

Cornfield School

53 Hanworth Road, Redhill, RH1 5HS

Inspection dates 12–14 November 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 students make good academic progress despite often having missed out on significant amounts of education in the past. Most leave with qualifications that help them gain a college place.
- The students show great improvements in their personal development, especially their attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- The quality of teaching is good. The staff know the students well and relationships between them are positive.
- The attention to the students' emotional well-being and work with families, carers and external agencies is very effective.
- The school's leadership is highly committed to ensuring that the school lives up to its declared aims. Leaders have ensured that teaching and achievement are good.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The recent improvements in the use of students' achievement data by teachers have not yet had an impact on the students' academic progress.
- Some aspects of the curriculum are not as well planned as the rest so that opportunities for achievement are missed.
- The school leaders' evaluation of the school does not yet make full use of achievement information. The proprietor is supportive but does not sufficiently challenge school leaders about the quality of education.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet 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

- The inspection was carried out with a day's notice.
- Six lessons were observed including all teaching groups in the school. Additional time was spent in visits to classrooms and other learning activities.
- Meetings were held with senior members of the staff, the proprietor, a visiting officer from the local authority and two groups of students. Additional informal conversations were held with a variety of members of staff and students.
- Students' work and achievement records were examined.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including policies and procedures, logs of premises and fire safety checks, and teachers' planning documents.
- Six questionnaires were received from school staff. No questionnaires from placing local authorities were received. Parents' and carers' views via the online Parent View questionnaire were not available as there were insufficient responses. However, one parent or carer was interviewed by telephone following contact with the inspector.

Inspection team

Greg Sorrell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cornfield School, which opened in 2003, is an all-girls day special school for students aged between 11 and 18 years of age and is located in Redhill, Surrey.
- It is registered for up to 25 students and there are currently 12 students on roll, aged between 11 and 17 years. Ten have a statement of special educational needs and six are in the care of their local authorities.
- All students have histories of previously interrupted schooling.
- Students are placed at the school due to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and some have additional needs including specific learning difficulties. They are funded by a small number of local authorities in South East England.
- The school aims to 'nurture through structure' and states that it is 'dedicated to improving the education, achievements and life chances of vulnerable or excluded children'.
- The school makes use of a range of off-site venues for physical education and sports.
- The school was last inspected in May 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure leaders and teachers make good use of students' achievement data so that planning is even more effective in meeting their needs and promoting students' academic progress.
- Ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are as well planned as the strongest aspects.
- Ensure the proprietor challenges school leaders more effectively about the school's provision and students' academic achievement.
- Ensure students' individual targets are precise and that they, and school reports, focus more on academic learning.
- Seek further means to assist the students to stop smoking.

The school must meet the following independent school standards.

- Where a pupil who is registered at the school is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil should be provided to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 24(1)(h)).

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

The students' achievements are good, as a result of good teaching, an appropriate curriculum and the purposeful and nurturing learning environment. When they arrive at the school, students' standards are typically below average. In large part this is due to prolonged periods out of formal education. The school has evidence that over time students make good academic progress as their attitudes to learning and attendance improve.

Through improved attitudes to learning the students improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills within English, mathematics and other subjects across the curriculum. Their achievements are displayed in classrooms and around the school. The art room display is especially good although other areas of the school contain some examples of their work. The students develop their communication skills in all subjects, particularly in literacy and numeracy when using information and communication technology (ICT). The students with a statement of special educational needs also make good progress due to the support they receive.

The school offers a suitable range of subjects that are examined at GCSE and Entry Level, for example, in English, mathematics, science, art and physical education. When appropriate the students may also take AS levels and BTEC awards in science and cookery. The vocational curriculum has recently been enriched by the addition of the Northern Advisory Council for Further Education (NCFE) award in Creative Craft and Employability skills through a hair design course. All final year students stayed on until the end of their courses and success was achieved at grades B to D in GCSE English, mathematics and art. This represents good progress from students' relatively low starting points. The large majority of students go on to attend colleges of further education and some go to into employment.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

The provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has a strong impact on their personal development. The students' behaviour is good and they appreciate the work that staff do to support their studies and particularly their emotional well-being. One commented, 'We can fall out from time to time but basically we all get on and look out for each other and the staff know where we're coming from.' Attendance is good overall and is a strong indicator of the students' enjoyment. There is a minority of students whose attendance is low and they are subject to focused attention from staff in order to establish improved attendance.

Attitudes to study are good and especially when students are engaged in practical subjects such as art and hair design. Their confidence in adults and their own abilities increases over time. Occasionally, a minority of students struggle to engage in any work, due to relationship issues, and as a result, swearing may sometimes be heard. Much of this is due to students' emotional difficulties and immaturity. Typically, the students respond well to staff and learning resumes. The school ensures that all controversial issues are studied in a balanced way and that any extremist political views are not tolerated.

The students make a valuable contribution to the community while running the local YMCA café on a weekly basis. Members of the public show appreciation of their friendly manner while the students also gain work experience in a commercial setting. Fund raising is regularly undertaken but there are limited opportunities for students to take on responsibilities at school. Their personal, social, health and citizenship studies prepare them well for life in multicultural, democratic Great Britain and ensure they learn about public institutions and services in England. There are good links with the local church, police and public institutions, including health and judiciary services. Students know about staying safe and healthy, although putting this knowledge into practice remains difficult for some. While the uptake of physical exercise is good, several students persist in

smoking despite the school's efforts to discourage the habit.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and enables the students to make good progress in their academic and personal development. The staff team know the students well and the small group sizes and good relationships assist in the development of a personalised approach to learning for each student. In some cases the students arrive at the school with limited up-to-date assessment information about what they know and can do. Staff address this issue by using a range of new assessments that include standardised tests to gauge the students' needs and next steps needed in learning.

