

Chilworth House Upper School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	931/6000
Unique Reference Number (URN)	137334
Inspection number	393276
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2012
Reporting inspector	John Gush

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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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Chilworth House Upper School is an independent special school which is registered to admit up to 40 male and female pupils aged between 11 and 18 years who have complex learning difficulties and who may have challenging behaviour. The school currently has 35 boys and one girl on roll aged between 11 and 16 years. They all have statements of special educational needs and three of them are looked after pupils.

The school is owned and operated by the Witherslack group. It is located in a rural setting, just outside Oxford and is adjacent to another school operated by the same group making provision for primary aged children. The school opened in September 2011 and this is its first inspection by Ofsted.

This inspection also considered a request for a material change to the school's registration details. In response to an increasing number of referrals, the school has asked to increase the number of pupils on roll to a maximum of 48 rather than the 40 for which it is currently registered. This will involve use of an additional site it has recently acquired about a mile away from the main school site.

The school aims for its pupils state that: 'Experiencing opportunities for success, in a nurturing and caring environment, develops the self-confidence and esteem of our pupil population which is seen as so important.'

Evaluation of the school

Chilworth House Upper School provides a good quality of education and meets its aims. Pupils' behaviour is good and this helps them to make good progress. The quality of the curriculum is good as is the quality of teaching and assessment. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good and the provision that the school makes for their welfare, health and safety, including the arrangements for safeguarding, is outstanding. All of the regulations for independent schools are met.

The Department for Education is recommended to accept the request for a material change subject to confirmation that the present alterations to the accommodation are complete, the security fencing is in place and risk assessments have been undertaken.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It provides pupils with the full range of National Curriculum subjects but also good courses in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education. In addition, there are alternative subjects, for example Forest Schools and 'HorseWyse', aimed at addressing the learning needs of pupils with volatile behaviour and unsettled emotions.

Strong emphasis is placed on the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills and, in addition to regular English and mathematics lessons, a daily reading scheme lesson has recently been introduced for all pupils. This has been successful in increasing pupils' ability to read, their comprehension skills and their interest in reading. Weekly PSHE lessons, together with the school's strong emphasis on values education, support pupils' personal development effectively. A very good range of activities, at lunch and break times, together with the Friday afternoon 'reward' activities, provide pupils with excellent opportunities for making choices and learning to work together. Older pupils take part in work experience, prepare for external examinations appropriate to their ability and work with careers advisers and school staff to identify and suitably prepare them for college courses when they leave.

Teaching and assessment are good. Provision is not outstanding because outcomes are not outstanding. Teachers use effective long-term plans, schemes of work for each subject and detailed lesson plans, which ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to make good gains in their learning from year to year. Detailed and thorough assessment of pupils' social, emotional and academic abilities enables teachers to plan their lessons in relation to each individual pupil's needs and ensure that the requirements in the statement of special educational needs for each pupil are met. In the best lessons teachers use this information to ensure that the pace of the lesson, the questions that they ask, the tasks that they provide and the support they arrange, are tailored to the specific needs of each individual. In some satisfactory lessons, all pupils are given similar tasks and teachers questions do not fully reflect detailed knowledge of individuals.

Excellent support is provided in each class by knowledgeable and conscientious teaching assistants who develop very good relationships with the pupils, helping them to meet the high standards of good behaviour.

Marking is consistently carried out and in the best cases it is not only encouraging but also clear about inaccuracies and strategies for improvement. Lessons begin and finish punctually and particular care is taken to make sure that all the time available is well used. Classroom and other teaching resources are excellent and they are very well used. In addition to good information and communication technology (ICT) facilities throughout the school, specialist resources for science, design and technology and food technology promote the pupils' interest and encourage active learning.

A range of excellent procedures is available to help pupils to manage their behaviour. All pupils and members of staff are aware of the very clear expectations and stress

the importance of making an effort and behaving well. These are effectively reinforced by a points based incentive scheme where pupils evaluate their own performance and behaviour after every lesson and earn rewards that take place on Friday afternoons. All pupils have a dedicated key worker who helps to set and monitor individual behaviour targets and a very effective pastoral care team is available to support pupils who experience inappropriate or troubled behaviour.

A process for assessing each pupil's work against National Curriculum levels every term has been introduced and targets have been set for improvement and progress. Overall, the early findings of these processes are that pupils are making good progress, although this is better in some subjects than others. Moderation procedures are currently being developed that will improve accuracy when attributing National Curriculum levels to pupils' work but moderation practices are not fully embedded.

The school's curriculum and systems for teaching and providing learning support are all suitable for an increase in pupil numbers, as requested by the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils demonstrate their self-esteem and confidence in their own capabilities by their willingness to engage in new activities, their ability to choose between the options available and the way they greet and talk with visitors to the school. The school's clear expectations for appropriate and thoughtful behaviour, together with the strong emphasis on values, helps pupils to recognise right from wrong and to work together when they can. In PSHE and humanities lessons they learn about their own and other cultures helping them to develop an attitude of tolerance. This is reinforced by the pervading attitude of respect that the staff demonstrate towards each other and to the pupils. Most pupils attend regularly and engage well in lesson activities. This backs up what the majority of those interviewed said: that they enjoy coming to school and think that the school will help them to grow up and make the most of their lives. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to contribute to community life. This includes various fund raising events which the whole school takes part in, involving Help for Heroes, Red Nose day and Meningitis Awareness charities.

