

Cotswold Chine School

Box, Stroud, GL6 9AG

Inspection dates 5–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Adequate	3
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate because

- The quality of teaching is variable. Too frequently, pupils are not challenged enough in lessons to ensure that they are making good progress. The quality of pupils' work is uneven.
- Over time, the majority of pupils are making at least adequate progress in English and mathematics. Some are making better progress but a few are making little progress.
- When pupils are not motivated by the teaching, their behaviour becomes more challenging in lessons. This is not always managed well.
- School leaders are hardworking and diligent and have recently taken appropriate steps to tackle weaknesses in teaching. However, there is a lack of shared understanding and an agreed way forward with precise roles and responsibilities for all leaders in the school.
- Those responsible for holding the school to account know the school well on a day-to-day basis but do not have appropriate information to accurately judge the current overall effectiveness and the quality of teaching and to systematically challenge leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils, often with a significant history of disrupted education, say they feel happy and safe at the school.
- Those pupils with the most challenging behaviour learn to manage their behaviour better.

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 standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. An inspection of the care provision took place at the same time. This is reported and published separately.
- The inspector observed all class groups and made a number of additional, shorter visits to observe particular activities. All observations were carried out with members of the school's management team.
- Pupils' plans, books and files were examined. Documents, including those related to the curriculum, behaviour management and safeguarding, were looked at.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, therapists, the Chief Executive of the Novalis Trust, and the school's education and behaviour advisers. There were too few comments on Ofsted's online Parent View to use as a source of opinions. The inspector examined comments from parents and carers on pupils' annual review records.

Inspection team

Stephen McShane, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cotswold Chine School is an independent charitable special school and is also a registered children's home. The school, located in a semi-rural location, is a member of the Novalis Trust, a charitable trust. The Chief Executive manages the trust on behalf of the trustees.
- The school is registered for up to 60 boys and girls aged between seven and 19 years of age. There are currently 55 pupils on roll, 18 of whom are day pupils. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Their needs are related to social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Some of the pupils have additional communication and learning difficulties.
- The school was last inspected in December 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it consistently leads to good learning by:
 - ensuring that lessons are planned that take full account of assessment information and the prior learning of individual pupils
 - making sure that activities are appropriately challenging and interesting
 - ensuring feedback to pupils is effective in helping them to improve.
- Improve the consistency of behaviour management in classrooms so that pupils' behaviour makes a strong contribution to learning.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the roles and responsibilities of leaders in driving improvement are clear and they have the necessary training and skills to carry these out
 - monitoring and evaluation are frequently drawn together so that a shared and accurate view is developed on the effectiveness of the school to inform precise action planning.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

Pupils make adequate progress over their time at the school. The school's data show that the majority make at least adequate progress over time at the school in English, mathematics and science, with some making better progress. A few pupils do not make enough progress, particularly in mathematics. Before arriving at Cotswold Chine, many pupils have had extremely disrupted educational experiences. The school successfully reengages them in education. Pupils become more confident and, perhaps for the first time, begin to learn. Achievement is not good because learning in lessons is uneven. Pupils are not developing their skills, particularly in literacy, systematically enough. Levels of pupils' engagement and motivation in different lessons are variable. This is often related to the quality of teaching. In craft subjects, for example, work is carefully tailored to pupils' interest, specific needs and strengths. This results in pupils concentrating on detailed work for long periods. The results are impressive. Pupils learn technical vocabulary, such as different media and methods in art and good skills in woodwork and pottery. However, in some other lessons, the work is too easy or too hard. This results in pupils not being challenged enough. Written work is often poorly presented, unfinished and does not accurately reflect what pupils can achieve. Pupils attain a range of GCSEs, entry level or BTEC qualifications. When they leave the school, they frequently build on their learning and continue their education at college.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Adequate

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are adequate overall. While the school offers a nurturing and safe environment that supports pupils well, there are inconsistencies in the way that behaviour is managed on a day-to-day basis. Pupils attend regularly. The school tracks serious incidents methodically. When there are concerns about an individual, the multi-disciplinary team of therapists, care workers and teachers put in place a range of interventions that, over time, help pupils to manage their anger or anti-social behaviour more effectively. Familiar and kind staff are also readily on hand to support pupils if they are having difficulties. Senior leaders have recently reviewed the behaviour policy to improve consistency and effectiveness. There are a range of rewards, sanctions and individual plans in place to support behaviour management in the classroom. In some lessons, these lead to a calm and business-like learning environment. However, in other lessons, particularly when teaching is not motivating, there is low-level disruption, with pupils choosing not to work or leaving class. These events are not always tackled confidently or followed up systematically. This impacts adversely on pupils' learning.

Through curriculum opportunities, discussions and good models from staff, pupils become more confident in their own abilities, for example putting themselves forward to be class representatives and learning to be respectful of others. Pupils are informed about life in democratic Britain and the school takes appropriate steps through its curriculum planning to ensure that pupils receive a balanced presentation of different viewpoints. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural progress of pupils is well catered for through a range of opportunities. The morning assembly is a good start to the day, when the whole community comes together and sings enthusiastically. Festivals of different religions are celebrated and used to inform pupils about difference. Art, music and craft have a high profile in the school and are effective in building pupils' self-esteem.

