School report

National Institute for Conductive Education

Cannon Hill House, Russell Road, Moseley, Birmingham, West Midlands B13 8RD

Inspection dates 22–24 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	**Outstanding**
Effectiveness of leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	**Outstanding**
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	**Outstanding**
Outcomes for pupils	**Outstanding**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders, governors, the charity and proprietor work together in an exceptionally effective manner. Outcomes for pupils are outstanding.
- Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards are fully in place.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are imaginative and inspiring. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress.
- Leaders have put in place a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that provides appropriate levels of challenge.
- Pupils develop highly positive attitudes to learning. They have remarkable confidence and work well and cooperatively together.
- Professional development is outstanding. Teaching staff are trained effectively in the demanding and challenging conductive education method. They use this exceptionally well and dramatically improve pupils' life chances.
- Parents are supportive of the school and delighted with the progress their children make and say that their children's development has exceeded their expectations. They are eager for their children to attend the school.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff have a very secure understanding of pupils' skills and abilities and ensure that they make excellent progress.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in personal development. Staff are highly trained and effective at helping pupils develop the ability to live independently.
- The early years and foundation stage are outstanding. Children flourish as a result of exceptional leadership, teaching and care.
- Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective. Leaders have developed a culture of vigilance.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the new process for measuring pupils' progress against international benchmarks further improves current assessment practice.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding

- Leaders are inspirational. They have in place efficient systems for planning the strategy of the school, ensuring accurate evaluation and using resources well. Leaders at every level are enthused by their ambition for the pupils. Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards continue to be met.
- Leaders know the school well. They have an accurate, thorough understanding of pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are safe, thrive and develop a fascination for learning.
- The quality of professional development is excellent. Teaching and support staff are trained effectively in the policy of the school to offer conductive education. Morale is very high. As a result, pupils are very well challenged and successfully learn to express themselves, develop confidence and make outstanding progress in a wide range of national curriculum subjects. A typical comment in the staff questionnaire was, 'I feel very privileged to work with such a dedicated team of professionals who give their all on a daily basis to ensure that all the children are safe, happy and encouraged to reach their goals.'
- The governing body, charity and proprietor are united by a vision for excellent education and they are delivering it. They challenge and support school leaders well. The chief executive and headteacher work very well together putting into effect their well-crafted strategic plan. Leaders review their plans regularly and effectively. Their self-evaluation is strong and accurate. As a result, the school is an exciting place for pupils and staff to learn.
- Leaders are eager for further school improvement. They have recently introduced a new progress measure so that pupils' outcomes can be measured against outcomes internationally for pupils with similar primary needs.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in all three key stages. Pupils have demanding, challenging and ambitious targets for physical development and academic progress. Pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are well judged and based on secure and detailed information about their abilities. EHC plans are reviewed effectively by the staff and linked well to teachers' lessons.
- Parents are supportive of the school and delighted with the progress their children make. Parents say that their children's development has exceeded their highest hopes. A typical parental comment expressed through Parent View was, 'The school has been a huge support to our family. They are fully in tune with my child's needs and ability and keep me regularly informed with progress and next steps. The staff are so dedicated and driven to help the children reach their best potential, more so than I have seen in any other school.'
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and is very well managed by staff. Pupils' attendance is high. Pupils with a history of irregular and low attendance make rapid improvements. This is because teaching ensures, for example, that pupils learn how to express their needs in a thoughtful manner. As a result, pupils are keen to attend the school.
- Leaders have put in place a broad, balanced and demanding curriculum. Leaders have

high expectations and ensure that pupils make effective progress, including in their writing, reading and mathematical skills. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development curriculum is rich and varied. Art and music are particularly strong. This is because teaching frequently uses, for example, singing to develop speech and language skills and art to encourage imagination and independence. Leaders have planned the curriculum effectively so that pupils get a chance to learn from their mistakes and see their skills improve.

- Leaders have very effective links with local authorities. These close links ensure that the school is well informed about the histories and needs of pupils. As a result, leaders plan helpful transition arrangements when pupils first come on roll and when they leave.
- Leaders have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding continue to be highly effective. Staff are trained effectively in all the requirements of statutory guidance and in particular how to minimise the risks presented to pupils with SEND.

Governance

- The governing body is a significant strength of the school. Governors are experienced and bring a wide range of relevant talents and skills to their work. They liaise closely with the trust and with the proprietor to make sure that pupils make outstanding progress.
- Since the previous inspection, they have added two more parent governors to their team. The links to children's families are strong and well informed.
- There is a shared vision that governors frequently test against the detailed information they receive from leaders. They visit the school regularly, talk with pupils, parents and staff, and review the work of pupils to check that their ambitious plans are effective.
- Governors provide clear challenge and support to staff. Minutes of their meetings show how strong are their support and challenge to the chief executive and headteacher.
- Governors place the highest priority on safeguarding. They make sure that the school's arrangements are reviewed and evaluated against the independent school standards and relevant statutory guidance from the Secretary of State. They check and monitor pre-employment records and make sure that staff are well trained to offer early help.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective.
- Safeguarding is at the of heart everything the school does. Leaders maintain safe and secure management of the school site and systems. A culture of vigilance exists at the school. Pupils' and staff's welfare is the most important concern of leaders, ensuring that pupils feel well cared for and learn protective behaviours specific to their individual needs.
- Pupils' risk assessments are very well designed and implemented. Leaders are scrupulous about ensuring that the school site meets the independent school standards. For example, fire safety is well managed, highly detailed and gives staff clear instructions and guidance. Checks of school equipment are regular and efficient and ensure that it is fit for staff and pupils to use. Repairs are put in place quickly as the result of daily scrutiny of the wide variety of resources needed by the pupils, all of whom have complex physical and sensory needs.

