

## School inspection report

9 to 11 June 2026

### **Options Trent Acres School**

Alrewas Road  
Kings Bromley  
Burton upon Trent  
DE13 7HR

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. The school group and local governing committee provide careful oversight of the school. They receive detailed reports and regularly visit the school to consider the views of staff and pupils. They successfully support and challenge school leaders and ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to meet the Standards consistently.
2. Leaders have developed a curriculum that provides pupils with a broad range of experiences and supports their academic development. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to choose from a wide range of qualifications to recognise and reward their progress.
3. Teachers understand pupils' needs well. They adapt their teaching to each individual in the class, and pupils make good progress. Teachers use detailed assessment to identify gaps in pupils' learning and provide additional support in response.
4. Leaders have a deep understanding of pupils' needs and recognise that they have had previously negative experiences of education. They use regular and effective staff training to ensure that staff know how to respond to pupils' needs. Close communication between staff across the site, including clinical and educational staff, ensures that they understand each individual pupil's situation. Staff use this knowledge to promote positive interactions with pupils and avoid negative interactions. By having this detailed knowledge of pupils and having the skills to support them, staff form positive relationships with pupils. Pupils rapidly develop higher levels of self-esteem and self-worth, which improves their academic and social self-confidence. Pupils attend school more regularly than previously, interact more positively and achieve better outcomes. This is a significant strength of the school.
5. Leaders take a systematic and robust approach to recording and monitoring pupils' attendance at the school. Where a pupil's attendance falls below expectations, they respond promptly with a variety of robust approaches to support the pupil to attend school. At the time of the inspection the attendance policy on the school website was out of date. This was rectified during the inspection.
6. Opportunities for physical education (PE) are integrated into the curriculum. Pupils develop their dexterity and balance in outdoor learning and participate in a variety of sports in PE lessons. However, the PE curriculum is not as consistently effective as it might be in developing pupils' physical skills and fitness.
7. Staff prepare pupils well for life beyond school. They provide a range of experiences so that pupils are prepared for the different education and employment environments they may encounter when they leave school. Leaders integrate careers education throughout the curriculum so that pupils understand the options available to them and have the skills necessary to pursue these opportunities.
8. Leaders promote a robust safeguarding culture throughout the school. Staff understand their roles well and respond promptly to any safeguarding concerns. Leaders ensure that staff undergo the required pre-employment checks prior to beginning work at the school. At the start of the inspection the dates of a few of these checks were not recorded on the single central record (SCR). This was rectified during the inspection.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen the programme for physical education so that it more effectively engages pupils and develops their fitness and physical skills
- ensure that the latest version of the attendance policy is consistently displayed on the school's website
- ensure that the single central record consistently records the dates of completion of any overseas records checks.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. A multi-layered system of governance within the school group provides comprehensive oversight of the school. School leaders provide regular reports to the local governing committee, which challenges them on their decisions and the school's outcomes. The regional director works closely with school leaders and visits the school regularly to speak to pupils and staff. The school group also provides national oversight of specific areas such as educational performance and safeguarding. This system of governance ensures that leaders have the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the Standards consistently.
10. School and group leaders share an aspirational vision for the school. They have a high level of understanding of the complex needs of the pupils and use this to make decisions that actively promote pupils' wellbeing. They emphasise creating an environment that integrates a wide range of support for pupils. They maintain close links between clinical and educational staff to ensure that teaching is closely matched to the benchmarks in pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plans). Leaders use information from both clinical and education teams to provide comprehensive staff training so that staff know how to respond to pupils, challenge them appropriately and avoid any negative experiences that may undermine pupils' progress. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
11. Leaders are committed to self-evaluation and conduct regular reviews of a wide variety of records and performance outcomes. They set highly ambitious standards for the school and regularly introduce new activities in response to pupils' needs. Leaders take the views of pupils and parents into account during self-evaluation. The school council provides regular feedback to leaders. Leaders respond thoughtfully and proactively, for instance, by introducing additional enrichment sessions on Fridays to provide pupils with a greater variety of activities.
12. Leaders take a systematic approach to risk management and carefully consider the additional risks that may apply to pupils due to their additional needs. Staff work together across different areas of the school to identify risks and ways to manage them effectively. Risk assessments typically take the needs of individual pupils into account and provide specific strategies, including high levels of supervision. Leaders are alert to the risks pupils may face outside school, including online, and work with parents and carers to educate pupils in how to manage these risks.
13. Leaders maintain a comprehensive suite of policies which staff implement consistently. Leaders provide staff with an extensive induction prior to working at the school and then regular ongoing training so that staff understand their roles and support pupils effectively. Leaders are aware of recent and upcoming changes to legislation and guidance. They respond to new guidance promptly and effectively.
14. Leaders maintain detailed records and share this information proactively and appropriately to support pupils. Leaders provide parents with useful information via the school website and information on their child's progress in regular reports and parents' evenings. Leaders share appropriate information with the local authority and collaborate closely with them to arrange pupils' placements and account for the spending of council funds. Leaders and clinical staff play a full role in reviews of pupils' EHC plans.

