

Chilworth House School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	931/6125
Unique Reference Number (URN)	131064
Inspection number	393338
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Reporting inspector	Sue Frater HMI

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2012



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 School is an independent co-educational day special school in Oxfordshire. While it is registered to admit 30 pupils from five to 14 years, there are currently 29 pupils on roll aged between six and 12 years. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Their needs relate mainly to autism, emotional and behavioural difficulty, and speech and language or communication difficulties. Pupils are usually placed by their home local authority. The school is much smaller than most primary schools with more boys than girls. The large majority of pupils are White British. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. Most pupils go on to Chilworth House Upper School, which opened recently on an adjacent site and was inspected at the same time. Chilworth House School opened on 8 September 2005. As part of the Witherslack Group, it is committed to providing a happy, welcoming and motivating learning environment where the whole school enjoy their learning experiences and are encouraged to achieve their potential. The school was last inspected in March 2009.

Evaluation of the school

Chilworth House School provides a good quality of education and meets its aims. While the curriculum is outstanding, the quality of teaching and assessment, and pupils' progress, are good rather than outstanding because the large majority of teachers are relatively new and are still developing strategies to address effectively pupils' specific needs. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, and their behaviour is good and improving as teachers become more adept at meeting their needs. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Despite significant changes in staffing, the school has retained its previous good quality of education and continues to meet all of the regulations, including those for safeguarding children.

Quality of education

The outstanding curriculum is extensive, balanced and tailored to meet the needs of all pupils exceptionally well. As a consequence, the school received the Investors in Pupils award. The curriculum provides full access to all National Curriculum subjects.

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

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

It also includes a unique curriculum that the school calls 'swallow', which incorporates personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), core values, themes from the social emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme and weekly social skills lessons to enrich learning. Such provision makes a very positive impact on improving pupils' personal development and developing individuals' self-confidence and self-esteem. In addition, the school provides a range of effective intervention programmes that are tailored to individual needs, for example reading intervention, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy. A suitable alternative curriculum programme has been introduced for pupils who require more focus on developing skills such as team work, communication and managing their own behaviour. The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of enrichment programmes including visits to activity and outdoor education centres, an on-site Forest School, camping trips and enrichment weeks such as a recent 'arts and enterprise week'. Careers education is included appropriately in the 'swallow' curriculum and involves visits to different places of work and visits from employees.

The curriculum is monitored and reviewed rigorously to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils and fulfils the requirements of their statements of special educational needs. The curriculum statement is supported by a clear system of long-, medium- and short-term planning. While long-term planning provides for progression in learning, lesson plans are tailored well to meet individuals' specific needs and interests. The curriculum prepares pupils exceptionally well for the next phase in their education and adult life, and a few pupils have reintegrated successfully into mainstream secondary school.

The quality of teaching in the majority of lessons is good rather than outstanding because the large majority of teachers are relatively new to the school and are developing strategies to address the pupils' specific needs. There is outstanding practice in the school that is not yet disseminated to further improve the provision. The school's well-established curriculum planning and very effective professional development programme have supported the new staff exceptionally well. Effective features of teaching include positive relationships with pupils, consistent behaviour management strategies, well structured lessons tailored to individual needs, and good use of teaching assistants and a range of useful resources including interactive computer whiteboards to support learning. High expectations are set clearly through learning objectives and teachers modelling the required skills. Pupils engage in self-assessment and are motivated to improve their work through a clear system of rewards.

In a few outstanding lessons observed, teachers engaged the pupils immediately in activities and maintained a brisk pace of learning. For example, in a literacy lesson the pupils began by rapidly recalling the sounds letters make (phonics) and moved swiftly on to applying these in reading challenging texts, before writing their own sentences. In the minority of lessons that were satisfactory, the pace of learning was slow and there were few opportunities for pupils to engage in independent learning such as problem solving or activities involving investigation.

The school's very good systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are extensive and based on National Curriculum levels. They are used very effectively to inform lesson planning and in identifying appropriate interventions. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Exercise books show pupils make good progress over time. Individual targets for English, mathematics and personal development help pupils to know how to improve their performance.

The majority of pupils make good progress and this was confirmed by the questionnaires completed by parents and carers. The progress is a result of good teaching and very effective intervention. Intervention is informed by rigorous monitoring by senior and middle leaders of the progress of individuals and all groups of pupils, including those who are looked after. Pupils are progressing at least in line with, and often better than, the nationally expected rate of progress. This means that previous gaps in their attainment, including in reading, are closing and the pupils are reaching their challenging targets.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Through reflection on their progress and praise in lessons, and fortnightly discussions with their individual key workers, pupils develop self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience in learning. Pupils' attitudes to school are exceptionally positive as shown in their improving attendance and willingness to participate in lessons and other activities. Questionnaires completed by pupils are full of praise for the teaching and support staff and include comments such as, 'My teacher rocks,' and, 'This is the best school ever.'