- Leaders keep parents fully informed about the welfare and safety of pupils. Teachers plan the safety of their children on a daily basis, meeting with parents when they bring pupils to school and when they collect them. Parents speak very highly of the school's safety.
- Leaders give staff frequent and appropriate training in their highly effective policies, such as health and safety, e-safety, pupils' medical plans and the protection of pupils with SEND. The safety of staff is well planned, for example through carefully managed manual handling plans. Applications for posts at the school are thoroughly checked and leaders are well trained in safer recruitment. As a result, staff give effective support to their pupils, all of whom have a range of communication needs.
- There are successful parent workshops on safeguarding so that the strong relationships between home and school are well maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment — Outstanding

- Staff are highly skilled at teaching pupils with complex needs. As a result, learning is exceptionally well planned and delivered. Consequently, pupils make significant progress in subjects across the curriculum and in their personal development.
- Staff make good use of the school's very effective assessment policy and make accurate judgements of pupils' starting points. This allows well-considered and ambitious targets to be agreed with parents and worked on at home and school.
- Teachers standardise accurately their assessments against the national curriculum and with partner schools. As a result, the quality of their feedback to pupils is high. Teachers listen and watch pupils carefully, communicating with them well through a variety of means, for example through signing, flashcards and communication aids. As a result, they promote a culture of realistic challenge throughout the school.
- A spirit of teamwork exists amongst the staff. Teachers and other adults sympathetically guide pupils' learning. They work well with pupils to help them to express what they would like to achieve. The result is that classrooms are exciting, joyful places for pupils to learn.
- Teachers ensure that lesson activities are well matched to pupils' abilities and interests and EHC plans. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and enjoy lessons.
- Teaching is creative and skilfully combines the teaching of physical movement with, for example, literacy and numeracy. In a lesson focusing on poetry, pupils were guided through exercises to enhance muscle flexibility and balance while learning challenging vocabulary. In another lesson, teachers used puppetry while gently helping pupils to remember the steps involved in knee bends.
- Teachers develop pupils' skills of visual recognition through, for example, electronic whiteboards and games. Teachers use positive reinforcement, constantly praising, encouraging safe movement and helping pupils recognise each other's successes.
- There is a quiet urgency about the school's learning culture. Teachers are highly skilled at talking with their pupils and use questioning in a highly sensitive manner. As a result, each pupil is reminded, prompted and challenged by their teachers and other adults. Not a moment of lesson time is wasted. Pupils are never without the close guidance of a member of staff and clearly flourish at the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils successfully develop self-confidence because teachers reward appropriately, give encouragement and guidance and draw out each pupil's talent.
- Fundamental British values are well taught, for example fairness, rights, responsibilities and politeness. Pupils want to help each other and they respect each other's equipment, work and views.
- Pupils develop an interest in other people's cultures. They celebrate the diversity of religious belief. This helps them grow in tolerance and strengthens their positive attitude to the world around them. In religious education learning, for example, pupils celebrate the festivals of different faiths.
- Staff encourage pupils to be interested in growing things in the school grounds, for example potatoes from seed, then cooking and eating the produce. Pupils develop an interest in healthy diets and a curiosity about plant growth.
- Staff help pupils' personal care in a safe and encouraging manner. This helps pupils towards independent protective behaviours. The school encourages excellent personal cleanliness, security, privacy and safety.
- Pupils are very well cared for and have justified confidence in their teachers. Teachers are successful at promoting self-reliance, helping pupils to express themselves, ask questions and make their needs known.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are punctual and well prepared for learning. The school has built excellent relationships with families, greeting parents at the start of the day and discussing pupils' learning at the end. Pupils develop a calm and positive attitude to learning.
- Attendance is high for almost all pupils. Pupils are absent only in the most exceptional and reasonable cases. There are no unauthorised absences.
- There are no incidents of poor behaviour or bullying. Throughout the school day, in and out of lessons, pupils develop practical ways to show courtesy, politeness and enthusiasm for learning.
- Teachers make sure that pupils learn how to behave with confidence and vigilant awareness of risk by taking them into local urban areas, parks and retail outlets. Teachers nurture pupils' approach to these real-life situations, so they learn how to ask for help, express their needs and how to tell which people are likely to be helpful and trustworthy.

