

# The Annex School

Leyden Hatch Lane, Hextable, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7PS

## Inspection dates

5–7 November 2013

## Overall effectiveness

	Adequate	3
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
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

- Systems for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching, the curriculum and the provision for students' welfare, health and safety, are not sufficiently rigorous.
- The proprietor does not challenge the leaders and managers robustly enough.
- Although there is some outstanding teaching, there is also a small proportion of adequate teaching resulting in uneven progress for some students in some areas of learning. Marking does not always show students exactly how they can improve their writing.
- Despite having good features, the curriculum is only adequate in supporting students' achievement because of inconsistencies in planning. Individual educational plans do not always include clear and subject-specific targets for improving students' literacy and numeracy skills, and so do not support students' learning consistently well in these areas.
- There are a few weaknesses in some of the policies and procedures relating to students' welfare, health and safety.

### The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and students make good progress over time and achieve well in most subjects. Some learning support assistants contribute extremely well to the success of lessons and to students' achievement and personal development. Students make outstanding progress in art, where they also develop independence.
- Good pastoral care enables students to make significant improvements in their behaviour, attitudes to learning and personal development. Students feel safe, enjoy school and their attendance is good. They develop good levels of self-confidence and are well prepared for their future.
- Placing authorities, staff and students are very positive about the school's work.

### 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 carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed six lessons or sessions taught by two different teachers and two learning support assistants, and listened to students read. Meetings were held with the proprietor/headteacher, teaching staff and students. Documentation relating to students' welfare and academic progress was also scrutinised.
- The inspector considered responses to staff questionnaires and the views of local authorities placing students at this school. There were no responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey.
- At the time of this inspection, there was also an inspection of the children's home. A separate report has been written which is available on the Ofsted website.

## Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Annex School is a special school that was registered in March 2007 to provide education for up to five boys and girls aged between eight and 16 years who have special educational needs relating to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school uses alternative provision for a wide range of sports and for vocational courses. It had its last inspection in October 2010.
- There are currently five students on roll, aged from 11 to 17 years, all of whom are boys. All students are in the care of the local authority that places them in this school. Four students have a statement of special educational needs. One post-16 student attends part time and is enrolled on a course at a local college.
- The senior leaders of the school include the proprietor, who is also the headteacher, a lead teacher and a senior manager. The teaching team consists of two main part-time teachers, two full-time learning support assistants and a high number of part-time learning support assistants.
- The school's stated aims include providing 'a safe, secure environment in which learners feel valued in order to make both academic and social progress'.

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

- Raise students' achievement by further improving teaching so that it is consistently good or outstanding by:
  - sharing the best teaching practice with all staff
  - ensuring that all learning support assistants are very effective in supporting students' learning and extending their skills
  - making arrangements for the external moderation of all of teachers' assessments to improve their accuracy and consistency
  - improving the marking of writing so that students always know exactly what to do to improve their work
  - making consistent use of curricular targets to involve students more deeply and routinely in the assessment of their own learning.
- Improve the curriculum to support the teaching more effectively and help students to make even better progress by ensuring that:
  - individual educational plans always include subject-specific and measurable literacy and numeracy targets and the strategies to be used to develop students' skills in specific areas of these subjects.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of welfare, health and safety policies and procedures are monitored systematically and rigorously
  - the skills of the leaders and managers are further developed to support them more effectively in their roles
  - the plans to manage teachers' performance more systematically are implemented fully
  - the proprietor challenges the leaders and managers more robustly.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Students' good achievement is the result of good teaching, good pastoral care and an adequate curriculum. Students make good progress in most areas of learning from starting points that are typically low for their age, because the initial and subsequent assessment of their needs and aptitudes is used effectively to help them fill the gaps they have in their knowledge and skills. In addition, students make significant improvements to their behaviour, attitudes to learning and self-confidence. Achievement is not outstanding because the existing proportion of outstanding teaching is insufficiently high to enable students to make outstanding progress in most subjects. Furthermore, inconsistencies in the planning of the curriculum, coupled with the presence of a small proportion of adequate teaching, result in uneven progress for some students in some areas of learning.