The staff go to great lengths to motivate and engage all learners, including those who do not attend regularly. Staff's management of behaviour is consistently good and reduces the students' time off task to a minimum. This improvement over time is well documented by senior staff.

Teachers' use of assessment information has recently been significantly improved and involves providing good quality feedback to students about their work and what needs to be improved. Teachers invite students to assess work completed by themselves at the end of lessons but there is as yet less emphasis on peer assessment. The quality of academic targets has recently improved as a result of additional support and guidance. Individual subject teachers make effective use of the regular assessments of students' progress and each has an overview of progress in their particular subject. However, the students' individual education plans contain some targets that are too broad and imprecise and which focus too much on improvements in behaviour rather than academic learning. Teachers' reports on academic progress also focus too much on behaviour and not enough about learning.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good and enables students to achieve well. It is supported by a suitable policy and schemes of work. The subjects and courses cover the required areas of learning with a suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. A few areas of the curriculum are not as well planned as the strongest aspects. The headteacher has rightly identified the need to extend the planning to provide more geography and history, which are currently taught through topic work and English. The school provides courses which are externally examined and a curriculum that is based closely on the requirements of students' statements of special educational needs and the National Curriculum. It is particularly successful in helping students to make up the ground they have lost and to gain the basic skills they need to be able to undertake and do well in examinations such as GCSE.

Although there is a strong emphasis on basic skills, there is also good provision for creative subjects such as art, music and hair design. Staff recognise the importance of setting work that plays to the students' strengths as well as their areas of most need. For example, when appropriate, there is a practical element such as setting a science lesson in the context of a crime scene where it was crucial to know the properties of materials. Much attention is also given to the importance of examinations and the routes that are then opened up to students. Occasionally, opportunities for maximising academic achievements are missed. For example, the off-site café enterprise and the weekly 'activities afternoon' are viewed primarily as social and are not planned or assessed with the same rigour as the rest of the week. There is an adequate range of off-site provision, including regular opportunities to take part in a range of sports, such as swimming, badminton and squash. The students receive appropriate careers education and are well informed about options after school. Where required, students can access a range of therapies to address their identified needs.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Good**

The provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is good and all the requirements for independent schools are met. The school has an appropriate range of well-implemented policies to promote the students' well-being. A number of policies, including for child protection and others relating to safeguarding, have recently been reviewed and are informed by up-to-date national guidance. The staff have clear responsibilities and work very well as a team to maximise attendance and students' engagement in lessons. Work beyond the school with students' families, carers and external agencies is a strength as is the morning briefing that ensures effective communication from home to school.

There are robust arrangements to ensure the suitability of all staff to work with children, including those not directly employed by the school. All required checks are made and are effectively recorded on a single central register. The designated child protection officer is very well briefed and ensures staff are informed appropriately. All staff have undergone child protection training at the appropriate level and intervals. Staff and students know how to report any concerns to the designated person. The same good attention is given to training in safe restraint, fire safety, first aid, health and safety, and risk assessment. Regular fire drills and health and safety checks are rigorously implemented. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained.

The students feel safe and know that issues of bullying are addressed promptly. The behaviour policy is implemented effectively and students know the rules and sanctions. Valuable work on parenting, the potential dangers of using social media and substance abuse are undertaken through tutorial sessions and in personal, social and health education (PHSE) lessons. Visits out of school and visitors from external agencies also support this work. The arrangements for promoting the students' well-being in respect of exercise and their emotional health are strong. However, there are some missed opportunities to promote healthy eating and the school is very aware that several students remain highly resistant to initiatives to assist them to stop smoking.

Leadership and management**Good**

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher communicates a student-centred ethos which is enthusiastically embraced by senior leaders and all staff. As a result students achieve well. Responses to the staff survey indicated unanimous agreement that the staff are proud to work at the school and included a commitment to its stated aim of 'improving the education, achievements and life chances of the students'.

The school has good evidence of annual self-evaluation whereby staff reflect upon what has worked well and less well and to devise new priorities accordingly. The leaders acknowledge that such evaluations, including performance management reviews, need to take more account of the students' academic outcomes. The recent improvements in mathematics are a good example of the actions taken and the way forward for other subjects and are an improvement since the last inspection. The school development plan also has relevant activities to take the school forward.

Staff have access to professional development that closely matches their subject needs, including keeping up to date with the requirements of examination boards. Training to raise awareness of autism has also been provided although the staff's knowledge of different specific learning difficulties could be extended. The proprietor is supportive in ensuring that the vast majority of regulations are met but acknowledges that leaders could be challenged more effectively about the school's provision and students' academic achievement.

The premises are well maintained and provide suitable accommodation for safe and effective learning. The proprietor ensures that parents and carers receive the full range of information to which they are entitled and that the complaints procedure meets all requirements. The proprietor has ensured that all regulations for independent schools are met with one exception. The school

does not currently send to local authorities an annual account of income received and expenditure in respect of students they fund. All required reports are written for parents, carers and others and give information about students' behaviour but sometimes there is limited information about academic progress.

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/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	133477
Inspection number	422752
DfE registration number	936/6581

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	Day special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Proprietor	Vivienne Spence (Cornerways Children's Services Limited)
Headteacher	Jayne Telfer
Date of previous school inspection	May 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,368
Telephone number	01737 779578
Fax number	01737 771927
Email address	cornfieldschool@cornerways.org

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