

# Action for Children Parklands Campus

Bessels Leigh, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX13 5QB

<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 March 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- This is a rapidly improving school. Leaders, teachers, staff and governors are ambitious for the pupils. All work together to ensure pupils access the support and guidance they need to achieve well and develop essential life skills.
- In all key stages, pupils make better progress than previously from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff successfully promote literacy and numeracy skills in all activities.
- Teachers are skilled at engaging pupils and building a stamina for learning. The great range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits enhance pupils' learning and give them opportunities to put skills to practical use.
- In some subjects, including music, physical education and farming, pupils are inspired by their learning experiences and make rapid progress.
- Pupils of all ages are committed to behaving well. They understand the potential impact of negative behaviour on learning, well-being and future life chances. Incidents of disruptive behaviour have reduced significantly in frequency and severity.
- Arrangements to help keep pupils safe and secure are excellent. This is because pupils' welfare is understood as the number one priority for all staff. Leaders are diligent in maintaining detailed records and communicating with families and other agencies.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders' evaluations and plans for further improvement lack detail and precision. They do not make clear how actions taken improve outcomes for pupils.
- The range of subjects taught is not broad enough to match the interests and aptitudes of all pupils.
- A small amount of teaching requires improvement as it does not enable pupils to make enough progress.

## Full report

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

- Further improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that during lessons teachers consistently check for pupils' understanding and make adjustments, including by re-explaining or by moving on more quickly.
- Sharpen future plans, monitoring records and evaluations to ensure that the intended impact on pupils' achievement is clear and that progress towards stated targets is evaluated precisely and used to inform next steps.
- Ensure that the range of subjects taught is balanced and broad enough to match the interests and aptitudes of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The leadership of the Principal has transformed the school. Major improvements have been secured in pupils' achievement and behaviour and in the quality of teaching and learning. A culture of optimism, ambition and mutual support permeates the school.
- Leaders and teachers are clear about their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. Teachers and support staff report that leaders have high expectations of them, but that this expectation is accompanied by equally strong support. For example, teachers have opportunities to plan together, to observe one another and to visit other schools. Weak teaching is tackled decisively. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated.
- Staff morale is high. Staff are resilient and act as excellent role models to the pupils in their care. Pupils feel safe to express their opinions and views, to take proportionate risks and to offer ideas and suggestions. As a result, pupils play a part in shaping school improvement and in the day-to-day organisation of the school.
- Leaders have focused particularly on raising achievement in reading and writing. All staff have undertaken extensive training. In all classrooms and around the school, including when learning on the farm or in the kitchen, literacy skills are seamlessly promoted. The success of this approach is reflected in pupils' improving achievements in all subjects studied.
- Behaviour strategies and policies are consistently applied. The focus on acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviour is balanced effectively by pupils' clear understanding of boundaries.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and an appreciation of British values are woven into all aspects of the school day, as well as specific themes covered in personal, social and health education and tutor time. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of right and wrong, including racial prejudice and homophobia. Staff do not shy away from tackling difficult subjects, such as child sexual exploitation, in order to ensure pupils gain the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe.
- Leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by observing lessons, looking at pupils' workbooks and talking to pupils about their learning. Monitoring of learning that takes place off-site is effective in ensuring pupils' needs are met. Leaders provide teachers and other staff with useful verbal feedback that helps them improve.
- Approximately one third of the pupils are entitled to additional government funding. These funds are used to provide activities and individual tuition to make up for gaps in learning and are successful in promoting better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders and governors know precisely what money is spent on and evaluate the impact of all strategies.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive and makes a significant, valuable difference to pupils' academic progress and acquisition of social skills. Pupils benefit from regular short trips, such as visits to places of worship, shopping for cooking ingredients and bus journeys to learn about independent travel. Pupils also learn from participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. A caravanning holiday enabled pupils to put much of their learning to practical use, as well as extending their range of life experiences.
- Leaders are acutely aware that the range of subjects taught formally lacks breadth and does not offer pupils the opportunity to pursue particular interests or skills. A review of the curriculum has begun.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, although this is not well documented. The strategic plan is broad and does not make clear what actions must be taken, by when or by whom, in order to achieve the required improvement. Written evaluations of the quality of teaching or of the impact of interventions lack precision and do not make sufficiently clear how well pupils have improved.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors bring a range of highly relevant skill and experience to their roles. They understand their responsibilities and accountabilities and these are clearly recorded. They are well informed and realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, receiving and challenging a range of evidence in order to hold leaders to account. Governors take their responsibility to ensure pupils' safety very seriously. They are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and are appropriately trained. Scrutiny of recruitment processes demonstrated good practice. Governors share a clarity of purpose and, with school leaders, aspire to provide outstanding education and care.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders pursue high-quality support and advice and work in effective partnership with families and agencies. There is a strong focus on supporting pupils with their next steps, including preparing for independent living.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** **is good**