Through participating in activities such as the local authority's Junior Citizens scheme and visits from the police and emergency services, pupils learn right from wrong, to respect the law and develop a very good understanding of public services and civic institutions. Pupils contribute very positively to the school council and to the community, for example in fundraising for charity and visits to a local home for senior citizens. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of other cultures, for instance in discussing the origin of the African drums that they were using in music and their impending visit to a local mosque, and in displays of their art work, including Aboriginal art. As a result, pupils develop strong relationships with others and respect and tolerate each other's differences. One pupil spoke for many when he said, 'I feel accepted here.'

While pupils' behaviour is good, it is not yet outstanding because in a minority of lessons staff do not engage pupils all of the time, and some pupils need reminding of acceptable behaviour. However, pupils are developing self-control and will often take the initiative and go to the 'cool-off' corner without prompting. They say that they feel very safe in school. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of risks, including different forms of bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They are confident to share concerns with any member of staff and particularly their key worker. During the inspection, pupils greatly enjoyed a whole

school game of hide and seek in the grounds and graciously accepted being caught by the staff. Lunchtimes are very sociable affairs, with pupils passing food courteously and considerately to the pupils and staff on their tables.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for because all staff consistently give the highest priority to safeguarding them. Robust policies and procedures have been established to promote all aspects of the welfare, health and safety of the pupils at all times. They comply fully with government legislation and guidance and are monitored regularly and implemented consistently by all staff. The school provides comprehensive induction training and ensures all staff are kept up to date through undertaking regularly a broad range of safeguarding and safety training. Consequently, staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, particularly regarding child protection, first aid and behaviour management. Rewards and sanctions are implemented consistently and fairly. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good and there is a calm environment for learning. Incidents of bullying are rare and when they do occur are addressed very effectively, enabling pupils to feel safe. Parents and carers agree that their children are happy and safe at school. They praise the support provided for them by the staff.

Health and safety checks, including risk assessments on school trips and safer recruitment procedures, are carried out rigorously. All requirements regarding the management of risk from fire are met fully. Lists of staff who are qualified in first aid are displayed around the school and first-aid boxes are well equipped. Medicines are stored securely, with clear instructions about administration. The pupils enjoy healthy lifestyles through regular exercise, partaking of healthy eating options and developing awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. There is a high level of staffing and pupils are supervised very well at all times. Admissions and attendance registers are maintained appropriately. Attendance is monitored rigorously and, consequently, is improving. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010 robustly and constantly reviews its accessibility policy to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils. Thus the school is an inclusive community in which all pupils feel valued.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children have been carried out and details are recorded appropriately in a single central register. In line with best practice, enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks are renewed every three years.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is accommodated in a large Georgian house which is set within extensive, and very attractive, grounds. It is sited within easy reach for a range of neighbouring

local authorities that place pupils in the school. Excellent use is made of the premises and site, including the creation of a Forest School, to provide an extensive curriculum. The house and grounds are very well maintained and have been adapted sensitively and well to meet the needs of all pupils.

Provision of information

The school provides, or makes available, all of the required information for parents, carers and others. The information is clear, accurate and up to date.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedures meet regulatory requirements.

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.

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to raise achievement further by:
 - disseminating the existing outstanding practice
 - increasing the pace of lessons
 - providing more opportunities to develop pupils' independent learning skills such as problem solving and investigation.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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	✓			
--	---	--	--	--

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special for pupils with complex learning difficulties and challenging behaviour		
Date school opened	8 September 2005		
Age range of pupils	5–14 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 26	Girls: 3	Total: 29
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 26	Girls: 3	Total: 29
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,660–£73,252		
Address of school	Thame Road Oxford Oxfordshire OX33 1JP		
Telephone number	01844 339077		
Email address	admin@chilworthhouseschool.com		
Headteacher	Sophie Garner		
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.



2 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chilworth House School, Oxford OX33 1JP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school, for completing the questionnaires and for talking with me about your work. It was a pleasure to meet you, to have lunch with you, and to see you at work and play.

You were proud to tell me that you go to a good school. I agree with you. Your school gives you a good quality of education and all government requirements are met. The good teaching helps you to make good progress in your work. The curriculum, that is all the many subjects and activities you do, is outstanding. You told me how much you enjoy all the enrichment activities and trips. I hope Maple class enjoyed their visit to the mosque.

Your behaviour is good most of the time and your teachers and teaching assistants help you to make excellent progress in your personal development. I was impressed by how considerate you are to others. I was also impressed by how eagerly and confidently you join in with your lessons. You told me that you enjoy school very much and that you feel happy and safe there. The headteacher and staff take excellent care of you. I have asked them to help you make even better progress by:

- making more of your lessons outstanding and by sharing the outstanding practice that exists to help teaching and learning improve
- making sure you are learning all the time in your lessons and that the pace of learning is consistently good
- helping you to be more independent in your learning, for example in solving problems and investigating.

You can help by attending school every day and by never giving up trying to improve your work and behaviour. I wish you success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater
Her Majesty's Inspector