

# ISP School (Kent)

Church Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3EG

## Inspection dates

27 February–1 March 2013

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

**2**

Pupils' achievement

Good

2

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

2

Quality of teaching

Good

2

Quality of curriculum

Good

2

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

2

Leadership and management

Good

2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- The headteacher and leadership team have high ambitions for every pupil. This is shared by the staff. There is a clear commitment to making school useful and meaningful for the pupils.
- Pupils achieve well. All groups of pupils make good progress and some pupils make outstanding progress. The school's focus on improving skills in communication, behaviour and other life skills is very effective.
- Older pupils respond well to opportunities to develop their independence skills and gain useful accreditation.
- Teaching is good and supported well by very good relationships between staff and pupils.
- Pupils are increasingly aware of the needs of one another in and out of lessons. They feel safe in school, and those who experience difficulties learn to manage their behaviour well over time.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Not all pupils make as much progress as they could in all subjects.
- Sometimes the targets set for pupils are too focused on improving their behaviour rather than extending their learning.
- The school does not make the best use of the information it gathers. As a result, leaders and managers are not as informed as they could be about how well the school is doing.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a half day's notice.
- Nine teachers in ten lessons were observed. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector held meetings with staff and the company's operations director. She toured one site with the headteacher and the other with pupils. She spoke to pupils and heard two read.
- The inspector examined pupils' work and looked at documentation.
- She took account of 29 staff questionnaire responses. She considered parent or carer comments provided by the school, spoke directly to one carer and received one written response from another.

## Inspection team

Anne Duffy, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- ISP School (Kent) is an independent day special school. It is part of the Integrated Services Programme (ISP), a company that cares for and educates children and young people looked after by local authorities.
- The school in Sittingbourne originally opened in 1993. In 2010, it merged with another ISP school in nearby Teynham. The Sittingbourne provision is located within an urban environment and provides a secondary-based education for students aged 11 to 16 years. The Teynham provision is based in a rural setting, in purpose-built provision surrounded by open fields, with vegetable gardens, farm animals and an engineering workshop. It provides an education for pupils aged between eight and 11 years and those aged between 11 and 17 years of age who would benefit from a vocational curriculum.
- The school caters for boys and girls who have severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many pupils have additional learning needs and the large majority have language and social communication difficulties. Many have a history of poor attendance in previous schools.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 34 students on roll, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school aims 'to create an engaging enjoyable and nurturing school environment; to provide children with knowledge and skills for life; to recognise and develop individual potential; to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem; to help children self-regulate and take responsibility for their actions and their future'.
- The school does not use additional provision.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support pupils in making the best possible progress in their learning by:
  - checking that, over time, there is a good balance between behaviour and academic targets for each pupil
  - making sure that the learning objectives which are included in teachers' planning are consistently understood, achieved and evaluated by both staff and pupils in lessons.
- Establish systems which effectively bring together the wealth of information on individual pupils in a way that enables the leadership of the school and the parent company to monitor, evaluate and clearly demonstrate how well the school is doing by:
  - using a system across the school that supports the tracking of progress made against both academic and behaviour targets
  - identifying and using relevant mechanisms that help the school to moderate its own judgements.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Pupils' achievement is good. All groups of pupils make good progress overall, and some make outstanding progress, from P levels and the levels of the National Curriculum through to GCSE. In 2011 all school leavers obtained a good range of GCSE grades C to E and entry-level qualifications. Pupils' attitudes to learning are increasingly positive as their behaviour needs are addressed and met. Good achievement overall is supported well by the development of work-related skills and a strong focus on the key area of communication. Good teaching in English and mathematics lessons supports the pupils' progress in key areas of literacy and numeracy very well. Acquisition of the key skills of numeracy and literacy is also supported effectively by linked activities. For example, a topic on 'Magic' led primary-aged pupils to imagine themselves as Harry Potter. They used this to extend their writing in English and to measure and gauge capacity when creating 'spells' in mathematics and science. Students at the top of the school benefit from strong teaching in some areas of vocational study such as motor vehicle studies. This increases their motivation to succeed, and they build up portfolios of work that demonstrate good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Almost all pupils improve their behaviour and social skills well.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

The behaviour and personal development of pupils are good. In contrast to some of their previous experiences, pupils generally enjoy coming to school and this is evident in their improved attendance. In response to the school's evident care for them, pupils make good progress in managing their anger and anti-social behaviour. They respond very well to the points and rewards systems and are pleased for one another when certificates are presented in assembly. When staff actively encourage pupils to take responsibility for the resources which are used in class, they enjoy this opportunity to contribute to their learning. Pupils show themselves able to think of others through fundraising activities, which they clearly see as important, for example by picking the Royal National Lifeboat Institution as their chosen charity this year.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Knowledge and awareness of different lifestyles and cultures, as well as public services and institutions, are supported well through different projects, visits and visitors. At the time of the inspection, pupils were preparing for the school's performing arts event. It was clear from their interest and excitement that this provides many of the pupils with the opportunity to build confidence and self-esteem and to take the occasional risk. For example, one pupil was able to sing solo for the first time and others were working together to put together a finished production. Their attitude to, and preparation for, the world of work is supported very well by opportunities to grow and sell their own produce. Staff and pupils are rightly proud that they have even made a delivery of home-grown plants to Downing Street.