Pupils' behaviour is good overall with most pupils taking advantage of the school's behaviour management structures and supportive environment. Where pupils' unsettled emotional life results in disturbed behaviour they are supported to understand the consequences of this for themselves, and others, and to develop strategies to avoid repetition or escalation. Inappropriate behaviour, especially any that results in physical intervention, is rigorously monitored to ensure the welfare of pupils is properly safeguarded. Information collected shows that pupils' behaviour improves while they are in school even though for some this is not a straightforward process.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. It is based on robust implementation of policies that are systematically reviewed and updated. Annual training in child protection for all staff is delivered by the designated senior child protection officer, who has received the required higher-level training. Other regular training for all staff includes first aid and 'team teach' techniques for safe and appropriate physical intervention.

Behaviour management strategies are well developed. Thorough recording and reporting procedures ensure that parents, carers and local authorities are kept informed of incidents that occur or of any sanctions imposed on pupils. The anti-bullying policy has been enhanced by the school council's initiative to develop a buddy system where pupils who may be susceptible to bullying are offered support from other pupils.

Health and safety awareness is a strong feature throughout the classrooms and school grounds making it possible for activities that pose a risk to take place safely, for example science experiments and cooking over an open fire. Health and safety procedures are thoroughly carried out, including regular testing of portable electronic equipment, monitoring of water temperatures and regular checks on the school vehicles. Effective procedures are adopted for fire safety awareness, fire fighting equipment checks and regular fire drills. There is first-aid equipment in every classroom and at strategic locations throughout the school grounds. Detailed assessments are made of any risks associated with trips and visits away from the school site.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that the school helps them to be healthy. Lunches provide nourishing hot meals with salad and fruit consistently available. Pupils have many opportunities for physical activity including physical education and games lessons, structured physical activities at lunch and break times and as part of the Forest Schools curriculum.

Attendance and admissions registers are maintained as required and the school has prepared an accessibility plan, which meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has effective recruitment procedures and makes all of the required checks to ensure the suitability of staff and others to work with children. A clear record of these checks, together with those that have been made on members of the proprietorial body, is maintained in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's well-designed new-build classrooms and excellent refurbishment of the original farmhouse provide an effective learning environment which is supplemented by a very well-resourced outdoor area. This includes a football pitch, all-weather pitch, BMX track and a horticulture area with vegetable beds and a glasshouse. These provide very good opportunities for pupils to play safely and to engage in outdoor learning experiences.

In connection with the school's request for an increase in the number of registered places, the school's proprietor has acquired land and buildings about a mile away from the school. This provision will provide additional good quality accommodation to enable the school to increase its numbers and to extend opportunities for practical and vocational subjects. The current, minor internal refurbishment of the new accommodation and the pending installation of security fencing and completion of risk assessments will need to be completed before pupils can use the facility.

Provision of information

The school's recently developed website and well-presented parental handbook provide, and make available, all of the required information for parents, carers and others. Good quality annual reports of pupils' progress are made available to parents, carers and others. Financial information and details of statement reviews are made available to the local authorities as required.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a well-constructed complaints policy which complies with regulations.

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.

- Continue the development of moderation procedures to ensure accuracy in attributing National Curriculum levels to pupils' work.
- Ensure that information from the assessment of pupils' social, emotional and academic abilities is always used to provide tasks that are well matched to individuals' needs.

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 pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special day school for pupils with complex learning difficulties and challenging behaviour		
Date school opened	September 2011		
Age range of pupils	11–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 34	Girls: 1	Total: 35
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 35	Girls: 1	Total: 36
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,231 to £69,358		
Address of school	Thame Road Wheatley OX33 1JP		
Telephone number	0184 4337720		
Email address	K.Larsen@chilworthhouseschool.com		
Headteacher	Kevin Larsen		
Proprietor	Witherslack Group		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chilworth House Upper School, Wheatley OX33 1JP

Thank you for making me welcome when I inspected your school recently. I very much enjoyed talking with you about the school and joining you in your lessons. The inspection found that your school provides you with a good quality of education and helps you to develop as mature young people. The school meets all government requirements.

The school provides you with a good range of subjects and activities that are well designed to meet your needs and interests. The practical subjects such as design and technology and motor vehicle maintenance help you to understand the importance of education for your futures, and the outdoor activities like Forest Schools help you to work together effectively. Your teachers and all the other staff members know you very well and are very good at keeping you focused on your learning. You make good progress in most of your lessons and some of you present your work carefully in your books. Your behaviour is usually good and you are courteous to visitors.

In order to make your school even better I have asked the proprietor and headteacher to:

- continue improving the way your work is moderated so that judgements made about your attainment are secure
- ensure that the information gained from assessment is used effectively to plan work that is consistently challenging and that work is matched to your specific needs.

You will help your teachers to achieve this if you continue to work as hard as I saw you doing during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Gush
Lead inspector