

Inspection of Active Support Education Centre

Unit 1 Britannia Estates, Leagrave Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 1RJ

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 June 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Outstanding
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

For many pupils, this is their first positive experience of school. Prior to being placed here, most have been permanently excluded from their previous school or are at risk of this. Some have struggled previously to attend school and have been disaffected by education.

Staff are highly committed to turning around these pupils' lives. As a result, pupils' life chances here are significantly improved. Pupils gain qualifications, including GCSEs, and a range of vocational experiences which did not seem possible on arrival. Pupils leave here with either a place back at mainstream school, or in college, work or training. Pupils successfully meet their 'placement targets', especially for their personal development.

Pupils are expertly helped to develop their talents, which improves their self-esteem. Pupils' physical and mental well-being is supported through access to a very well-resourced school gymnasium. Pupils are offered coaching in rugby, boxing and football. Pupils learn new skills such as in catering, construction and hair and beauty, bespoke to their interests.

Crucially, pupils are taught specifically and openly about how to stay safe in the community.

Pupils appreciate being listened to and treated fairly. This fosters high levels of mutual respect. Pupils trust the adults here. They benefit hugely from having positive role models and mentors. The school is calm, orderly and sociable.

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

The school has a strong moral purpose. Leaders have ensured that their unwavering determination that pupils can succeed is shared by staff.

The school has effective systems in place to ensure pupils are placed on the most appropriate curriculum pathway. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have the necessary adjustments in place to access the curriculum well and succeed. However, there are instances where the information the school requests about pupils' needs at the referral stage lacks detail. This can limit how quickly the school sets precise placement targets from the outset.

Staff follow the agreed curriculum approach consistently well. Staff check that pupils are retaining knowledge. Gaps in knowledge are identified and filled. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading or require help with spelling are well-supported. The school enters all Year 11 pupils into GCSE examinations in core subjects. Most pupils work through the agreed qualification pathways successfully. However, there is a growing number of pupils now joining the school permanently from key stage 3. The key knowledge they need to know over time is not sufficiently clear. This limits how highly some of these pupils achieve.

Staff have good subject knowledge. However, sometimes, the school is not specifically adapting the learning to match pupils' ability. Some pupils complete work that is too easy. This hinders how far pupils, including pupils with SEND, are having their knowledge deepened when capable of doing so.

Pupils understand the school's high behaviour expectations. Staff build positive relationships with pupils, based on respect and fairness. The school takes effective action to manage unwelcome behaviours. If there are instances of bullying, pupils know that staff will address this.

Most pupils who were previous school refusers now attend school more often due to highly individualised approaches. The school is quick to intervene should attendance drop.

The personal development programme is very carefully considered and bespoke to each pupils' specific needs and levels of risk. Leaders leave no stone unturned in sourcing support for pupils' wider needs, career aspirations or college placements. The school uses its links with the local community and charities very well to mentor pupils on how to manage money, live independently and have safe and healthy relationships. Pupils are therefore well-prepared for adulthood.

Staff teach pupils about the dangers of knife crime, gang affiliation, extremism and drugs in a way that is very relatable to pupils. The school does not shy away from tackling sensitive issues to protect pupils. There is positive engagement with the police. Discriminatory incidents are rare. Pupils are very well-supported to understand life in modern Britain.

The proprietor and governors ensure that the independent school standards are met, including the requirements under schedule 10 of the Equalities Act 2010. The school buildings are well-maintained, spacious and well-resourced. The governors are effective in holding leaders to account. They are also mindful of staff well-being and the pressures that are involved in running this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school ensures that pupils are kept safe and that all adults who work with pupils have had the required vetting checks. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and are very aware of the specific risks that pupils at this school are vulnerable to. The school makes sure that ways to mitigate these risks are also specifically taught to the pupils.

Staff know how to identify and report concerns to leaders. Leaders respond to these concerns in a timely and appropriate manner. The school has recently moved to a new system for reporting concerns. Some staff are not yet using this system as fully as intended. They are still reporting concerns to leaders, so no pupil is at risk, but in

not using the centralised reporting system, it means the designated safeguarding lead does not have full oversight of all the follow-up actions carried out.

The school also has clear risk management processes in place. While there is a risk assessment for pupils' movement between the school buildings, this is not sufficiently detailed enough for new staff to be clear on the road safety expectations.

Leaders are aware of these safeguarding points and have actions in place to address them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some aspects of the curriculum for those pupils now placed permanently at the school are still being developed. This means that these pupils are not yet securing knowledge in enough detail or in a logical order over time. This hinders how highly they achieve. The school needs to ensure that in these subjects the knowledge pupils need to learn and when is explicitly signposted and followed.
- There are some instances where the school is not adapting learning activities specifically to pupils' ability. This means pupils produce work they are already capable of and limits their knowledge being deepened further. The school needs to support staff to adapt learning more precisely to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve academically.
- For some pupils on short-term placements, some of the referral information the school requests is not sufficiently detailed. This means the school do not always have the most accurate or latest information about pupils' starting points prior to completing their own checks. The school needs to tighten the referral process, so it receives the specific information needed for precise placement target-setting so that no time is wasted in meeting academic needs from the outset.

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	142672
DfE registration number	821/6013
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10391772
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Number of part-time pupils	32
Proprietor	Active Support Education Centre Ltd
Chair	Sujel Miah
Co-Headteachers	Matthew Ford and Shahed Koyes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,400 to £48,000
Telephone number	01582 256040
Website	www.activesupportededucation.co.uk
Email address	infor@activesupportededucation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 to 15 September 2022

Information about this school

- This school is registered to take pupils aged 9 to 16. However, it is currently only accepting pupils aged 11 to 16, so operates as a secondary provision.
- Most pupils who attend here are dual registered with their mainstream school. This school provides a mix of short- and medium-term placements for local secondary schools and the local authority's pupil referral unit. These are a mix of full-time and part-time places.
- Since the last standard inspection, there are currently 22 pupils from whom this is now their permanent school and are single registered here. These pupils have an education health care (EHC) plan, primarily for social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Overall, there are currently 33 pupils at the school with an EHC plan, primarily for social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school uses five unregistered alternative providers.
- The school is based on 2 sites that are adjacent to each other, but in separate buildings. The addresses are Unit 1/2 Britannia Estates, Leagrave Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 1RJ and Unit 3 Britannia Estates, Leagrave Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 1RJ.
- This is the school's third standard inspection. Both previous standard inspections have judged the school to be good.

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 judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and personal, health, social and economic education (PHSE). 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 looked at other subject curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs co-ordinator, senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching staff and support staff.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the chair of the proprietor body and three members of the governing body.
- To check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors spoke to the headteacher, proprietor, members of the governing board, staff and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons, observed social times and toured the school site.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's own self-evaluation, school improvement plan and governance minutes. The lead inspector also reviewed a range of school policies.
- 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 inspectors considered the responses gathered through Ofsted Parent View and spoke to a selection of parents and carers by telephone and in person. Inspectors also reviewed the staff survey, pupil survey and spoke to several pupils across all year groups.
- Inspectors also spoke to some of the school's commissioning partners.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mary Abeyasekera

Ofsted Inspector

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