Quality of teaching

Adequate

The quality of teaching is adequate overall, though variable across the school. A proportion is not yet good and this means that pupils' achievement is not good. The school's own records of lesson observation say teaching was previously more consistently good and better. Senior leaders, however, agree that the variable quality of teaching observed during the inspection is accurate and

confirmed their own recent findings. In all lessons observed, there were strong relationships between adults and pupils. Staff use a mixture of gentle humour and cajoling as they work with pupils. Teachers' planning means that activities and resources are ready and there is a pace to the majority of lessons. In the best lessons, there are both stimulating activities that increase motivation and capture the interest of pupils and very clear learning outcomes that are systematically addressed. This means, for example, pupils learned successfully about ratio in mathematics and germs in science through practical activities and a clear focus. In other lessons, the learning outcomes are less clear and activities less interesting. In these lessons, the particular needs of individual pupils are not addressed sufficiently. Previous work or assessments are not built upon. Work is too easy or too hard. There is an overuse of worksheets and frequently these are not well matched to the reading level of the pupil. The emphasis on completion of these sheets does not encourage pupils to think and learn, and prevents them from deepening their knowledge. Marking and feedback are not consistently effective to support pupils to improve their work.

Quality of curriculum

Adequate

The quality of curriculum is adequate. There are some key strengths in the range of opportunities on offer for pupils. However, there are weaknesses in the way that basic skills are delivered to ensure that pupils are making good progress. Pupils study subjects of the National Curriculum and these have appropriate schemes of work in place. There are inconsistencies in the implementation of the curriculum, particularly in literacy. This means that expectations are different between classes and skills are introduced or revisited inappropriately. Progression and challenge are not consistently assured. Interventions that are designed to systematically address pupils' difficulties are not applied rigorously.

Senior leaders keep the curriculum on offer under close review. They have recently reviewed their approach to entering pupils for external examinations so that these provide more appropriate challenge for pupils. They have extended the range of accreditations, which means that pupils can leave with a wider range of qualifications. New opportunities are developed to capture the interests of individual pupils; for example, GCSE physical education has been recently introduced, which supports future career aspirations. The new café, owned by the Novalis Trust, offers valuable opportunities for pupils to work in a public environment, and practise their social skills and develop knowledge of this industry.

The Trust employs a wide range of therapists. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed by knowledgeable individuals who provide interventions and class support. These lead to improvements in language and behaviour and provide opportunities to address specific emotional issues. At times, however, opportunities are missed to make full use of this advice in the daily activities of the school.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Adequate

Pupils' welfare, health and safety are adequate overall. Staff are committed and caring. Independent school regulations are met. However, behaviour management is not consistently effective and this adversely affects pupils' learning.

The school has appropriate staff recruitment practices to safeguard pupils. The school has a single central register for recording checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. There are suitable procedures and policies related to safeguarding and child protection and staff are suitably trained. Pupils say they feel safe. They say that staff will sort out any difficulties they have. Any incidents of bullying, including any racism, are dealt with effectively. School and care staff work closely together. This has led to improved attendance at school. The school has responded to the increase in the proportion of day pupils by appointing a person responsible for regular liaison with pupils' homes. Comments from parents and carers at annual review meetings are very positive about the school and the care their child receives.

All staff complete training exploring their understanding of behaviour and emotions and management techniques, including physical intervention. Senior staff monitor serious incidents and are on hand to support. However, there is a lack of consistency in staff's response to low-level disruption and a lack of clearly planned and recorded targeted approaches to specific behaviours. This means that on a day-to-day basis, too much depends on the relationship between staff and pupils. On the occasions when this is not sufficient, issues escalate and pupils' learning is disrupted.

Leadership and management

Adequate

Leadership is adequate as teaching is not consistently good. School leaders have identified recently the unevenness in the quality of teaching. They have taken appropriate steps to secure good teaching and re-establish consistent practice, with a monitoring regime to check on progress. It is too early to see impact of this work. The headteacher and deputy headteachers are active and driving improvement and have ensured that all the independent school regulations are met. However, the roles and responsibilities of other leaders, including subject coordinators, in improvement are unclear and underdeveloped. While school leaders identified current issues and started to work on them, their analysis and action planning have not yet been sufficiently synthesised and drawn together to ensure that all those accountable for the school have a shared, up-to-date and accurate view of the school's current overall effectiveness. This means that although individuals know the school very well on a day-to-day basis, there is a lack of strategic challenge to improve the quality of teaching quickly.

Leaders ensure a curriculum that is regularly reviewed and responsive to pupils' interests. The processes to monitor pupils' progress are in place, although senior leaders are realistic about the current reliability of these, given the unevenness of teaching.

All leaders promote an ethos of valuing the pupils. They encourage a nurturing atmosphere that supports pupils to learn and make progress. They give time to hear their views and get to know them well individually so that they can support them. Pupils spoken to say they are 'happy' and are pleased with their progress. Their parents and carers agree. The information for parents, carers and others, together with the complaints procedures, meets requirements. The school continues to improve the school premises and ensures continual refurbishment, with the result that all the regulations in respect of the premises and accommodation are met. There are currently building works to improve sports facilities.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education 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/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	115802
Social care unique reference number	SC030367
Inspection number	422706
DfE registration number	916/6040

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.

Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	7–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Proprietor	Novalis Charitable Trust
Chair	Jake Lukas
Headteacher	Ms M Smith
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,650–£70,200
Telephone number	01453 838550
Fax number	01453 837555
Email address	mail@cotswold-chine.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

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 St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

