

Coxlease School

Clay Lane, Lyndhurst, Hampshire SO43 7DE

Inspection dates	14–16 October and 1 December 2015
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for children and learners	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders have ensured that the school provides an environment where pupils can flourish. The carefully designed and balanced curriculum caters exceptionally well for pupils' emotional needs, as well as providing wide and rich learning experiences.
- The school has rapidly improved since the previous inspection. Leaders diligently check whether their actions are effective. They actively pursue excellence in all areas of their work and have high standards, which they ensure are met.
- The Principal, senior leaders and those responsible for governance have successfully improved the quality of teaching. The vast majority of pupils make excellent progress towards challenging targets. Outstanding teaching, learning and assessment are characterised by consistently high expectations.
- School leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Despite their low starting points when joining the school, pupils rapidly gain the life and learning skills they need to move on to the next stage of their education with confidence.
- The personal development of pupils is outstanding. Many pupils join the school with considerable barriers to success. The highly effective support they receive from all staff, including therapists, ensures that they develop into very confident and positive learners.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to foster positive relationships with others, including other adults. Pupils make outstanding progress in this area.
- Behaviour is outstanding. This is because pupils quickly learn how to manage their behaviour more effectively. Staff consistently use highly effective behaviour management strategies.
- 16 to 19 study programmes are led excellently. Learners are successful in the post-16 courses they pursue at colleges. The school works extremely well with college providers to ensure that learners' learning requirements are fully met.
- Learning experiences are well balanced between physical activity and social and academic studies. Social, spiritual, moral and cultural education is excellent. The school makes outstanding use of the forest environment in which it is located to enhance pupils' progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by developing the effectiveness of teachers' planning so that all pupils are sufficiently challenged by the tasks teachers set.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The Principal, well supported by highly effective leaders, has determinedly improved the school. Leaders focus relentlessly on ensuring that pupils are well nurtured and provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop the life skills they need to succeed. Dedicated staff work together to make sure that the school has a transformational effect on every pupil.
- Leaders and governors have high expectations of staff and pupils alike. In order to ensure that high standards are met, leaders provide all members of the school community with a good balance of support and challenge. This has created a climate of self-improvement to which staff and pupils are fully committed.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved substantially so that it is outstanding. Teachers employ a range of highly effective approaches to ensure that pupils make very good and sometimes outstanding progress. For example, teachers ask pupils to assess their own learning at the end of every lesson, which motivates pupils to try harder and take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school's work. They highly value the pastoral care that their sons and daughters receive. Parents appreciate the regular updates regarding behaviour, and personal and social development. They are rightly complimentary about the information they receive regarding their child's progress. One parent who said, 'My child rediscovered his joy of learning in this school' exemplifies this.
- School leaders have designed highly effective programmes of study that place pupils' needs at their core. An excellent range of learning experiences develop pupils' physical, social and academic skills well. For those in Key Stage 4 and above, there is a wide choice of different pathways, including GCSEs, along with other academic and vocational qualifications. Pupils benefit hugely from an array of carefully thought out learning experiences planned by the school. These enable pupils to gain and apply a whole host of new skills. For example, pupils' problem-solving skills develop well because of the outdoor learning opportunities provided, using the New Forest.
- The Principal and leaders effectively ensure that any barriers that stand in the way of pupils making progress are removed. For instance, pupils benefit from therapies in which they can express their feelings through music and art. Consequently, pupils who join the school, many of whom have very poor social skills, rapidly develop so they have the strong self-confidence to enable them to interact with others successfully.
- The teacher with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has introduced a rigorous programme of monitoring to ensure that pupils' needs are met at all times. Monitoring activities are extremely well focused and very carefully considered, leading to improvements which are then implemented effectively. This aspect of the school's work is of the highest quality.
- British values, such as the importance of democracy, are carefully developed. For example, pupils visited the House of Commons and learnt about the voting system. All pupils participated in elections to appoint members of the school council. The culture of the school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- There are well-planned opportunities, both within and out of school, to improve pupils' social skills. Staff help pupils learn how to control their emotions and develop a sense of their own worth. For example, on residential visits and trips, pupils learn about the importance of valuing their own strengths as well as those of others.
- There are numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural awareness and abilities. Once a term, a day is dedicated to celebrating the food, art and music of different cultures. Recently, pupils learnt about India. They created Indian-themed art, made curries and listened to Indian stories. Pupils successfully develop their understanding of poetry and have achieved national recognition in a poetry-writing competition.
- Leaders make excellent use of the school's location in the New Forest to broaden the curriculum so that it enables pupils to strengthen their vocational learning, as well as to develop socially, morally and spiritually. The staff ensure that the forest provides pupils with moments of awe and wonder, which contribute to pupils' well-being and ongoing spiritual nourishment.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Those responsible for governance have a very detailed view of the school. They carefully monitor information about how pupils are behaving and how well they are achieving, on a weekly basis. They share leaders' high expectations for the pupils the school serves.