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

The quality of teaching is good. All staff are committed to the use of approaches which are suited to the behavioural needs of each pupil. They are confident in how to respond to different behaviours and, as a result, there is a marked improvement in pupils' attitudes to school and learning. Good support and high expectations help pupils to feel a real sense of achievement when they gain points for both behaviour and learning at the end of a lesson. Teachers show good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects. Teaching and classroom management are informed extremely well by detailed and accurate baseline and ongoing assessment. Senior leaders, therapists, teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to determine each pupil's needs and to plan interesting and challenging activities. For example, in a primary mathematics lesson, each member of the staff team worked on a different activity and showed that they had a good understanding of their role and

high expectations for each pupil.

There is a good emphasis on all the practical aspects of teaching, such as planning and arranging the classroom. Classrooms generally provide attractive and stimulating places for learning, with pupils' targets clearly displayed. For most pupils, targets are very clear and help them to know how they can make as much progress as possible in their work. For a few others, targets are focused too strongly on behaviour and so are less helpful in supporting pupils' steady progress. In many lessons, teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn and help them to evaluate how successful they have been in their learning. In a few lessons, although learning objectives are included in teachers' planning, they are not always shared with the pupils. As a result, although pupils know what they have been doing, they are less sure about what they have learnt. This makes it difficult for both the teacher and the pupil to build on secure knowledge and understanding as they move on to the next steps within a subject.

### Quality of curriculum

### Good

The quality of the curriculum is good. Based on the National Curriculum, it focuses well on the acquisition of the key skills across a range of subjects. As a whole, the curriculum is broadly balanced and well matched to the individual needs of the pupils. The Key Stage 2 curriculum is effectively based on a 'nurture group' approach which includes literacy and numeracy and cross-curricular themes. Key Stage 3 supports all the main curriculum areas except modern foreign languages. However, when pupils express a wish to learn an additional language, arrangements are made on an individual basis for them to do so.

Key Stage 4 students follow a formal timetable towards GCSE qualifications or vocational awards in mechanics, light engineering and manufacturing, land management and animal husbandry, and hospitality and food preparation. They also access rural science studies within a farm setting. Many benefit greatly from these opportunities to support their academic learning with practical experience. There is also a strong therapeutic element running through the provision which supports the learning and attitude to work for each pupil very effectively. Students in Key Stage 4 are appropriately guided towards entry-level accreditation or that provided by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Careers guidance is regularly available and an extensive range of activities in school and off site contributes very well to pupils' knowledge of the world of work.

### Pupils' welfare, health and safety

### Good

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school's diligence in ensuring that their social and communication needs are met is a major factor in improving pupils' emotional well-being and physical safety. All the required policies are in place, including those for child protection, health and safety and anti-bullying. All are understood and implemented effectively.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils and for the recruitment of staff are robust. Staff training in child protection procedures is up to date and the correct procedures are put into practice immediately if a concern arises. The results of recruitment checks are recorded properly in a single central register. There is little staff turnover so that pupils feel secure with people they know. As one pupil stated, 'I feel safe and happy at home and at school.' Staff are suitably trained in first aid. Up-to-date risk assessments are in place for individual pupils, for teaching, external areas and for educational visits. The arrangements for fire and other emergencies are well established and are implemented effectively. The personal, social and health education curriculum promotes other aspects of healthy living very well. Opportunities for outdoor play and learning are enhanced by trips to local sports centres and the mixed-gender football team.

**Leadership and management****Good**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and staff are committed to creating equality of opportunity and improving life chances for the pupils. They have been successful in changing many students' attitudes to school and have ensured that good teaching supports students' current good progress.

The school has a great deal of good quality information on every aspect of each individual pupil's educational experience. However, this is not always assembled and presented in a way that helps senior leaders to have a clear overview of how well the school is doing or to compare itself with other schools. The management group is already well informed but not as informed as it could be in order to provide the highest level of challenge as well as support.

The school has been extremely successful in establishing a strong and valued position within the ISP company and in the lives of the young people it serves. Very good use is made of partnerships to guide pupils and support those who care for them. There is a comprehensive programme of staff development and the school has a very positive track record of providing training so that its own staff can gain qualified teacher status. A tailor-made staff training programme, 'Action Plus', supports the skills and confidence of staff and carers alike.

The accommodation and premises on both sites are used well, are well maintained and meet requirements. Parents, carers and placing authorities are provided with all the required information and appropriate procedures are in place and used well to respond to any complaints. The views of all those involved with the school are regularly sought and acted upon.

The proprietor and the school's managers have ensured that all the independent school regulations are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119015
<b>Inspection number</b>	420212
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6065

This inspection was carried out 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent
<b>School status</b>	Day special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–17 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	34
<b>Proprietor</b>	Integrated Services Programme (ISP)
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Butler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Craig Walter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–25 March 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£28,129 –£31,061
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 422044
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Sittingbourne.school@ispchildcare.org.uk">Sittingbourne.school@ispchildcare.org.uk</a>



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