leaving school. The sixth-form curriculum is tailored to support students in their transition to adulthood. Through personalised learning pathways, students develop essential skills and insights into life, employment and relationships, equipping them for their future aspirations. Students have opportunities to apply this learning in real contexts, For instance through supported internships, work experience and running the school tuck shop trolley and as play leaders helping younger pupils.

The school is not complacent. It continuously seeks ways to make further improvements to the education and care that it provides for pupils. This self-reflection and the subsequent actions have ensured the continuing success of the school. The trust, governors and senior leaders have ensured that changes implemented since the last inspection have been pupil-focused and sustainable. They are deeply committed to ensuring the highest standards for pupils. The staff take great pride in being part of the school community. They appreciate the strong support provided for their well-being, workload and professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not consistently adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs. This means that on occasion, some pupils are less well prepared for the next steps of their learning than they could be. The school should ensure that staff adapt teaching effectively so that pupils' learning needs are well supported.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded

inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the third ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, The Eresby School, to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in January 2013.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139625
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10379581
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Ross
CEO of the trust	Stuart Burns
Principal	Claire Hutchinson
Website	www.eresbyspecialschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. Pupils have a range of complex SEND. These include autism, severe learning difficulty, and profound and multiple learning difficulty. Some pupils have additional sensory and/or communication needs. Some pupils have specific medical needs and others may need support for their social, emotional and mental health.
- The principal took up her role in September 2022. Additionally, two new senior leaders joined the school's leadership team in September 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with trust leaders, the principal and other school leaders, as well as teachers and support staff. The lead inspector met with members of the academy scrutiny committee, including the chair of the academy scrutiny committee.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including documents relating to school improvement.
- Inspectors held meetings and informal discussions with various groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors also observed pupils arriving at school in the morning and spoke to some parents about their views of the school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses.

Inspection team

Anne Maingay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nyree Parker

His Majesty's 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 2025