

The Evaglades

Inspection dates 30 September–1 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management	Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, do not achieve well enough over time.
- Not enough pupils make the progress they should from their different starting points.
- Teaching has not ensured that enough pupils have gained the necessary skills at the different levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Activities provided by staff are not always sufficiently challenging for pupils, including those that are most able.
- Marking in pupils' folders does not ensure that they are given enough guidance on how to improve their work or enough opportunity to carry out the guidance.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to explore different faiths.
- Directors do not have a clear enough understanding of how well pupils are doing in order to secure the necessary improvements in teaching and learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Recently introduced teaching in one-to-one groups is securing improvements in basic skills, such as reading.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, they attend well, work hard in lessons and have good attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils say that they feel safe because the staff keep a close watch on them. Teaching ensures that they know how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils benefit well from activities in the curriculum that support improvements in their behaviour, build their confidence and help them to take the next steps.
- The recently appointed headteacher is bringing about improvements. For example, she is providing individual tuition for pupils to boost their basic skills well. As a result, the school is improving.

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 inspector observed teaching in two lessons. He spoke to the pupils on two separate occasions in order to explore their views.
- Separate meetings were held with the headteacher and head of education. The inspector met with a placing authority representative and spoke on the telephone to a director.
- The inspector took account of the results of online surveys from pupils and responses from nine staff questionnaires. There were not enough responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) for the inspector to make a meaningful analysis.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included the school's prospectus, information about pupils' progress, the school's own evaluation of its performance, work in pupils' folders, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Jonathan Woodyatt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Evaglades is a small independent special school which is located in a rural village.
- The school caters for girls aged between 11 and 16 years. It aims to meet the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most of those on roll have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school was previously inspected in November 2011.
- There have been significant changes of headteacher at the school since the last inspection. Similarly there have been significant changes of senior leaders in the company. The headteacher and the head of education have been in post for the last six months.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to good in order to boost the achievement of pupils by:
 - staff providing activities for pupils that closely match their needs and skills
 - ensuring that marking provides pupils with guidance on what to do to improve their work and that staff ensure pupils act on this guidance so they do not miss this important opportunity.
- Increase opportunities to enhance pupils' awareness and understanding of more world religions through, for instance, a wider range of cultural visits and visitors.
- Improve leadership and management to good by:
 - increasing the involvement of leaders at all levels in evaluating the school's work, including teaching, to secure a faster rate of improvement
 - ensuring the curriculum provides more opportunities for pupils to improve their basic skills in English and mathematics
 - developing and implementing effective systems to be used to hold the school to account for improving the achievement of pupils.

An external review of governance level is highly recommended to be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Senior leaders express a clear ambition to improve standards and they have been successful in creating a culture which engenders good behaviour from pupils. However, they recognise that they have not done enough to tackle underperformance of staff and that teaching over time has not ensured pupils' achievement has been good enough.
- Leaders do not gather enough essential information about the performance of the school and the systems in place are not effective enough in pinpointing those aspects needing to be quickly improved, such as the standards of teaching and achievement. As a result, they have not been able to hold the school to account well enough.
- The recently appointed headteacher has diligently set about the task of improving the quality of teaching in the school in order to secure better achievement for pupils. She has carried out checks on pupils' levels in order to be clear for herself about how well they are doing. As a result, she is providing work that matches pupils' needs more closely.
- The curriculum is providing more effective support for pupils who need a boost in their basic skills through individual tuition sessions with staff. However, this is not yet fully impacting on pupils' achievement overall.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has made a significant contribution to ensuring good behaviour. It is enhanced by the activities on offer that, for example, ensure that pupils spend social time together and learn to value each other's views and opinions. However, their knowledge of different faiths is at a basic level and needs further development in order to prepare them better for life in modern Britain.
- A representative from a placing authority commented very favourably on the improvements in behaviour made by young people they had placed at the school. They recognise how well the staff have supported pupils' different social and emotional needs.

■ The governance of the school:

The director accepts that the senior leaders have not held the staff to account well enough and that arrangements for managing their performance have not led to sufficient improvements in teaching and achievement. This is because they do not have as clear a view of the school's performance as they should. Consequently they have not acted quickly enough to drive up standards.

