

Inspection of Hove Micro-School

221 Manor Hall Road, Southwick BN42 4NR

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 September 2025

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are understood and lovingly nurtured in this 'small school with big ideas'. For pupils who have often avoided school in the past, this is a safe place to learn. The school's homely setting readily supports its comfortable family feel. The atmosphere is busy but calm, punctuated with the sounds of enjoyment and laughter.

The school has high expectations. Because pupils are confident that the demands on them are achievable, they trust and flourish. Pupils develop the confidence to be themselves. They show considerable kindness and understanding to each other.

The varied morning clubs get the day off to a positive start. Staff sensitively prepare pupils for transitions between activities and any changes to routines. Together, pupils and staff enjoy the daily 'mindfulness walk' to the local allotment. Always attentive and caring, staff make sure that pupils' personal and sensory needs are well met. Extra support is always on hand if pupils need it, including from Frank, the school dog.

Staff pay close attention to any gaps pupils have in their previous learning. Pupils work hard and achieve well. The school balances its planned curriculum with pupils' likes and interests to make learning motivating and fun.

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

For many pupils who attend, just being in school is a transformative step. Most pupils' previous experiences of school have been negative. This school specialises in creating the conditions that help pupils feel safe and learn.

Pupils achieve well. For example, in mathematics, they apply their skills in new contexts. Most have positive attitudes to reading. Some read aloud with fluency and expression. Others prefer to immerse themselves in their own books. For those still learning to read, the school's systematic phonics teaching is creative, individualised and effective. Reading support for older pupils is similarly tailored to their needs.

To achieve this academic progress, the school creates a climate, where pupils thrive personally, socially and emotionally. The carefully designed learning environment and skilled staff support pupils to be ready to learn. The school helps pupils to identify, understand and manage their own feelings. Staff carefully nurture in pupils the resilience to cope with the demands of school.

Pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are carefully identified and very well met. The school successfully embeds what is set out in education, health and care (EHC) plans into pupils' routines. Close partnerships with external SEND specialists help provide direct support for pupils and develop staff expertise.

Teaching and support staff are knowledgeable and highly skilled. They are adept at tailoring their input to pupils' individual needs. Staff explain and demonstrate

important learning points clearly, checking to confirm whether pupils understand. They are alert to any gaps in pupils' knowledge and make sure that these are suitably filled.

The school cultivates an industrious but relaxed and unthreatening atmosphere. Staff know pupils incredibly well. They skilfully use this knowledge to anticipate and resolve any issues. Staff deftly turn routine moments into invaluable learning points. Pupils who are more reluctant to follow adult-led activities are expertly supported. They make notable progress from their individual starting points.

Supporting pupils to come to school every day is at the heart of the school's mission. The school forms close partnerships with families to help build pupils' trust and confidence. The resulting improvements in attendance are sometimes transformational.

Beyond the academic curriculum, the school's rich offer delights and enthuses pupils. From the musical theatre club and recent trip to see 'Wicked' in London, to running their own summer fair, pupils broaden their experiences and discover new interests. Pupils learn what it means to be a good citizen and play a central role in creating the school's special atmosphere. Pupils have many opportunities to consider aspirations and possible career pathways.

The school is ambitious for pupils' likely next steps. It keeps a long-term focus on preparing them for these and life beyond. The emphasis on English, mathematics and learning that supports pupils' social, emotional and mental health provides firm foundations for this success. The precisely sequenced curriculum here, and careful checks of pupils' progress, ensure that any gaps in knowledge are addressed ready for the next key stage.

In other subjects, the school balances its aspiration that pupils should access the full curriculum with the need to sustain pupils' enthusiasm throughout the day. Mindful of their needs and prior experiences, this includes tapping into pupils' interests and giving them some choice. Within this approach, the school takes account of the national curriculum to identify what pupils should know and be able to do by the end of each key stage. However, in some subjects, the school has not identified precisely enough what pupils need to learn along the way to get there.

The proprietor is knowledgeable about the independent school standards and the associated requirements. The school has an effective range of systems and checks to ensure that these are all met. This includes compliance with paragraphs 3 and 4 of schedule 10 of the 2010 Equality Act. Staff are universally positive and proud about working in the school. The school supports them well to continue developing their expertise.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum is not precise enough about what pupils should learn to reach the identified end points. Without this clarity, key points are not taught, learned and built on over time as well they could be. The school should make sure that the curriculum in all subjects identifies specifically what pupils should learn and retain, giving pupils the best possible chance of developing detailed knowledge and skills across subjects.

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	150990
DfE registration number	938/6021
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10375017
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	7 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Proprietor	Hove Micro-School Ltd
Chair	Rachael Ammari
Headteacher	Rachael Ammari
Annual fees (day pupils)	£21,240 - £43,280
Telephone number	01273 459 022
Website	www.hovemicro-school.com
Email address	info@hovemicro-school.com

Information about this school

- Hove Micro-School is situated in a former residential property at 221 Manor Hall Road, Southwick BN42 4NR. It was registered by the Department for Education on 11 July 2024. This was the school's first standard inspection.
- The school specialises in providing education for pupils with SEND who exhibit emotional-based school avoidance, pathological demand avoidance or have a diagnosis of autism. Most pupils have an EHC plan and are placed by a local authority.
- The headteacher is also the sole director of the proprietor body, Hove Micro-School LTD.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, who is also the proprietor, the special educational needs coordinator, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector spoke with the school's externally commissioned school improvement partner by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics 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 explored some of the topic-based learning that incorporates a range of other subjects.
- 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.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents and records relating to the independent school standards. They also checked arrangements for the health, safety and well-being of pupils and staff.

- The inspection team took account of the views expressed by staff and parents using Ofsted Parent View and the online inspection survey.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tash Hurtado

His Majesty's Inspector

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