

# Apple Orchard Slinfold

Five Oaks Road, Slinfold, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0RQ

**Inspection dates** 12–14 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Pupils' achievement	Outstanding	1
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Quality of curriculum	Outstanding	1
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### This school is outstanding because

- Students' achievement is outstanding. The majority of students make rapid progress, often from low starting points on entry to the school.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. The students have overcome their earlier difficulties and settled into school life.
- The outstanding teaching and curriculum result in rapid improvements in students' literacy and numeracy, and especially their reading.
- Attendance at school is excellent and students confirm that they enjoy school.
- The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding and very effectively safeguards the students, who confirm that they feel safe.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and this strong drive for excellence very effectively promotes the school's success.
- Leaders have ensured that students' achievement and the quality of teaching are outstanding.

### 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

- The inspection was undertaken with one day's notice. The inspector observed 10 lessons, taught by five different teachers, some of which were accompanied by the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with leaders, teaching staff and students.
- No responses to the Parent View online questionnaire were available, but the inspector took account of the views of two parents/carers visiting the school. Questionnaires from seven staff were considered.
- Written evidence, including work in students' books, schemes of work, individual behaviour plans and data on students' progress, was examined.

## Inspection team

Jill Bainton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Apple Orchard Slinfold is an independent special school for boys with recognised behavioural difficulties and is a therapeutic community. The school is registered for boys aged from 12 to 18 years and currently 21 boys attend from a range of local authorities. There are 17 boys who are funded by their local authority who have a statement of special educational needs relating to their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and most have a history of academic underachievement.
- The boys live in residential accommodation owned by Bramley Care Limited, which is registered and inspected separately by Ofsted.
- The school makes use of additional off-site locations for physical education, together with placements at colleges or settings where work experience is provided.
- The school aims to prepare boys for independent living in the community and to improve their self-esteem through the promotion of academic and sporting achievement. They are encouraged to learn strategies to manage their behaviour and discuss their difficulties, both individually with the therapist and in groups with other boys.
- The school was last inspected by both education and social care inspectors in October 2010.

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

- Consider extending further the range of GCSE and vocational studies available to the students.
- Consider extending further the range of therapies to include music, art and drama therapies.
- Improve the marking of the students' work so the students consistently receive clear guidance on how to improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Outstanding

Students' achievement is outstanding, especially in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). This is as a result of excellent teaching and a first-class curriculum, which is very well suited to their needs. Almost all students make rapid progress from low starting points on entry to the school. There is a major focus on the improvement of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Students are successfully entered for GCSEs and Entry-level Certificates, with students also studying AS level in mathematics. On arrival many students have histories of a fragmented education and, in some cases, non-attendance as they failed to thrive in their previous schools as a result of their learning and behavioural difficulties. The achievement of the students reflects their new-found confidence in learning which helps them to make sustained progress. They are carefully assessed on entry to the school using nationally recognised systems for both attainment and behaviour. This information is then used very well by staff to meet the specific needs of the students as identified on their education plans.

During the time the students attend the school their progress is very carefully monitored and analysed and, if required, they can be given additional focused support. The excellent strategies for managing students' behaviour, alongside the high expectation that the students will succeed, brings out the best in them. Students who arrive with limited aspirations and low self-esteem and self-belief in their own abilities achieve success in a variety of external examinations, including GCSE, in a range of subjects. The school intends to expand the range of GCSE and vocational qualifications it currently provides for the students. Although their attainment mostly remains below the national average, students are equipping themselves well for the next stage of their education or the world of work. This includes those students with identified learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The improvement in students' reading is a real strength in the school and many students confirm that they now choose to read for pleasure.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Outstanding

Students' behaviour and personal development are outstanding and this helps the students to settle quickly into the school routine and to engage very well in learning. Relationships are very positive and supportive and students confirm that there is always a trusted adult they can talk to. Staff manage behaviour in a calm and consistent manner and the students appreciate that good behaviour is rewarded appropriately and that the sanctions are fair. Their attendance is excellent and many confirm that they enjoy school saying, 'This school has turned me around ... the staff trust you.' They especially enjoy the sporting opportunities, which are many and varied, with the school entering in local and regional school competitions and achieving a high measure of success in many sports. Lunch and break times are social occasions, with staff eating and talking to the students in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students feel that they have a voice in the school and that their concerns are listened to and addressed at the twice-daily handover times. They confirm that there is no bullying and they are always well supervised. The school provides the students with excellent opportunities to develop their self-confidence and their individual contributions to the life of the school are celebrated.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effectively promoted. The school successfully integrates education, care and therapy to meet the individual needs of the students. Students have individual therapy and group therapy sessions and the school has identified that the range of therapies could be extended to include those associated with music, art and drama. Students learn about other cultures, English services and institutions through both the curriculum, outside visits and visitors to the school. Racial harmony is effectively promoted and the school does not promote any partisan political views and ensures that any controversial issues are addressed in

a balanced way. Students are very well prepared for the next steps in their education or life beyond school through the strong focus on developing their life skills, achieving qualifications and through the enrichment activities, such as the many visits outside school to museums, theatres and places of worship.

