

# Cotswold Chine School

Independent school standard inspection report

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URN for social care	SC030367
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Reporting inspector	Mick Megee
Social care inspector	Clare Davis

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## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

An inspection of the care provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for children's homes. This inspection took place at the same time but the full report is published separately on Ofsted's website and should be read in conjunction with this report which covers the educational registration of the school.

## **Information about the school**

Cotswold Chine School provides education for students with complex learning needs and significant associated behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A third of the students have a diagnosis of autism. Students are resident for between 39 and 52 weeks a year. The school, situated in a semi-rural location, is owned by the Novalis charitable trust. The school is registered for up to 42 male and female students between nine and 19 years of age. There are currently 38 students on roll aged between 10 and 19 years, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs. The students come from all areas of the country, and there are 16 students who are looked after by their local authorities. The school opened in 1954 and was last inspected in June 2006. The school is dually registered as a children's home and its previous social care inspection was on 27 January 2010. The school aims 'to provide a holistic approach to both care and education in order to achieve positive outcomes in all areas of academic and social development'.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Cotswold Chine School provides an outstanding quality of education that fully meets its aims, maintaining its high standards from the previous inspection. Students make outstanding progress because the quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment is outstanding. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are outstanding. The provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements are securely in place and the school meets all of the regulations.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

## Quality of education

The school provides an outstanding quality of education for its students. It achieves this through its outstanding curriculum that knits together very well its therapeutic, academic and vocational aspects. Staff very carefully customise learning so as to fully meet the individual needs, interests and aspirations of each student. All students have access to all subjects of the National Curriculum. Those in Key Stage 4 and post-16 are offered a number of curriculum pathways, including life-skills and vocational courses, and have very good opportunities to achieve a wide range of appropriate qualifications. Staff provide many opportunities for students to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy through other subjects. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used in all subjects and motivates and engages students in their work. Comprehensive curriculum policies and schemes of work ensure that the students' experience of education is coherent and continuous. The curriculum is underpinned by a very good programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) which is enhanced by valuable contributions from residential staff and the school nurse.

The curriculum is greatly enhanced, both at school and in the homes, through residential experiences abroad and through a wide range of visitors into school and visits to places of interest, such as a nearby cathedral and theatre. There are excellent links, too, with a local college and leisure centres to attend vocational programmes and to undertake sports and leisure activities. The students produce first-class jewellery and leather products at a local craft workshop. Students have the opportunity to learn French, German or Japanese. Those who show flair attend individual music lessons, for example in singing or playing the guitar.

The small classes and high ratio of staff to students are key features of the outstanding teaching and assessment. Students receive on-the-spot guidance allowing them to recover confidence and stay on track. Lesson plans set out explicit individual learning objectives and teaching strategies to meet the varying learning needs of the students. Staff assess progress on a daily basis to provide a good basis for planning subsequent steps in learning. Staff ensure that students are fully aware of their individual learning targets and strive very hard to help students achieve them. Teachers have excellent knowledge of their subjects, and lessons are characterised by good-natured banter between students and staff; this adds a good deal to students' enjoyment of learning. Lessons are conducted at a lively pace with frequent changes of activity so that students attend well and remain absorbed. The speech and language therapist and care staff are often to be found in the classroom providing excellent support to the students without disrupting learning.

Staff gain a very good understanding of students' starting points during a four-week assessment period. Staff make full use of this information in their planning and maintain detailed records of each student's progress. Staff carry out formal assessments of progress three times a year and provide well-evidenced reports to parents, carers, key workers and local authority representatives. Students are

encouraged to assess their own efforts. The school's records show that students are making outstanding progress from their individual starting points and many of them exceed the challenging targets they are set. Teachers' marking gives students praise and encouragement, although there is often insufficient written commentary on how the work could be improved further.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students**

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They receive a warm and caring welcome to the school and settle in quickly so that the need for intensive management of behaviour rapidly disappears. Through an excellent range of learning experiences, students recover their desire to learn. Staff show students that they value their opinions and efforts. This boosts self-confidence and strong and kind relationships develop between students and staff and between students. Students behave outstandingly well and their approach to learning becomes very positive. Students gain a more balanced view of life and gain a deep understanding of justice, fairness, and right and wrong. Students have a strong voice in determining their own learning and behaviour targets and staff value the many ideas students have of how to improve the school. In the meeting with students during the inspection, students came up unbidden with several ideas about how to ensure the safety of staff. Students experience higher levels of independence as their age and maturity allows, receiving support that ranges from full supervision at all times through to independent trips out using public transport with no adult supervision.