Recently, directors have set about organising themselves more effectively and are recruiting the necessary staff with skills to bring about improvements, for example with the recent employment of the headteacher at the school. However, they have not been as effective as they need to be in tackling underperformance in teaching in order to secure good progress and achievement for all pupils.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During the inspection, they demonstrated positive attitudes to staff by responding quickly to requests and typically worked diligently on their tasks in lessons. Pupils were well behaved with each other and their good understanding of each other's needs is reflected well in their good cooperation in and around the school and at different times of the day.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to the school and their attendance levels are high.
- There are no records of pupils being excluded from the school, because they treat each other respectfully. This confirms that the staff and pupils work hard to appreciate and value each other's differences and demonstrates the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- Pupils told the inspector that they sometimes fall out with each other, but that they are good at resolving issues for themselves. The school's logs show that there have been very few incidents of misbehaviour over time and these were dealt with quickly by staff because pupils respond well to them.
- The inspector observed in one lesson that a pupil's concentration slipped briefly. However, because the staff have good skills in managing pupils' different emotional and behavioural needs, they were quick at bringing attention back to the work.
- Pupils know about the school's good system for managing behaviour. They explained how they can gain

rewards on their wall charts for doing things well and how this motivated them to do better.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff and placing authority representatives agree that this is the case. Pupils told inspectors that staff around the school keep a close watch at all times of the day and this helps them to feel safe. Staff have been teaching them well about different ways to keep themselves safe, such as when they are using computers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There have been weaknesses in the quality of teaching in English and mathematics over time since the last inspection. In addition, significant changes of staff have slowed the rate at which the school has improved. As a result, pupils' standards have not risen enough and pupils do not make enough progress from their different starting points because teaching has not been good enough over time.
- Teaching, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and the most able, has not ensured that pupils have made enough progress. This is because teachers have not had the skills to ensure that the work is matched closely enough to pupils' individual learning needs.
- Changes have been made by the headteacher so that the work provided matches pupils' skills and needs better. Scrutiny of work in their folders, carried out by the inspector, shows that pupils' progress is now improving quickly. For example, there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in poetry, plays and letters in their folders.
- Marking is carried out regularly by staff. However, comments written by staff in pupils' folders do not provide enough information for pupils on what they need to do to improve. Where helpful comments are made, not enough opportunities are given by staff for pupils to act on the guidance given.
- The improving curriculum ensures that pupils can learn skills and knowledge in different subjects which increasingly meet their needs. For example, pupils were observed drawing a plan to make a table in a design and technology lesson and talked enthusiastically about how they would make this from wood in subsequent lessons.
- The headteacher has introduced one-to-one teaching and tutorials with pupils, for example, in order to boost their basic skills in subjects. One pupil told the inspector that they recognise that they have improved their reading skills as a result of being given support in this way because work is better matched to their needs. Both the headteacher and teaching assistant provide opportunities for pupils to receive this beneficial support.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress from their starting points across the school is inconsistent due to variable standards of teaching over time. Consequently, pupils do not do well enough in the key subjects.
- Pupils enter the school with levels of skill that are typically below those of similar age in other schools because of previous disruptions in their learning. By the time they leave the school their standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen, though they are still below others.
- Staff reported that one pupil achieved a GCSE in mathematics in the last year. Although this demonstrates that the school can improve outcomes for the most able pupils, overall pupils are not taught well enough to reach this level in the key subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not do as well as they should because the teaching has not met their needs well enough.
- Pupils' literacy skills improve during their time at the school but not as much as they could. However, one-to-one support put in place by the headteacher is ensuring that pupils' basic skills in reading are improving speedily. Pupils are encouraged to read after the school day and activities are provided for them to do so, such as through homework tasks, in order to improve these skills.
- Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to discuss and consider their next steps in learning as part of their personal and social development. In conversations pupils indicated how this has helped to boost their confidence as well as their life skills. As a result, they are well prepared to participate successfully in, for example, offsite education opportunities.

What inspection judgements mean

Schools

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	135292
Inspection number	446261
DfE registration number	888/6098

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted 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	Special
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Female
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Whistledawn Ltd (Northern Care)
Headteacher	Tessa Tyndall
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2011

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