

Cotswold Chine School

Box, Stroud GL6 9AG

Inspection dates 13–15 October 2015

Overall effectiveness **Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Sixth form provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Adequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership, management and governance of the school are inadequate because safeguarding requirements are not met.
- The trustees and the Chief Executive Officer do not check or monitor the work of senior leaders of the school frequently or robustly enough.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure and to provide for their welfare, health and safety is inadequate. The school's procedures to identify and manage the potential risks and hazards associated with school trips are inadequate.
- The number of physical restraints of pupils is high and often higher when they first join the school. The recording of the pupils' views following restraint is limited and does not follow statutory guidance. Pupils do not always have direct access to an impartial and independent advocate following such incidents.
- Teaching is not consistently good or better and is too variable in quality across different subjects. Consequently, pupils do not make the accelerated progress that they need in order to catch up on previous lost learning, particularly in English and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- It is all right to be different at this school. Pupils and staff freely accept people who may have different views, sexual orientation and backgrounds.
- Pupils say that bullying is unusual and that staff help them to deal with it when it happens.
- Staff care about the pupils and build good professional relationships with them.
- The new assessment systems and closer monitoring by senior leaders are helping teaching and learning to improve.
- The school has started to use external support to help senior leaders to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education provided.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Immediately improve the quality and implementation of the school's policies to safeguard pupils and to promote their welfare health and safety by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders and trustees regularly check that the safeguarding of pupils is correctly conducted and appropriately recorded
 - risk assessments are properly undertaken and recorded
 - following a serious incident or one involving the use of physical restraint, pupils have, and are encouraged to use, an impartial and independent advocate
 - high priority is given to following the *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years*, published by the Department for Education in January 2015, in particular to ensure that pupils' voices are clearly heard and their views listened to.
- Continue to reduce the duration, intensity and number of physical restraints, with a firm focus on significantly reducing them when pupils first join the school, and that the 'debrief' with pupils is effectively recorded in line with best practice guidance.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that pupils make consistently good progress, by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is equally strong across all lessons and never less than good
 - teachers continue to improve their use of assessment information to inform their planning, resulting in accelerated progress in pupils' learning, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
 - Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the school, and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 6, 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
 - Ensure that there is a written policy on compliance with the relevant health and safety laws which is implemented effectively (paragraph 11)
 - Ensure that school staff are deployed to ensure the proper supervision of students (paragraph 14).
 - Ensure that the welfare of students at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy, and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a), 16(b)).
 - Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and actively promote the well-being of students (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The trustees and the Chief Executive Officer have not ensured that all of the safeguarding requirements are met. Consequently, the independent school standards relating to the quality of leadership and management are not met. This means that the leadership of the school is inadequate.
- Since the last inspection, the roles and responsibilities of leaders have been clearly defined. However, the extent to which these are performed effectively is not sufficiently monitored. For example, there is no regular and robust system to check and confirm that safeguarding requirements are met.
- The procedures to ensure the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils are inadequate. For example, senior leaders and the trustees do not sufficiently check and monitor the implementation of risk assessments, such as for school trips. In addition, risk assessments are not always reviewed when circumstances change to ensure that the risk is still low.
- The school's procedures and ways of recording the physical restraint of pupils are inadequate. They do not take full account of the *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years*, published by the Department for Education in January 2015.
- Some of the documentation provided for parents and pupils is not as helpful to them as it could be. For example, the handbook for pupils is written in a style that is too complex and advanced for the vast majority of pupils to be able to read on their own.
- The school works effectively in partnership with other agencies to share information so that those agencies are able to provide help for pupils when they need it.
- The school's leaders set high expectations of standards of behaviour and manners. They know the pupils very well and are ambitious for them.
- The deputy headteachers, as part of their new roles and responsibilities, are helping to motivate teachers and improve the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have more first-hand evidence about the quality of teaching in the school than in the past, and now have a more accurate view of the progress pupils are making. Visits to classrooms and scrutiny of pupils' work have helped to promote consistency in teachers' planning and to establish higher expectations of the quality of work expected in pupils' books. Senior leaders are raising teachers' aspirations and helping to identify pupils who could potentially fall behind in their work.
- The curriculum is tailored effectively to individual pupils' needs. It covers all the requirements of the independent school standards. Where therapy intervention or booster support is required, for example in English or mathematics, it is woven into the school day, resulting in more productive use of pupils' learning time. The school now allocates a daily lesson to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This lesson also has direct links with the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) well-being curriculum. Through these and other citizenship lessons, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, develop a sense of fairness and morality, improve their social skills and gain a cultural awareness. These aspects are further enhanced by assemblies and activities in other lessons. However, limited access to the outdoors compromises the development of pupils' health and well-being.
- Pupils are being adequately prepared for life in British society. They have democratically elected their own school council and are taught about British institutions such as the police and health service. They learn about the dangers of extremism.
- Most of those parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View were positive about their child's school experiences.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The trustees are too reliant on information provided to them by the Chief Executive Officer and the schools' leaders. They do not check for themselves that the quality and implementation of matters relating to safeguarding are as good as they need to be. They have not challenged the Chief Executive Officer and the school's leaders robustly enough about their work. Consequently, statutory guidance has not been effectively followed.
 - The trustees are highly supportive of the school. They have provided accommodation, specialist teaching rooms and facilities that are of a very high standard. A good range of appropriate resources is available to support learning and pupils' well-being, such as the medical and therapy rooms.