### Quality of teaching

### Outstanding

Teaching is outstanding and is instrumental in re-engaging students in learning and helping them achieve such excellent progress from low starting points. Teachers and teaching assistants establish very positive working relationships based on mutual respect and a shared understanding of strategies that work best to get the most out of the individual students. Teachers have consistently high expectations of the extent to which students will engage in lessons and achieve high standards. The students' response to this provision is very positive; the students listen attentively in lessons, engage in discussions and behave very well. They are divided into three age and ability groups, the Commandos, Marines and Paras. This system works well and a combination of direct teaching, individual help and paired work ensures that students are given the correct level of support to enable them to succeed.

The learning tasks given to them are relevant, many are practical and they provide an appropriate level of challenge, enabling the students to make progress commensurate with their ability. Students demonstrate excellent engagement, for example in mathematics in learning about fractions and bearings in a practical and 'fun' way, in games where they participate eagerly and enthusiastically, and in English where they express their enjoyment of poetry. Teachers provide positive, but realistic, feedback in lessons which helps the students to keep on task. The excellent checking of students' understanding in lessons is based on the teachers' thorough knowledge of their capabilities and is a key feature in ensuring that the students make such good progress. Literacy, especially reading, is given a very high profile and is instrumental in making the rest of the curriculum accessible to the students. The systematic teaching of mathematics and ICT also contributes effectively to the students' success. The academic lessons are balanced with very good practical and creative activities such as design and technology, art and horticulture. Resources are good, especially in ICT, and are used well to support learning.

The assessment of the students' work is thorough. Teachers are using both standardised and teacher-assessed criteria well for the assessment of students' work in National Curriculum subjects. The teachers mark students' work regularly but do not always give the students sufficient guidance on how they could improve it. Students are very well prepared for GCSE examinations and they demonstrate confidence in their mature attitude to assessed tasks. Some students expressed the wish to increase the number of subjects they could take at GCSE, a matter which the school is planning to tackle.

### Quality of curriculum

### Outstanding

The outstanding curriculum is supported by clear policies and schemes of work, based on the National Curriculum, which have been improved since the last inspection when there was some inconsistency across schemes of work. It has a strong impact on students' learning and achievement. The curriculum covers all the areas of learning required by the independent school regulations. It is based on academic, vocational and therapeutic strands, which enable the students to make exceptional progress in their personal development and academic learning. There is a wide range of academic and practical studies, focusing on literacy, numeracy and developing scientific and technical skills.

For the less academic students the range of vocational courses offered is designed to meet their needs including food technology which has been introduced since the last inspection. The school's main focus is on raising the students' achievement and their confidence so that students can either go on to college or into employment. There is a major focus on basic skills in literacy and

numeracy. Students are entered for GCSEs and Entry-level Certificates, with some studying AS level in mathematics. They have access to very good careers education, attend open days at local colleges and speakers are invited into school to share their career experiences with the students. They successfully take part in local work experience placements in car mechanics, catering, and on a local estate which gives the students an active role in helping to care for animals.

Students' specific needs and behaviours are addressed through very regular individual and group therapy sessions. The school has also identified that the range of therapies offered could now be extended to include music, art and drama. The very wide range of extra-curricular experiences contributes significantly to the students' personal development. Both the school and care staff work very closely together to ensure a seamless transition from home to school. This helps to effectively promote the 24-hour curriculum. Personal, social and health education permeates the whole curriculum and is central in promoting students' outstanding personal development.

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

### **Outstanding**

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is outstanding and all of the regulations to promote students' well-being are met. Senior staff have undertaken the required training for child protection and all other staff have been trained effectively. The policies relating to the students' welfare are clear and up to date and include child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and health and safety. All the required checks are made on staff to ensure their suitability to work with children, and the information is recorded on the required single central register of staff appointments. A number of staff are trained in safer recruitment and all the necessary checks are made prior to appointment. The school works effectively with other agencies that have roles in relation to child protection. There is very good provision for first aid, with trained staff on duty and accidents and incidents carefully recorded as required. The school provides a safe and secure environment. There is very good management of risk and for addressing all aspects of safety associated with the premises and activities undertaken by the students. The students' outstanding behaviour is promoted through a policy based on the principle of fair sanctions and rewards which the students confirm they understand and believe are enforced effectively by both residential and education staff. Students are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and they have very frequent opportunities for planned physical activities and enjoy a well balanced diet.

### **Leadership and management**

### **Outstanding**

Leadership and management are outstanding and enable students to learn and achieve extremely well. The headteacher has a relatively high teaching commitment. The proprietors and headteacher have ensured that all the statutory regulations for independent schools are met. The headteacher is highly ambitious for the students and what they can achieve and this strong drive for excellence very effectively promotes the school's success. This positive attitude permeates through the school and the students respond by behaving very well, being respectful and considerate to each other and to the staff. The focus on improving teaching, particularly new teachers' skills over a short time, ensures that teaching is outstanding and enables students to achieve extremely well. Staff questionnaires show morale is very high and teaching assistants are all actively engaged in lessons to support students' learning. Leaders know the school very well. The school development plan focuses on maintaining and continually improving the provision and gives clear direction to the school. Parents, carers and local authorities receive all the required information and are kept very well informed through regular reports. Those parents and carers spoken to felt very well informed and were appreciative of the work the school was doing for their son. The complaints policy meets requirements. The proprietors have ensured that the premises and accommodation meet requirements and provide an attractive and safe learning environment.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132069
<b>Inspection number</b>	422741
<b>DfE registration number</b>	938/6258

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>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	12–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	22
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	John Silvester and Steven Thomson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jim Martin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20–21 October 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£389,991
<b>Telephone number</b>	01403 783416
<b>Fax number</b>	01403 786082
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