- The lead governor makes excellent use of the insight gained in her role across the governing bodies of other schools in the Priory Education Group. This enables her to make direct comparisons between settings, which she uses to challenge the school’s leaders to maintain standards, as well as to do even better.
- The new governance structure that started this year ensures that careful checks of the school’s self-evaluation are made. Governors effectively measure the school’s performance against targets set in the school development plan. This enables the school to improve at a strong pace.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective, including the vetting of staff during the recruitment process and the checks made when they join the school.
- Leaders carefully monitor how closely staff follow safeguarding processes and procedures. Although procedures are robust, in keeping with the culture of self-improvement, leaders make appropriate adjustments to policies, guidelines and procedures following their detailed checks. This means that changes are made swiftly to any areas that need improving. Staff are not complacent; they keep a careful watch over pupils and respond very well to any risks that come to light as a result of their vigilance. Staff very effectively implement any new government safeguarding guidance, such as the duty on all schools to prevent radicalisation.
- Staff are very highly trained and do not shy away from difficult issues, such as the need to use physical intervention. All physical intervention necessary is conducted in line with guidance, when all other options have been exhausted. Very well thought out policies, and a high level of scrutiny by school leaders, mean that pupils trust staff to manage situations that require such interventions very well. This approach has helped reduce the need for restraint for many pupils over time. Pupils comment that the occasional use of physical intervention has made them feel safer; they clearly understand why it is necessary from time to time.
- Governors and leaders respond to the small number of complaints they receive very well. When following up on both informal and formal complaints, they adhere very closely to guidelines. Leaders and governors listen carefully and make a concerted effort to ensure that they truly understand complainants’ worries. This helps them to resolve many complaints informally. Where a more formal response is required, leaders and governors check to ensure that procedures are followed scrupulously and their response is explained clearly. They ensure that any learning points arising from complaints are shared with staff and inform school improvement.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding because across the school, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils make excellent progress towards meeting challenging targets. They use their deep understanding of each pupil’s needs to ensure that everyone participates fully in learning activities, is able to share their ideas clearly and completes written tasks to the highest standard of which they are capable. No opportunities are missed to further pupils’ abilities to think for themselves, which is a key strength of the school.
- Excellent progress is evident due to a highly effective curriculum, which enables pupils to make very rapid advances in their learning. Pupils are highly stimulated by the engaging and relevant topics they study and the enthusiastic manner in which teachers present them. Very occasionally, pupils who have finished all the tasks teachers set, including tasks designed to extend their learning, would benefit from further challenge.
- Teachers plan well, ensuring that activities are varied. They help pupils appropriately to gain and apply key skills successfully in different contexts. Teachers are very adept at supporting pupils in bridging the gap between over-reliance on them and their assistants, to completing work on their own.
- Staff make very effective use of assessment to ensure that they meet the needs of every individual pupil. For example, they carefully assess the ability of pupils when they start at the school, recognising that some take longer to settle than others. In order to gain the fullest and fairest picture of each pupil’s attainment and potential, pupils are tested twice, a couple of weeks apart. Teachers use the information gained from this information to very good effect.

- Occasionally pupils have gaps in their learning due to long periods of absence from education in the past. When this happens, teachers plan bespoke learning programmes, which enable pupils to rapidly gain the foundations that they lack in the subject. The time and effort taken to do this are very well spent because, after gaining essential skills, pupils become more confident and often develop a greater love of the subjects being studied. They go on to make rapid strides in their learning following such programmes, for example in history.
- Teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. They work exceptionally hard to ensure that they employ agreed approaches as expertly as possible. On the rare occasions when teachers need additional help to refine the methods they use, leaders ensure that they are given very effective support and guidance, for example through links with partner schools within the Priory group. Teachers expertly use the knowledge and expertise gained from their additional training, and hold themselves to account for how well newly adopted approaches have worked. As a result, there is a thriving culture of self-improvement at the school, which places pupils' progress at its heart.
- Due to often sporadic attendance at previous schools, some pupils may do better in one topic within the same subject than in another. This is particularly a feature of mathematics where, for instance, some pupils have weak geometry skills but are more competent with algebra. When this happens, the subject leader ensures that pupils' strong skills are celebrated, while at the same time providing rapid and comprehensive support for pupils to gain prowess in weaker areas.
- The highly effective teacher with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs oversees staff responsible for implementing the requirements of pupils' statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. Their extensive notes on pupils' personal and academic requirements are shared with the teaching staff, the therapeutic team and a range of outside agencies, which together ensure that needs are met very effectively.
- In lessons, teachers have high expectations and encourage pupils to try their best. If, on occasion, pupils fall short of these expectations there are no recriminations. The focus is on encouraging pupils to realise that they can be successful, after often many years of perceived failure.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective and utilised skilfully by teachers. They work in a variety of well-planned ways to support pupils to make strong progress, including through more precise questioning and thorough checking of work in books.

The personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- All parents who were spoken to during the inspection were delighted with the school. This was exemplified by one parent who accurately stated, 'Teachers are amazing with the pupils and I love this place for what it has done for my child. For once they actually want to come to school.'
- In often a short space of time, the school is able to turn pupils' very negative attitudes into positive ones. Pupils quickly become confident learners and show a genuine passion for learning. For example, pupils were delighted with their culinary skills during a food technology lesson.
- Pupils learn that by collaborating well they can achieve much more. For example, pupils on the school council were unhappy that they could not have a football pitch in the grounds, as there was no flat area. So pupils and staff decided to work together to create one. Many thousands of tons of soil were removed but eventually pupils had a flat pitch on which to play. All were delighted with the results and additionally this had a very positive impact on pupils' self-esteem, as they realised they could make a real difference through their combined efforts.
- Pupils are helped to become successful learners because of the comprehensive package of therapeutic care they receive. Each student has a bespoke plan from psychotherapists and occupational therapists, designed to help them to better understand themselves.
- Those pupils who attend alternative provision part time are helped to develop their personal aspirations. They report that they improve their behaviour because they see the purpose of the vocational courses that they are studying.

- Many of the school's pupils have been poor attendees at their previous schools. Some may not have attended school for several months or even years. By contrast, in this school they attend very well. For primary-aged pupils, attendance is exceptionally high and this year it is 100%. Boys of secondary age also have high levels of attendance. There are only a few girls in the school. However, their attendance is more variable. This is due to specific authorised reasons. Pupils are invariably punctual coming into school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- As a parent rightly said, 'Once pupils have been at the school for a while they transform.' School records confirm this and show that the number of incidents rapidly decreases over time. During the inspection, no incidents of inappropriate behaviour were observed.
- The school has implemented a highly effective behaviour management procedure and behaviour is monitored rigorously on a daily basis. The impact of this is that pupils quickly start to improve their behaviour in the first few weeks that they attend the school. Pupils get positive feedback when they have considered the consequences of their behaviour on others and so they quickly learn to manage their behaviour for themselves.
- Pupils say they enjoy the welcoming start to the day in the breakfast club. Pupils and staff eat toast and chat, which helps to set a friendly atmosphere for the rest of the day. Many pupils enjoy the responsibility of cooking breakfast for staff and pupils at the end of each term.
- School leaders work tirelessly to ensure that there is an anti-bullying culture: for example, they frequently organise outside speakers to come and talk to the pupils. Pupils say that bullying is rare and they know what to do should it occur. Pupils know how to stay safe, as staff are very highly trained and support pupils by informing them of potential risks and how to avoid them.

The outcomes for children and learners are outstanding

- Pupils make very strong and in some cases outstanding progress from their starting points. This is particularly the case in the primary phase of the school, because teachers ensure that pupils gain a very deep and thorough understanding of key concepts.
- Most pupils make the very strong progress and in some cases exceptional progress needed to meet their challenging targets, due to highly effective teaching and well-focused interventions.
- The breadth of the subjects on offer for pupils to study has a very positive impact on achievement. Pupils gain expertise and mastery in a wide range of non-core and vocational subjects. The courses and qualifications available mean that teachers can make very good use of the forest environment to allow pupils to learn through experiences, such as the highly valued horticultural courses.
- In 2014, the majority of pupils in Year 11 who sat GCSE mathematics were successful in obtaining an A* to C grade. In 2015, pupils completed a broad range of qualifications, which included GCSEs.
- In English, pupils completed various qualifications in both 2014 and 2015, including functional skills Levels 1 and 2 as well as the international GCSE in English language. In 2015, there were too few pupils to report their outcomes in each qualification without individuals being identified. However, the very large majority over the last two years have gained an A* to G qualification in the international GCSE in English language, with targeted pupils achieving the C grade threshold.
- Pupils achieve well because teachers ensure that they are entered for appropriate qualifications and are well prepared for them. All pupils in Year 11 in 2015 who sat GCSE examinations in science, art, information and communication technology (short course), design technology resistant materials (short course), catering, media, film and physical education, gained an A* to G qualification.
- Some pupils, in particular those who are most able, sit GCSEs a year early. In 2015 all pupils who took GCSEs in physical education (short course) and photography gained an A* to G grade. Other pupils gained A* to G grades in English language and mathematics. Pupils made good and in some cases outstanding progress in academic qualifications carefully chosen to provide pupils with a good grounding in key skills, as well as the opportunity to pursue their passions.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in their functional skills, and ASDAN qualifications, which demonstrate their skills in personal and social development. In 2014 and 2015, the majority of pupils who took these qualifications, including at Levels 1 and 2, were successful.