15. Leaders provide a clear complaints policy for parents to raise any concerns about the school. They respond promptly to any concerns and take appropriate action where necessary. They maintain detailed records of complaints and review these regularly to identify any trends or patterns.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance**

- 16. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Leaders provide a broad and ambitious curriculum which challenges pupils and allows them to choose from a range of options to meet their needs and interests. The curriculum includes a wide range of qualifications, including functional skills, GCSE, BTEC and City & Guilds courses. Pupils take a bespoke pathway through these qualifications and other, non-assessed, courses. Staff use their knowledge of each pupil's progress to enter them for qualifications at an appropriate time so that their progress is recognised and they can experience success.
18. Leaders and staff understand that many pupils have gaps in their learning. In Year 1, teachers integrate many aspects of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework and pupils, at the start of their schooling, successfully develop their understanding of fundamental skills. Throughout the school, the curriculum enables pupils to revisit topics regularly and reinforces fundamental ideas. Staff make effective use of a range of assessment techniques to identify gaps in pupils' understanding and provide extra support to pupils. Pupils make good progress throughout the curriculum.
19. Teachers use a range of effective techniques to develop pupils' linguistic skills. Teachers use subtle questioning to develop the engagement of pupils who may struggle to vocalise their ideas. They move smoothly between closed and open questioning to help pupils develop their confidence in articulating their ideas. Teachers throughout the school are ambitious for pupils to develop their vocabulary, for instance when younger pupils discuss boisterous and timid behaviour in English lessons or the difference between translucency and transparency in science lessons.
20. Teachers use careful explanations and repeated checks of pupils' understanding to develop their numerical skills across their subjects. Teachers of mathematics carry out specific assessments to measure each pupil's understanding across topics and use the results to provide targeted support. Pupils can apply their mathematical skills across subjects in practical ways, for instance when converting an hourly pay rate into monthly pay.
21. Pupils successfully develop their practical and theoretical understanding of science and the natural world. In science lessons, teachers use effective demonstrations to help pupils understand about abstract topics, such as the way light travels through materials. In animal care, pupils learn practical ways in which to promote the welfare of the wide range of animals at the school. Teachers have the flexibility to adapt the curriculum to help pupils pursue their own interests, for instance in vehicle mechanics or planning the planting of a flowerbed.
22. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their artistic and creative skills. In art lessons, pupils develop a range of technical skills and produce highly expressive artwork and sketchbooks. Pupils learn about the interaction between technology and creativity in music technology sessions.
23. A range of educational and clinical specialists ensure that the school meets the needs of the pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that there are high levels of effective communication and collaboration between staff, including the therapeutic and clinical team, when considering barriers to each pupil's progress and how these can be overcome. Teaching assistants provide close support for pupils in lessons, helping them to access the curriculum and supporting them should they become overwhelmed.

24. Leaders make effective use of a structured system for assessing pupils' progress. This information informs individual targets, which are linked to pupils' EHC plans. Teachers understand these targets and the level that pupils are working at. They use this to adapt the level of support provided for each individual to aid their learning.
25. Leaders provide a range of lunchtime activities which support the development of pupils' wider knowledge and skills. They play board games, learning to work together and communicate when making strategic decisions. Pupils are free to explore their artistic skills in the art room and use different media to develop these skills.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