 - The trustees understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salaries and how pay awards are made. The performance management system used by the headteacher ensures that teachers' performance is effectively measured and checked by more than one person.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching and learning require improvement because teaching is too variable in quality from lesson to lesson. Although teachers plan consistently, they are not all adept at adjusting work in accordance with pupils' learning needs in lessons or over time. Consequently, pupils are not yet making the progress of which they are capable.
- The assessment system, although new, is enabling the school to better identify pupils' starting points. Lessons are increasingly planned to take account of assessment information and any known prior learning of individual pupils. However, it is too early for this to have had a significant impact on pupils' achievement.
- Where teaching is strongest, activities are challenging and interesting. Teachers adjust work frequently to meet individual pupils' needs when they spot that the work set is too easy or hard. This helps pupils to make better progress and enjoy their learning more.
- Teachers' marking and the methods used to provide feedback to pupils are increasingly effective in helping them to improve their work.
- Adults provide good role models for pupils, demonstrating good manners and social skills. They use humour effectively to encourage pupils and work as effective teams during lessons.
- Teachers exploit opportunities to promote pupils' social, moral spiritual and cultural development. They cultivate an environment of respect and challenge any derogatory language in lessons.
- Pupils undertake duties throughout lessons to help them take responsibility for their own and others' learning.
- Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. There is a good range of specialist expertise across the school to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum prepares pupils for different levels and diverse types of external accreditation. As a result, pupils can, and do, choose courses that suit their ambitions at the right level based on their academic achievements.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Pupils are not kept safe because the school does not always ensure that all significant risks have been assessed and minimised.
- The school has not sufficiently promoted the *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years day-to-day in school, or when pupils are at the children's homes*.
- Other than in science lessons, pupils do not get enough opportunities to play outside or enjoy the grounds, at break, and lunch times. This is not reflective of the Rudolph Steiner principles of care and education that the school aims to follow.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including using modern technology. The close monitoring by the school of pupils' emails and the use of electronic 'firewalls' ensure that pupils do not access inappropriate emails or websites when on the school site during the school day. However, pupils need more support and practice outside the school environment to become responsible for keeping themselves safe when using electronic and social media.
- The new SMSC and PSHE programmes are helping pupils to be more prepared for life beyond school and have more positive views of themselves and the world around them.
- Pupils generally arrive promptly to lessons and have the appropriate equipment with them.
- The attendance of pupils who reside in the children's homes is better than that of day pupils. The school continues to work with the families and other services when pupils do not attend school when they should. The school accepts that shared travel arrangements sometimes hinder school attendance and that this needs to be tackled more effectively.
- The new pupil council members are proud to have been elected by the other pupils. They have had their first meeting and published their first pupil council bulletin. They are looking forward to further exercising their new roles and responsibilities and developing class packs to 'Make a noise about bullying' as part of anti-bullying week 2015.
- Most pupils who spoke with the inspector had a clear idea about what they want to do when they leave school. The school provides an external impartial careers guidance service, which pupils can freely use.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school takes the using of physical restraint seriously and the number of restraints is reducing. Nonetheless, the number of physical restraints of pupils is high, and often higher when they first join the school. The school is endeavouring to reduce the need to restrain pupils still further. With the help of a consultant, the school leaders have introduced a new way of welcoming pupils to the school in order to reduce new and current pupils' levels of anxiety when a new young person starts school. It is too soon to judge the full impact of this work.
- Pupils who have experienced restraint do not always have access to an independent advocate, limiting their capacity to participate in decisions about their support or to receive impartial advice and guidance.
- Pupils told the inspector that they liked the new 'token-based' rewards system. They said it made them think more often about their behaviour and learning during lessons. Pupils are proud to receive their tokens and look forward to 'celebration assemblies' to get their rewards.
- All pupils and staff have safety plans. These are shared with everyone so that if someone gets distressed others are in a better position to help them. In lessons, pupils regularly refer to their own 'safety and behaviour' plans and use them to help manage their behaviour, for example by concentrating on their breathing, covering their head or cooling off on a bench.
- The vast majority of pupils who met the inspector were polite and courteous. Pupils who spoke with the inspector said they appreciated that their behaviour had improved and that they now enjoyed their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils generally join the school with English and mathematical skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. The vast majority of pupils also arrive with significant weaknesses in their learning skills, which hinder their progression to higher or deeper levels of learning.
- Senior leaders have placed a greater emphasis than in the past on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills more quickly and frequently. This, along with the improving teaching, is beginning to develop pupils' basic skills and plug gaps in their learning. However, this is not yet consistently effective for all pupils or in all subjects; progress is still too slow for some.
- Pupils are getting better at understanding basic life skills such as using money and understanding how to tell the time. Increasingly, the most-able pupils are given more challenging work that tests their mastery of mathematics and their ability to solve more complex mathematical problems, which they enjoy demonstrating.
- Pupils are encouraged to read and explore different types of literature. Investment in electronic tablets, although very new, is helping pupils who are struggling most with their learning to communicate their thoughts and ideas more easily, while at the same time developing their handwriting skills. This is making lessons more meaningful and fun.
- Science is interesting and relevant to pupils because of the work planned by teachers that involves practical experiments and investigations. For example, pupils enjoy exploring the school grounds and the local common, researching different animals and their habitats.
- Pupils throughout the school learn well in, and through, art and design, and design and technology. Specialist teachers enable pupils to explore their creativity, understand historical developments in art and design and find out about famous artists and craftspeople.
- The well-tailored music lessons match pupils' abilities and particular interests so that they enjoy and are able to make their own music.
- Pupils take part in a range of physical and recreational activities that they enjoy. They are encouraged to keep fit and healthy through regular physical exercise, which most of them enjoy. However, they are not sufficiently able to complement this with informal access to the outdoors at lunch and break times.
- Pupils study an appropriate range of subjects at different levels of certification, including entry level certificates and GCSEs. More pupils now leave with external certification because of the widening range of courses available, better tailored to individual needs and levels of ability.