Students make an excellent contribution to the local community through, for example, planning community events and helping out at the local football club. Students have a very good understanding of different faiths, cultural differences and diversity through the strong links with a school in Zimbabwe and a children's home in Romania. Students exchange schoolwork, pictures, letters and cards with their counterparts in these institutions. Students demonstrate their enjoyment of school by their mature interactions and their very good attendance. Their often dramatic improvement in these two areas, together with their excellent progress in numeracy, literacy and ICT, means that their life-chances are greatly enhanced. The very good careers guidance they receive, coupled with very good opportunities for work experience, successfully lifts their expectations and aspirations in respect of their future education and employment.

## **Welfare, health and safety of students**

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. A comprehensive range of detailed policies and procedures, including child protection, which meet all the regulations, is in place to ensure students' safety, health and welfare. From day one of their employment, all staff receive intensive training on child protection, health and safety, first aid and fire awareness and there are rigorous procedures and training in place for tackling any incidents that may occur. School records

demonstrate that staff know how to deal with these quickly and effectively and how to record them accurately. Staff conscientiously carry out detailed risk assessments, including those for educational visits, fire and health and safety. The trust, in its role as proprietor, carries out frequent, regular inspections of the buildings and undertakes health and safety checks. Action plans are produced straight away and promptly implemented to address any identified issues. Some of the school site has been adapted to accommodate and include any students with physical disabilities and there is a comprehensive accessibility plan in place which complies with current disability discrimination legislation. Students have a very good understanding of how to lead a healthy life, enjoying the excellent additive-free meals that the school's chefs provide. Students greatly enjoy the excellent range of physical activities provided in local swimming pools, stables, leisure and water-sports centres. They say that they feel safe and that there is someone to listen to them if they have a worry or personal problem. Students say that staff deal effectively and sensitively with any reported bullying, although this rarely happens.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

All regulations are met. There is a robust recruitment policy in place which is effectively implemented. The school's single central record of checks made on staff confirms that all appropriate checks have been made to ensure the suitability of those working with the students.

### **Premises of and accommodation at the school**

The accommodation is well-designed to ensure students' safety, with a good standard of decoration and maintenance. Classrooms are suitably furnished, well lit, ventilated and heated, and enable students to learn effectively and in comfort. Individual classrooms vary in size, but group sizes are never too large for the rooms. There is an assembly hall and a range of specialist rooms, including a well-appointed design and technology workshop and a very pleasant food technology room. The school is currently building specialist accommodation for practical science. There is a shortage of adequate accommodation on site for physical education, but the school compensates for this very well by its use of off-site facilities for both indoor and outdoor sports. The school has extensive grounds which are available for students' use under staff supervision. Students have access to a local common and to the trust's recently purchased woodlands nearby, where they can enjoy supervised play. The woodland is being developed to provide an exciting outdoor educational area.

### **Provision of information**

The school's website, together with the document '*Information for Parents, Carers and Placing Authorities*', provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information as required.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school has received no formal complaints and has suitable, clear procedures and a policy that fully meet requirements.

## **Effectiveness of the boarding provision**

The care provision was judged to be outstanding and national minimum standards were met. A full report on the care provision is available on Ofsted's website and should be viewed in conjunction with this report.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that written feedback to students always contains guidance on the next steps the student should take in order to improve further.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of students	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs	✓			
How well students make progress in their learning	✓			

### Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of students	✓			

### Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students	✓			
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### The quality of boarding provision

Effectiveness of boarding provision	✓			
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for students with significant behavioural, emotional, social and complex		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1954		
<b>Age range of students</b>	9–19 years		
<b>Gender of students</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time students)</b>	Boys: 20	Girls: 18	Total: 38
<b>Number on roll (part-time students)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of students with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 20	Girls: 18	Total: 38
<b>Number of students who are looked after</b>	Boys: 7	Girls: 9	Total: 16
<b>Annual fees (day students)</b>	£56,550–78,000		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01453 837550		
<b>Email address</b>	maureens@cotswold-chine.org.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Maureen Smith		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Novalis charitable trust		