- In all key stages, the quality of teaching, learning and the use of assessment have improved beyond recognition since the previous inspection. Pupils' individual files clearly demonstrate gains in learning over time.
- Daily routines are established in all classes. Individualised activities, timetables, interventions, and behaviour charts all contribute towards a calm, established focus on learning. Pupils are clear about what is happening at each point during the day and the tasks they will undertake. Pupils know what they are learning or working to improve and are able to reflect on their own progress.
- High expectations for effort and behaviour abound. Staff believe that every pupil can and will make progress in all areas of learning. Previous barriers are steadily dismantled.
- Staff are successful in inspiring and motivating pupils as a result of the care they take when planning learning activities. Pupils' individual needs and interests are always considered and lessons build on previous learning. In physical education, systematic use of filming allows pupils to observe their own badminton technique and understand what they must do to improve.
- Teachers, in all subjects taught, have strong subject knowledge and are familiar with the requirements of accredited schemes of work. For example, in the music room, many pupils' award certificates are on display. This allows pupils to make links between what they are learning and their own achievement.
- Pupils who fall behind are identified immediately and are supported well to catch up, for example through additional opportunities to read with an adult, playing word games or by access to additional therapy. Pupils are given the emotional support they need to be able to access learning and focus on their work.
- Looking after the small school farm, growing vegetables and flowers, frequent trips into the local community and participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme are key learning experiences. Literacy, numeracy and life skills are taught effectively through these activities. Everyone understands that learning and high expectations for behaviour are not confined to classrooms.
- Assessment is used well and widely to establish pupils' starting points, and to set and review targets. All pupils have mathematics, English and behaviour targets. Assessments are made in all curriculum subjects as well as in social and emotional development. Teachers moderate their assessments with one another as well as with other schools. Staff and pupils know how well pupils are doing and use this information to set next steps.
- In some lessons, when it is clear a pupil has not understood clearly, or has understood easily, teachers do not adapt their lessons and instead continue along the planned route. On such occasions, pupils do not progress well.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** **is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are aspirational for their own futures. They know that to succeed in adult life it is important to gain qualifications and to be responsible citizens. Older pupils talk animatedly when considering the possibility of living independently or the prospect of paid employment in a job that interests them. Staff take close account of pupils' interests when securing college and work experience placements, in order to maximise preparation for life beyond school.
- Pupils participate actively in school development planning. All pupils are invited to take part in school council meetings. At a meeting that took place during the inspection, pupils understood the rules of participation and tried to speak only when they were holding the microphone. Pupils offered suggestions as to how the school could be improved and how a new pupil might be welcomed. The council meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss racist behaviour, for which pupils showed a clear abhorrence.
- Pupils know that they have rights and responsibilities and know how to complain, or access support, should they feel a need. Pupils are confident in the skill of adults to help them resolve complaints or concerns swiftly.