- 26. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

27. Leaders and staff have a deep awareness of pupils' prior experiences of education, which are often fragmentary and negative. They prioritise creating an environment in which interactions between pupils and staff are positive and promote pupils' self-esteem. Leaders provide staff with regular training and share information about pupils' individual circumstances so that staff can encourage and support pupils. Staff have a deep understanding of pupils' needs. Around the school and in lessons they engage pupils in positive discussions and encourage them so that they feel valued. This approach is highly effective in developing pupils' self-esteem, which has further positive impacts on their attendance, behaviour and academic outcomes.
28. Leaders provide a PE programme for pupils throughout the school. In outdoor education sessions, younger pupils develop their motor skills as they climb over play equipment and throw paper aeroplanes. Pupils participate in a variety of sports in PE lessons and develop their co-ordination playing football and their fitness when riding bikes. However, the PE curriculum is not consistently well structured and the activities chosen are not always fully effective in engaging pupils to participate and develop their skills.
29. Leaders implement a carefully planned approach to managing attendance. They maintain careful records of pupils' attendance and analyse these over a variety of time periods in order to identify any pupils who are at risk of increased absence. They are proactive in using a wide variety of approaches to support pupils in attending school, including regular home visits and working closely with the local authority to support pupils. Leaders emphasise building trust between home and school so that pupils are confident about returning to school. At the start of the inspection the attendance policy on the school website did not reflect current practice within the school. This was remedied during the inspection.
30. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and implement these expectations consistently. Throughout the day, staff closely supervise pupils. Staff model calm interactions with pupils and respond swiftly to any negative behaviour. They help pupils understand why their behaviour was wrong, for instance if pupils inadvertently use discriminatory language. Staff intervene appropriately when pupils become dysregulated, including making appropriate use of restrictive interventions as a last resort. Leaders maintain careful logs of behaviour and analyse these to identify any trends or patterns.
31. Staff consistently implement the school's anti-bullying policy. Pupils understand how they are expected to behave towards one another and know how to report any concerns they may have to staff. Teachers help pupils understand what bullying is, including how to relate to each other online. Staff respond to any instances of bullying promptly and appropriately.
32. Leaders have devised a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) which is sensitively adapted to meet pupils' needs. This programme is informed by current issues within the school and wider society, such as the recent hot weather, which has led to the addition of sessions on water safety. Teachers of PSHE know the subject well and use this knowledge to respond flexibly to pupils' interests. Teachers help pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy, for instance by discussing the links between sleep and mental health.

33. The PSHE curriculum includes aspects of relationships and sex education (RSE). Pupils learn about healthy relationships, including sexual relationships, and consent. This curriculum is designed to revisit topics that pupils may have missed in previous schooling so that they do not have gaps in their understanding of these issues. Where necessary, teachers provide additional one-to-one or group support to pupils in response to concerns raised by members of staff.
34. Staff responsible for health and safety take a systematic approach to maintaining the school site. They undertake regular checks of the site and keep accurate records of these checks. Staff make regular use of external experts to carry out specialist checks and respond to any recommendations in a timely manner. Regular evacuation practices ensure that pupils know what to do in an emergency.
35. Several medical rooms around the site provide appropriate facilities to care for any pupils who are injured or who become unwell. Leaders maintain records of any accidents and analyse these for any patterns. Staff ensure that pupils' medication is securely stored, and there are robust systems in place for administering this medication. Leaders ensure that there are an appropriate number of staff with first aid training available, including paediatric first aid training for those working with younger pupils.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 36. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

37. Leaders integrate careers education and preparation for life beyond school through the curriculum. Younger pupils explore a range of careers through role play. Pupils in the secondary school have a dedicated weekly careers session alongside regular discussions about careers in other subjects. Teachers help pupils understand different roles and help them develop the skills to identify and apply for jobs. Staff with specialist knowledge provide older pupils with one-to-one advice sessions to help them explore different options and identify those that align with their interests and skills. Leaders maintain close links with local employers so that pupils can gain work experience in a variety of roles. They provide additional supported work experience on the school site for those who can benefit from it.
38. Leaders take a strategic approach to preparing pupils for life beyond school. The vocational education site provides a college-like environment and allows pupils to experience greater independence at the same time as being able to learn on the main school site when necessary. The 'independent living' course helps pupils develop the skills to live and work in the world beyond school, for instance, by planning travel between locations. Consequently, pupils develop greater self-confidence and self-assurance.
39. Economic education is integrated into the curriculum. In PSHE lessons, pupils learn about financial goals, income and taxation. Pupils learn practical skills in independent living classes, such as budgeting for and purchasing a new school fish. Pupils learn to compare prices of different products and how to make wise financial choices. Teachers provide pupils with clear instruction on financial risks, for example, the risks of online gambling.
40. Pupils understand their responsibility towards others and regularly engage in charitable activities. Pupils take part in summer and winter fairs where they plan and budget for their own stalls to raise money for charity. Pupils create items to sell, such as crocheted items, or provide services which link to their studies, such as hair foiling. Pupils take part in fundraising events such as a pyjama day to raise money for a national children's charity. Pupils learn to think of others and identify ways to contribute to the community.
41. The school values are based on fundamental British values, and these are integrated into pupils' everyday life. Pupils learn that everyone should be listened to and see this in action in the school council. Visiting speakers from the police help pupils understand the rule of law and the distinction between moral and legal behaviours. Teachers make this relevant to pupils by creating case studies for pupils to discuss and helping them to see how these concepts work in practice.
42. Staff provide pupils with opportunities to understand moral responsibility and explore the links between morality, the law and religious teaching. Pupils learn about the harm caused by discrimination against different groups and learn about practical ways in which they can act in an inclusive manner. Pupils discuss these issues sensitively and with an awareness of others.
43. The curriculum integrates opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and beliefs. In religious studies lessons, pupils learn about the beliefs of different religions and pupils mark different religious festivals such as Holi. Teachers encourage pupils to respect those of different backgrounds by developing their understanding of different cultures. Leaders seek out opportunities