Students make rapid progress in their reading skills because reading is taught systematically and students have many daily opportunities to apply their reading skills in different contexts. For example, the morning 'tea and newspapers' session guides students to read a wide range of news items and deepen their understanding of various texts through discussion. Students' speaking and listening skills are promoted consistently well throughout the school day, which enables them to rehearse their ideas and develop critical thinking skills. However, their writing skills are not promoted consistently well in all subjects and the marking of writing does not consistently show students how to improve their work. Consequently, some students progress more slowly in writing than in other areas of literacy. Students use computers in all subjects and so develop good communication skills. They make outstanding progress in art where they benefit from specialist teaching and are encouraged to explore their own ideas and use a wide range of media and techniques. Students achieve well in a wide range of qualifications, including GCSEs, BTECs, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) certificates and Entry Level Functional Skills Awards, and so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school has received extremely complimentary feedback from course tutors about students who started college this academic year.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. The care and education teams provide a stable and nurturing atmosphere in which students can develop self-confidence and overcome their barriers to learning. A student who has been at the school for two years said of the staff, 'They have helped me to read, increase my confidence and get more opportunities for my future.' Students respond well to the firm boundaries set by the staff and generally behave well in and out of lessons, supported very effectively by their behaviour plans. They are helped to develop self-control and self-discipline through their daily interaction with the staff who support them in making the right choices. Students who joined with very challenging behaviour have made good progress in managing their anger and the school can demonstrate a significant reduction in the number of incidents and restraints. The staff are skilful at using de-escalating strategies and so outbursts are rare. When these occur, they are managed very competently and disruption to learning is minimal. Students are eager to achieve well. Their enjoyment of learning is reflected in their good attendance. Students enjoy the positive working relationships established by staff. They are polite and respectful, and do not take advantage of the frequent banter aimed at reducing their stress levels. Students gain a good insight into all aspects of bullying through training provided by a specialist agency and learn to be safe in various contexts.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Students have many daily opportunities to reflect on their achievements, behaviour and a wide range of issues as they arise. There is a systematic review at the end of each school day where they are encouraged to

analyse their actions and motives, consider others' feelings and develop a sense of social and moral responsibility. Students contribute to school life by making suggestions for improvement and having an input into the staff recruitment process. However, daily opportunities for shouldering responsibilities and developing leadership skills are limited. Students contribute to the wider community by raising funds for charity, recently participating in a swimathon for Marie Curie Cancer Care. Through their ASDAN work, they experience working in the community, for example through coppicing activities. Students develop a good awareness of public institutions and cultural and religious diversity through personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), religious education and educational visits. For example, they have visited the Houses of Parliament. They recently gained a good insight into Indian culture and Sikhism by visiting a *gurdwara* (temple) and speak enthusiastically about their visit in a way that shows an open mind and respect. The school has ensured that where issues are debated, views are presented without bias.

### Quality of teaching

### Good

Teaching is good and enables students to make good progress. It is not outstanding because there is not enough outstanding teaching to enable students to make outstanding progress and because there is a small proportion of teaching which is only adequate. The outstanding teaching is underpinned by excellent subject knowledge, thorough understanding of students' needs and very good preparation. It is characterised by very clear explanations and demonstrations, probing questions that extend students' knowledge and deepen their understanding, and clear direction of the learning support assistants who are extremely effective in supporting the students. For example, one learning support assistant may play the role of a knowledgeable student or a devil's advocate, which stimulates students to participate actively in discussion and substantiate their views. The teacher listens attentively to students' responses to build on what the students already know, and to challenge them. Students make excellent progress by working through tasks of gradual difficulty that closely match their individual needs, extremely well supported by learning support assistants who judge wisely how and when to challenge them. Where the teaching is good, rather than outstanding, not all learning support assistants engage students actively in learning, so that the students do not make outstanding progress. All adults work cohesively together to foster good attitudes to learning and high standards of behaviour in a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere, praising students consistently for their achievements. Resources are used very effectively to support students' learning.

There is a small proportion of the teaching which is only adequate. Where this is so, students do not receive consistently targeted support and so only make adequate progress. This is because the teacher does not check on their learning frequently enough to give them the feedback they need to progress faster, or because learning support assistants are insufficiently pro-active. On occasion, resources are not used effectively. For example, students are not always encouraged to use dictionaries to check the meaning of words, or their writing is sometimes limited by an overuse of worksheets.

The school has a suitable framework to assess students' learning on entry and continuously thereafter. Teachers track students' progress against National Curriculum levels and examination criteria every term. However, not all teachers' assessments are moderated externally to ensure their accuracy and consistency. Students are helped to understand what to do to improve their work through verbal feedback, marking, the setting of curricular targets and detailed annual academic reports. However, comments in marked work do not always give students precise guidance on what action to take to raise their standards of writing. The curricular targets set are not always used consistently in lessons, marking and reporting to involve students more deeply and routinely in the assessment of their own learning. Consequently, students do not always progress as fast as they otherwise could.