Outcomes for pupils — Outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress towards their personal and challenging goals and targets. From their starting points, pupils make remarkable gains in areas such as literacy, numeracy, physical mobility and speech and language development.
- Pupils make excellent progress in a wide range of skills required by the national curriculum. For instance, in mathematics, pupils develop strong problem-solving skills and understand how to handle addition and subtraction. Pupils make very good progress comparing number values. In English, pupils make strong progress in reading, because teachers are skilled at teaching through phonics. Pupils learn how to work their way round books, talking and communicating their likes and ideas. Pupils make excellent progress, from being unable to read with any comprehension to responding to questions that demand recall and review of text. Workbooks show evidence of pupils' ability to use punctuation correctly, and use sentences in varied forms such as question, statement, exclamation and command.
- In foundation subjects, such as art, pupils make excellent progress. They explore and develop ideas and investigate the properties of different textures and media. In design technology, pupils make strong progress, for example working papier mâché forms and naming materials that are synthetic or natural.
- Pupils learn how to express themselves orally or by using communication aids. They develop the skills to let others know what they feel about their work. Pupils reflect on what teachers say and remember what they learn from one lesson to the next.
- In science, pupils make very good progress in skills such as pattern-seeking, sorting, classifying and identifying material properties. These skills are developed, for instance, in water experimentation and playing games with magnets.
- School assessment information is well used by staff to track pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. These records show that pupils with complex medical needs make significant progress in their academic work.
- Pupils make very good progress in their physical development. For example, more than one parent reported that before their child attended the school, they had been unable to walk but now were able to do so unaided.
- Parents are thoroughly involved in pupils' progress. Staff use online records that give parents timely information about what pupils have achieved.

Early years provision — Outstanding

- Children make exceptional progress from often very low starting points. This is because leadership is exceptionally strong. Staff are extremely knowledgeable and very well trained to understand children's special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, teaching and learning help pupils make remarkable improvements in movement, reading and using writing equipment.
- Teaching is lively, engaging and well structured. This means that children are typically absorbed by the activities set for them. For example, teachers use phonics effectively to guide children through a rich range of appropriately challenging books. As a result,

children enjoy reading and are enthusiastic about the stories they encounter.

- Assessment is thorough, detailed and helps teachers accurately track the progress pupils make. It helps staff plan next steps for their learning. Staff record achievements in a detailed manner that allows them to determine effectively what children should learn next.
- The curriculum is rigorous and flexible so that staff can adapt it when necessary. It is built around the need to help children lay the foundations for later independence. Children's targets are updated formally three times a year and adjusted as they progress. As a result, learning is challenging and taught at a suitable pace for children's abilities.
- Parents are proud of the progress their children make and are pleased to have secured them a place at the school. Staff support parents to understand the challenges their children are set and how they can help at home. As a result, parents are included in their children's education.
- All children have complex physical and cognitive needs. Teaching combines strong movement education and physical development techniques in almost all activities. For example, in a lesson about visiting the beach, children learned how to use vocabulary about sand and sea while also learning controlled physical movements, fine manipulation and gross motor skills.
- Children grow effectively in confidence and learn how to accept learning challenges. They learn how to ask for help, concentrate and develop strong work habits. Teachers display children's work attractively so that they feel valued and encouraged. Specialist classroom resources are stimulating and well-maintained.
- Safeguarding is highly effective. Staff are vigilant and very well trained to support and protect children and teach them how to act safely.
- Leaders ensure that the independent school standards relating to early years provision are met.

School details

Unique reference number	103588
DfE registration number	330/6080
Inspection number	10092447

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	22
Number of part-time pupils	20
Proprietor	David Wood
Chair	Les Lawrence
Headteacher	Beatrix Szeszak
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25-35,000
Telephone number	0121 449 1569
Website	www.conductive-education.org.uk/children-services/red-boots-school/
Email address	LDebono@conductive-education.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–26 May 2016

Information about this school

- The National Institute of Conductive Education (NICE) is a co-educational independent day special school providing for the learning and development needs of children who have physical disabilities and wide-ranging learning difficulties. The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has a new headteacher.
- The school is registered for boys and girls aged from three to 11 years old.
- There is a mix of pupils who attend full time and those who attend on a sessional basis.

- All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school uses conductive education. The purpose of this approach is to help pupils lead independent lives. It combines academic learning with activities designed to develop pupils' physical and emotional ability.
- The majority of pupils are funded by the six local authorities in which they live. The school does not receive any additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed lessons in all three key stages and covered a wide range of the curriculum subjects, including English and mathematics.
- There was a scrutiny of pupils' workbooks, assessment folders and EHC plans and their associated reviews. The inspector talked with pupils about their work, learning and safety.
- The school's documentation was scrutinised, including curriculum plans and the tracking of pupils' progress. Leaders' arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of pupils were inspected.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- There was a meeting with middle managers, the executive headteacher, the proprietor, members of the governing body and of the trust.
- There were five free-text responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector met with parents at the beginning and the end of the school day. There were insufficient responses to the pupil questionnaire. There were seven responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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