

# Acorn School

Little Oak, Knowstone, South Molton, EX36 4SA

## Inspection dates

15 July 2013

## Context of the inspection

The school was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2013 when the school was judged to be inadequate and a number of regulations were not met. The school drew up an action plan for improvement in response to the report. This was evaluated as satisfactory in May 2013 and was accepted by the Department for Education.

This is the report of the first progress monitoring visit undertaken in order to evaluate the progress made by the school in implementing its action plan.

## Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

### Good progress

The inspection of February 2013 found that the teaching was inadequate overall. Teachers did not plan their lessons well enough to meet the needs of the students, making insufficient use of learning objectives to enable the students to make good progress. Staff had insufficient information on the students' needs and attainments. Class time was not always well used. Students' progress was not effectively assessed. The students' behaviour was not managed well enough to enable them to make maximum use of the time available and the students were too easily distracted from their tasks. The school stated in its action plan that new, more experienced staff would be appointed and current staff trained so that teaching was better informed to meet the needs of the students. The school also intended to devise and implement a new behaviour policy and an assessment policy.

During this progress monitoring visit the teaching seen was good. Lessons were planned with clear learning objectives shared with the students, and the tasks given were suitably challenging and matched the needs of the students as outlined in their statement of special educational needs. Lesson time was well used. Students made good progress and showed interest in the lessons. Staff had sufficient prior information on the students' attainment and demonstrated this through their focused questioning which helped to increase the students' knowledge and understanding. Students' progress is now effectively assessed. The students' behaviour is good and staff use effective behaviour management strategies to engage the students and keep them focused on their work. The new behaviour management policy is implemented effectively.

At the time of the last inspection the designated person responsible for child protection had not been trained at an appropriate level. The school stated that this member of staff would be trained. This training has been completed satisfactorily. The school had not carried out sufficient risk assessments on students and daily records of students' behaviour were not sufficiently rigorous. Students and staff smoked on the premises. These issues have now been addressed. Smoking is not allowed on the school premises and an active anti-smoking programme is in place. Detailed risk assessments are in place and the daily

behaviour logs are detailed and regularly reviewed.

The inspection of February 2013 found that the proprietor had failed to ensure that the premises met the regulations as there were not separate toilets for boys and girls or suitable medical facilities. The proprietors have undertaken a refurbishment of the school; as a result, toilet arrangements are satisfactory and the medical facilities are adequate. At the time of the previous inspection all of the required information was not available to parents and carers of existing and prospective students. The required information is now made available through the revised prospectus.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

**The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements**

## Inspection team

Jill Bainton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Information about this school

- Acorn School is an independent day special school for students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- There are currently two girls and one boy aged between 14 and 16 years at the school. All are looked after by their local authority and one has a statement of special educational needs. All have had long breaks in their previous schooling.
- Phoenix Learning and Care owns and runs the school; this company offers residential care and educational provision. The school was opened in 2007 and last inspected in February 2013 when it failed to comply with a number of regulations.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135773
<b>Inspection number</b>	420235
<b>DfE registration number</b>	878/6061
This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.	
<b>Type of school</b>	Independent day special school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	3
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Phoenix Learning and Care
<b>Chair</b>	Keith Burley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Abigail Heard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27–28 February 2013
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£20,900 – £22,800
<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 859720
<b>Fax number</b>	01884 881606
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@acorn.devon.sch.uk">enquiries@acorn.devon.sch.uk</a>

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