- Standards in reading are often low when pupils arrive in the school. They are actively encouraged to read a variety of books and older pupils help younger pupils read on a regular basis. The impact of this is that pupils' standards in reading rapidly improve. Pupils benefit academically and emotionally from being able to read well. Pupils have the opportunity to read books that deal with issues that they themselves have struggled with.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education. In the last three years, all Year 11 pupils who have left the school have gone on to further education or training.
- Parents of past pupils are very complimentary about the positive learning experiences their children have received at Coxlease School. They say the school has helped them to have high aspirations and achieve well in their future careers.
- Therapies make a very successful contribution to ensuring that each pupil fulfils their potential. They help pupils become positive learners. By gaining a better control over their emotions, and having higher self-esteem, pupils are able to function more effectively as learners and better direct their own learning. The school effectively ensures that pupils develop the resilience necessary to make progress in academic subjects, even ones they have previously shunned.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- The sixth form provision is outstanding because school leaders rigorously and effectively monitor the quality of the provision that learners receive while at college and its impact on their progress. The sixth form leader brings the high standards of the school to bear when he evaluates the provision and, where necessary, asks college leaders to make improvements.
- Learners have the opportunity to study a range of subjects including hospitality and catering, childcare, construction and motorcar maintenance. Learners have a wide choice of subjects from which to choose because of the highly effective partnerships that the school has engineered with local post-16 providers.
- The school has excellent procedures in place to ensure that the transition from the school to college is smooth, including spending a day a week in a college of choice when pupils are in Year 11. The seamless transition learners experience is a major achievement given that some find change very challenging and express concern about moving on from the secure environment of Coxlease.
- Each sixth form learner benefits from a carefully tailored programme of study at one of the local colleges. Leaders assist learners when they choose their post-16 courses, ensuring that they select courses that will help them pursue their chosen career as well as capturing their interests.
- The sixth form leader uses an effective range of monitoring activities when carrying out rigorous checks on learners' progress, including observing learners' learning during their lessons at college. As a result, learners make good progress on their courses.
- Learners who need to gain English and mathematics qualifications study them in conjunction with other academic and vocational courses. They make strong gains in their understanding, skills and confidence through participating in these courses.
- Carefully planned work experiences link very effectively to develop learners' vocational learning. For example, those who study hospitality also work in a hotel in the New Forest. Effective careers advice ensures that learners have the advantage of considering a range of possible options before deciding on a course.
- The school ensures that learners are very well supported both academically and pastorally. As a result, all learners who have started courses in the last couple of years have completed them. Learning support assistants assist sixth form learners excellently. There is regular liaison between assistants and the head of sixth form. Assistants' detailed feedback, based on their close work with learners, makes a crucial contribution to the head of sixth form's monitoring. For those who find it hard to stay on a programme of study, the colleges and school work together to rapidly put in place appropriate plans for attendance and commitment.
- Last year all learners progressed on to employment or further training.

School details

Unique reference number	116586
Inspection number	10006133
DfE registration number	850/6017

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Other
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	8–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd
Chair	Sophie Garner
Principal	Karen Gaster
Annual fees (day pupils)	£80,000
Telephone number	02380 283 633
Website	www.priorygroup.com/location-results/item/coxlease-school---hampshire
Email address	coxleaseschool@priorygroup.com
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2012

Information about this school

- Coxlease School is part of the Priory Education Group. It is situated in the New Forest and provides education for pupils who have emotional, social and mental health needs as well as other complex needs associated with autistic spectrum disorders.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school is registered for 55 pupils aged between 8 and 18. Currently, 29 pupils are day placements and 26 reside in residential homes owned by the same organisation.
- Two pupils who are in Year 11 attend an alternative education provider part time. They are studying vocational courses at a mainstream college.
- There are five post-16 learners, all of whom attend full-time alternative provision at local mainstream colleges. They are studying for Levels 1, 2 and 3 academic and vocational qualifications.
- The school aims are 'for pupils to be safe, happy and to engage positively in their learning and personal development'.
- The proportion of pupils on roll who are disadvantaged is below average.
- The school opened in March 1982.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice. A further visit was made to the school on 1 December to gather additional evidence.
- Ten lessons were observed, most of which were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised.
- The inspectors spoke to teachers, senior leaders and those who are responsible for governance.
- Conversations were held with colleges where learners who are in the sixth form were attending.
- There were two responses to the online Parent View. The inspector also spoke to several parents of past and present pupils.
- Questionnaires submitted by 40 members of staff were scrutinised.
- Documentation and policies were checked for compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

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