to embed understanding and respect throughout the curriculum, for instance, by including texts from diverse authors in English or looking at the history of society's views on sexual orientation.

44. Leaders ensure that pupils understand about the services and institutions of modern Britain. A range of professionals visit the school, including those from the local nursing team and the fire service. Pupils learn how to seek help and support beyond the school, for instance, how to access support during pregnancy.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society**

- 45. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

46. Leaders place safeguarding pupils at the heart of school life. They understand their roles well and provide robust safeguarding processes and procedures within the school. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding undergo regular training to develop their knowledge and skills to a high level. They provide staff with regular and effective training to ensure that they are alert to safeguarding needs and understand the risks and vulnerabilities of pupils.
47. Leaders maintain clear and well-planned reporting systems which staff use appropriately, including to record any concerns about other adults. Leaders maintain detailed records of any safeguarding incidents which occur and work closely together to determine the best action to support pupils. Leaders review these records regularly to identify any trends and respond proactively, for example, by adapting the PSHE curriculum or providing targeted education to pupils.
48. When safeguarding concerns are raised, leaders respond promptly and effectively. They have a good understanding of individual pupils' needs and use this to put in place appropriate support for pupils. Where necessary, leaders work closely with local safeguarding partners, such as family support workers and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), to provide additional support to pupils.
49. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils learn about the risks of social media, such as being contacted by strangers online. Leaders provide pupils with access to the internet in school through school devices and make use of an effective internet filtering and monitoring system. Leaders respond promptly to support pupils when the system flags any attempt to access inappropriate or harmful content.
50. Leaders ensure that staff undergo appropriate pre-employment checks before they begin working at the school. They carry out these checks thoroughly and record them systematically in staff files. Leaders maintain an accurate SCR of pre-employment checks. At the start of the inspection, the dates of completion of the overseas records checks for a small number of members of staff were not included. This was rectified on inspection.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

51. All the relevant Standards are met.

## School details

|                                        |                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>School</b>                          | Options Trent Acres School                                                                                    |
| <b>Department for Education number</b> | 860/6029                                                                                                      |
| <b>Address</b>                         | Options Trent Acres School<br>Alrewas Road<br>Kings Bromley<br>Burton upon Trent<br>Staffordshire<br>DE13 7HR |
| <b>Phone number</b>                    | 01543 473772                                                                                                  |
| <b>Email address</b>                   | trentacresschoolenquiries@ofgl.co.uk                                                                          |
| <b>Website</b>                         | <a href="http://www.trentacres.co.uk">www.trentacres.co.uk</a>                                                |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                      | P Bloom Ltd                                                                                                   |
| <b>Chair</b>                           | Mr Richard Power                                                                                              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                     | Mr Phil Petch                                                                                                 |
| <b>Age range</b>                       | 5 to 19                                                                                                       |
| <b>Number of pupils</b>                | 136                                                                                                           |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>     | 24 to 26 January 2023                                                                                         |

## Information about the school

52. Options Trent Acres School is an independent special school located across two sites in Staffordshire. The main school site is located in Kings Bromley and caters for all ages of pupils. A second site, situated in Cannock, offers vocational and applied courses and is predominantly used by post-16 pupils. The school is overseen by the Options Autism group and supported by a local governing committee. The school was previously inspected by Ofsted. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher was appointed in January 2026.
53. The school caters for pupils who have complex needs, including Autism-related conditions, trauma, attachment and anxiety. All pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
54. There are currently no children of reception age in the school.
55. The school has identified no pupils as having English as an additional language.
56. The school states its aims are for all pupils to experience a sense of belonging and being valued. The school recognises that almost all pupils have experienced negative and fragmented educational experiences that impact on their ability to forge and maintain positive trusting relationships. Fundamental British values inform the school's core values, which include that everyone should be listened to, everyone should be kept safe and make the right choices, everyone should be proud of who they are, should value each other and their surroundings, and be patient and kind to all.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

9 to 11 June 2026

57. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

58. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

59. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)