- When pupils receive education at a college or alternative provision, plans for personal development and welfare are considered hand-in-hand with education. Pupils receive individually tailored support packages and communication with Parklands Campus takes place daily.
- The school is profoundly committed to doing all it can to prepare and support pupils for transitions beyond school, as well as when transferring between care arrangements. Each pupil's file provides a detailed record of the school's work in this regard. Staff care deeply for the pupils.
- Pupils talk with understanding about the difference that attending Parklands Campus has made to their lives and recognise that their own behaviour and confidence is improving. However, pupils sometimes lack control and resort to name-calling in order to aggravate their peers.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has clear and effective strategies in place to provide pupils with consistent incentives and boundaries so that they know what is expected of them and can regulate their own behaviour increasingly well.
- Behaviour targets for each pupil, in each lesson, are on display in the classroom, reminding pupils of the behaviours and skills that will help them to learn. The consistent and persistent use of such strategies results in pupils improving self-esteem and attitudes to learning.
- The behaviour of pupils attending an alternative placement is monitored closely, with daily communication to and from the school. Consequently, any difficulties are known and addressed swiftly.
- When pupils do have an outburst, they are supported immediately by particular staff. Highly trained in behaviour management, staff remain calm and take action to reduce the sense of stress and anxiety. Physical interventions and use of calm rooms are now increasingly rare. Less learning time is lost and pupils re-engage more quickly in learning.
- There is a strong sense of respect, tolerance and responsible citizenship throughout the school. This helps pupils to develop greater resilience and a sense of self-worth as they have opportunities to help one another or adults. Pupils understand the difference between name-calling and bullying and know how to respond appropriately.
- Pupils are prompt to lessons and almost all attend very well, including when attending alternative provision. On the occasions when a pupil does not attend well, the school works determinedly with families and agencies to address the problem. Overall, pupils enjoy school and are keen to attend.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- Pupils join the school at various points during their secondary education. All have experienced significant disruption to their education and may have also experienced trauma in their personal lives. As a result of this and their complex and extensive special educational needs, pupils' attainment remains significantly below that of pupils in mainstream schools and many other special school settings. In relation to their starting points, pupils in all key stages, including in the 16–19 provision, make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils typically enter school with low levels of attainment in reading. Pupils make rapid gains in their reading because the school uses an agreed, systematic approach, which includes adults and pupils reading aloud in all subjects and at formal and informal times of the day. The school has worked successfully to promote enjoyment of reading and enables pupils to understand that reading is key to successful learning in other subjects.
- Pupils are able to apply functional skills in writing. Some use simple sentences to convey meaning, while others are able to write complex pieces. Pupils in all key stages take increasing pride in their work and are demonstrating capacity and willingness to write for different purposes and at greater length.
- Pupils gain basic skills in mathematics, especially in number and handling data. Practical applications of mathematics, including the measuring and purchasing of animal feeds, provide enjoyable opportunities to apply learning. When working on practical tasks, pupils develop their problem-solving skills effectively.
- Observations in classes, pupils' individual records and workbooks confirm that pupils attending the school currently are making consistently good progress. There is no evident difference in the rates of pupils' progress in different key stages. Those who are looked after and those supported by pupil premium funding progress equally alongside their peers in school. This reflects the school's strong and effective commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- School information relating to pupils' attainment and progress is gathered and closely scrutinised. Targets are individually set for pupils and progress towards these targets is meticulously recorded, analysed and

discussed by teachers and leaders. Information from such analysis is used to ensure that extra help or extra challenge are appropriately provided and that pupils' progress is maximised. For example, the most-able pupils who have shown a particular aptitude for mathematics have been further supported by specialist tutoring from Oxford University and have achieved higher grades at GCSE and A levels.

- In some subjects, such as music and physical education, pupils make particularly strong progress, with many learning to play a variety of instruments and sports with increasing skill and competence. Success in these areas further promotes pupils' self-esteem and sense of emotional and physical well-being.
- Pupils are enabled to gain a range of accreditations according to their abilities. These qualifications include English and mathematics functional skills, specialist music qualifications and a range of vocational and academic qualifications.
- Pupils debate social issues with energy and interest. They communicate their views and understand that they need to provide a supported argument. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education, with most going on to college placements. The school works in partnership with pupils, families, colleges and placing authorities to ensure that pupils' next steps are right for them.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123341
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012304

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	7
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	2
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Catherine Dugmore
<b>Principal</b>	Sean Canon
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 390436
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.actionforchildren/parklands-campus.org.uk">www.actionforchildren/parklands-campus.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:sean.cannon@actionforchildren.org.uk">sean.cannon@actionforchildren.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11–12 June 2014

## Information about this school

- Action for Children Parklands Campus provides education for secondary-aged pupils who have behavioural, emotional and learning difficulties. Some pupils have additional needs associated with an autistic spectrum condition and communication difficulties. All pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school is owned by the charity Action for Children, which also runs a home on the site providing residential accommodation for some of the children who attend the school.
- The school admits pupils from outside the local area. Currently, two local authorities place children at the school. All pupils currently attending the school are boys.
- Approximately one third of the pupils who attend the school are supported by additional government funding known as the pupil premium.
- The school provides education for post-16 learners and liaises with Oxford City Vocational College and Synolo business and enterprise centre, to provide additional courses and work-related learning opportunities.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed in 10 lessons. The Principal or vice-principal accompanied the inspector in most cases. The inspector listened to pupils read during the course of their lessons and observed pupils taking part in a school council meeting.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, the vice-principal, the assistant principal, teaching and support staff as well as with governors.
- The inspector spoke to pupils during lessons and at more informal times of the day and looked at their responses to a recent school survey.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of pupils' work, and records of progress and achievement.
- The inspector reviewed the four responses to the online parents' questionnaire, Parent View, and the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including recruitment processes and the checks made on staff concerning their suitability to work with children. A morning handover meeting from residential to school staff was also observed.

## Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2016