**Quality of curriculum****Adequate**

Although the curriculum has significant strengths, it is only adequate in supporting students' achievement because of inconsistencies in planning. This is why it is not yet good. This deficiency, which was also reported in the last inspection, is one of the two main factors contributing to students' good, rather than outstanding, achievement. The curriculum in Key Stages 2 to 4 is broad and balanced and covers all the required areas of learning. It is suitably modified to meet students' individual needs, with an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The provision for art and physical education is strong. The curriculum is flexible in that the school will provide additional subjects for students who request them. Students are appropriately grouped according to their abilities and the requirements of the course they are following. Most choose a combination of pathways leading to a wide range of qualifications. Post-16 students attend part time as they enrol in local colleges. The post-16 curriculum is tailor made to support students' achievement in whichever course they follow at college, in close cooperation between the school and the college. Careers education helps students to make informed choices about their future and the school has plans in hand to further widen the range of work experience opportunities provided for students.

PSHCE permeates the whole curriculum and contributes strongly to students' good personal development. The core elements are taught through a certified course and supplemented very effectively by enrichment activities such as an annual residential visit to Wales that focuses on developing students' survival, social, leadership and team work skills. The school has taken steps towards introducing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme this academic year to further enhance students' personal development. A wide range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities support students' cultural and social development well.

The teaching in different subjects is supported effectively by schemes of work based on National Curriculum documentation. The curriculum is personalised to meet the specific needs of students through the preparation of individual educational plans that are reviewed termly. However, inconsistencies in these plans mean that the teaching is not always sufficiently well supported and students are not always helped to progress at the rate of which they are capable in some areas of learning. The plans sometimes contain more behavioural than academic targets; literacy and numeracy targets are not consistently given. On occasion, an insufficiently wide range of strategies is considered to improve a student's skills or understanding in one area of literacy or numeracy. While sometimes the academic targets are subject-specific and measurable, this practice is not consistent and students do not always gain a clear picture of what to do to improve.

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

While the day-to-day care provided for students is good, the overall provision for their welfare, health and safety is only adequate because the implementation and effectiveness of policies and procedures are not monitored systematically enough to identify weaknesses. The care and education teams work closely together to create a warm and inclusive environment in which no student feels isolated. Good levels of supervision on and off site result in few accidents. Risks are appropriately assessed for on-site and off-site activities. The policy to promote good behaviour is clear and understood by all. Staff are supported well by behaviour plans that indicate clearly which strategies work best with each student. Consequently, the staff promote good standards of behaviour very effectively, which result in a calm environment in which all students can learn. Their work in safeguarding students' welfare is underpinned by a wide range of training including the appropriate levels of training in child protection refreshed at the required intervals. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all adults working with children are properly vetted. All the required checks are properly recorded in a single central register. All staff are trained in behaviour management, anti-bullying and first aid. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and

dispensation of medicines are good. Students also receive training on how to keep safe in a wide range of contexts provided by public services officers and specialist organisations. They say they feel safe and have full confidence in the staff's ability to deal with the few incidents of bullying. They are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through the curriculum, in particular through PSHCE, food technology, and a wide range of physical activities. The attendance and admission registers are maintained properly and attendance is monitored closely. However there are a few weaknesses in the school's provision for students' welfare, health and safety. Although the school now carries out one fire drill per term, which is an improvement since the last inspection, fire alarm tests are not consistently carried out weekly as required. While the child protection policy meets basic requirements, it lacks clarity and detail in part, and so does not support staff very effectively to deal with certain circumstances. Systems used to log incidents do not facilitate retrieval of information for the purpose of analysing patterns. All the regulations are met.

### **Leadership and management**

### **Adequate**

Leadership and management are adequate. While there are some good features, some improvements are needed to the rigour of the school's management systems in order for the leadership and management to be good. Senior leaders ensure that teaching is good and that students make good progress in their behaviour and personal development and achieve well academically. The proprietor ensures that all staff enact the aims and objectives of the school and create a nurturing ethos in which students can flourish. Placing authorities and carers express a high level of satisfaction with the school and with students' progress. They receive all the information to which they are entitled and find the staff approachable. However, leadership and management are not good because the quality of the curriculum and teaching, and the effectiveness of welfare, health and safety policies and procedures are not monitored systematically and rigorously enough. As a result, the curriculum and the provision for students' welfare, health and safety are only adequate, and there is a small proportion of adequate teaching. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and improvement of the provision is supported by useful management plans. The school demonstrates a good capacity to further improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement. There are plans to manage teachers' performance in a more systematic way this academic year, but they have not yet been implemented. The school has identified that the skills of the leaders and managers are not sufficiently developed for some aspects of their roles. The proprietor recognises that the leaders and managers are not challenged robustly enough. The proprietor ensures that the premises are well maintained and provide teaching accommodation that enables safe and effective learning. The complaints procedures are written clearly and meet requirements. All the regulations for independent schools 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/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135198
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC065684
<b>Inspection number</b>	422785
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6122

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>	Special school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD)
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–16 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	5
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	1
<b>Proprietor</b>	Jane Parish (J&R Care Ltd)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Parish
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20–21 October 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£36,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 618776
<b>Fax number</b>	01474 879123
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