

On Track Education Centre

Totnes

Parragon Building, Ford Road, Totnes, TQ9 5LQ

Inspection dates

24 November 2014

Overall outcome

Unmet independent school standards identified

Reason for the inspection

- The inspection was conducted without notice in response to a complaint received by the Department for Education which raises issues about bullying, smoking and drug taking.
- In addition, Ofsted received a complaint that students are spending too much time on 'distance learning'.
- The school has requested to increase its registered number on roll from 32 to 48 students. The inspection included a suitability check for this material change.

Main findings

- Schemes of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE) cover well topics such as keeping safe from bullying and the harmful effects of smoking and drug abuse. Students demonstrate a good understanding of the risks involved in engaging in such activities.
- The school makes sure that all students cover the topics by training teachers who provide outreach support to deliver PSHE lessons.
- At the time of the last inspection, a few students were timetabled for online learning sessions at home. Since this time, the number of students has increased. Currently, most students are timetabled for on-line learning at home for varying amounts of time during the week. They are sent work to cover, which is checked by staff at a later date. However, there is insufficient contact with staff during the sessions, for example by phone or email, to ensure the students are actually studying, coping with the work, and safe. The amount of time allocated to students for this activity results in a small minority of full-time students receiving less than 18 hours of taught time per week. The school encourages students to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to respect other people. It uses a commercial programme to assess students' social and emotional development and to identify the skills and awareness that students need to develop. The school's records indicate that students are making good progress in the identified areas.
- While incidents of poor behaviour towards other students occur on occasions, students are learning to manage their behaviour. For example, one young person said that when she first joined the school, her behaviour was 'wild', but now she knows how to behave towards others. She also said that she has developed in confidence and self-esteem, and is no longer 'angry'. Another student explained how she learned to socialise with others through forming a positive working relationship with her key worker. All students are allocated a key worker to support their personal development.
- The school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of students have regard to the recent guidance provided by the Department for Education and they are understood and implemented by all staff.
- The child protection policy and procedures meet the regulations. Training for the designated child protection officers and all staff is up to date and at the appropriate levels.
- While some students are wary of the behaviour of a few others, they generally feel safe in

school and are confident to discuss any concerns with a member of staff.

- The school meets all requirements for safe recruitment and for checks on the suitability of staff, including outreach teachers, to work with young people. It records the checks appropriately in a single central record.
- All staff follow consistently the school's behaviour policy and procedures. Incidents are recorded in full. Emphasis is given to helping students to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and to take responsibility for their actions. Staff are proud of the fact that they have not resorted to restraining students.
- Students were seen to be well behaved around the school at break and lunch time. The boys on the engineering course were proud to show their work.
- A few students were seen to be smoking in the designated outside area. The school's policy is to provide a designated area, so that the staff are aware of who is smoking and can help them to quit.
- Students say that on the occasion when they were taking drugs, the police were informed. The school's records confirm that the school took appropriate action.
- The students are well supervised by staff at all times while on the school site. Teachers providing outreach support contact their manager at the school when they meet with the student and again when the student has been returned to their home. However, there is not enough supervision of the on-line learning sessions to check that students are safe when under the care of the centre during this time.
- In line with its behaviour policy, the school seeks to prevent all forms of bullying by helping students to understand the impact of their actions on others. Through the curriculum, for example information technology lessons, students develop an awareness of all forms of bullying, including 'cyber-bullying', and how to keep themselves safe. Policies are reviewed regularly, although more could be done to take account of the students' views.
- Staff promote health and safety well. For example, students list safety checks before working on a car in the engineering workshop.
- Attendance registers are maintained and absence followed up appropriately, so that staff and parents are aware of students' whereabouts. However, the same rigour is not applied to checking that students are working safely online at home during distance learning sessions.
- The industrial units in which the school is accommodated have been converted into a range of teaching rooms and workshops to provide for the full curriculum. The school makes good use of surrounding industries, for example those relating to motor vehicle repairs, to provide suitable work experience for the students.
- The school makes effective use of alternative provision, such as a land-based centre and forest school, to meet the needs of particular students.
- The school has recently acquired a suitable additional centre, with surrounding grounds, on the outskirts of the town to accommodate the proposed increase in the number of students on roll.
- The proposed material change is recommended for approval when the current improvements to this centre are completed.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, and associated requirements

- For the students who attend the centre full-time, provide full-time **supervised** education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education (paragraph 2(2)(a)).

Inspection team

Sue Frater, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- The On Track Education Centre Totnes is a small mixed independent day special school. It provides full-time or part-time education for students with a variety of special educational needs who cannot access full-time mainstream education.
- Many of the students have been excluded from mainstream school and this has resulted in their low self-esteem and low levels of achievement.
- All current students have a statement of special educational needs. Most attend the centre full time.
- The school is registered for 32 full-time students aged between 11 and 19 years. Currently, 48 students are on the school roll. They are aged from 13 to 19 years. The school has requested an increase in its registration number to 48 students.
- The school is located in an industrial estate in Totnes. It occupies three industrial units and also offers outreach services for the students at other venues.
- The proprietor is On Track Education Services Limited, a not-for-profit company. The company owns five similar schools in other parts of the country. Students' school places are funded by their local authorities or care providers. Almost all of the current students come from Devon or Torbay.
- The school opened in November 2005. It was last inspected in May 2013 and its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- The school's main aims are for young people to experience positive achievement and success, acquire diverse skills and knowledge, and develop a positive desire to learn.
- The school provides individual programmes which seek to build on students' interests and knowledge. Students are entered for a range of accredited qualifications.

School details

Unique reference number	131715
Inspection number	454664
DfE registration number	878/6060

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Independent secondary special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	11
Number of part time pupils	7
Proprietor	On Track Education Services Ltd
Chair	Jane Cox, Jan Grayson and Penny Harris
Headteacher	Jane Cox
Date of previous school inspection	8–10 May 2013
Annual fees (day pupils)	£23,520–£34,560
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