Sixth form provision

is inadequate

- The same regulatory failures in safeguarding that apply to the main school also apply to the sixth form provision. As a result, the sixth form provision is inadequate. This also means that the leadership and management of the sixth form are inadequate and the independent school standards are not met.
- As with the main school, the assessment and monitoring systems are relatively new. However, case studies show that typically learners have made good progress in their learning and social development.
- Learners are encouraged to build on their achievements at the end of Year 11. The range and number of accreditations, as with the main school, has continued to increase. Learners successfully undertake a mixture of entry-level certificates, functional skills qualifications and BTECs. Learners can also choose to undertake new GCSEs, or resit GCSE examinations to improve their grades, which they successfully do.
- Staff are determined that learners should make the most of their time in the sixth form so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their lives. They adapt courses and published study programmes to ensure that the courses and activities that learners follow are appropriately matched to their interests as well as to their individual needs.
- Learners receive appropriate careers advice. The school has a 'transition co-ordinator' who helps to support learners along their chosen career paths. This support, and the curriculum provided, ensures that learners are developing appropriate skills towards their chosen futures in employment and/or further study.
- Learners undertake work experience placements in a range of venues, including the café attached to the school. This helps them meet with other people in the local community and, with other aspects of the school's work, prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

School details

Unique reference number	115802
Inspection number	10007067
DfE registration number	916/6040

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	Independent
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7–19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	18
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Novalis Charitable Trust
Chair	Jake Lukas
Headteacher	Tim Makaruk
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,650–70,200
Annual fees (boarders)	39 week: £81,900–144,300 52 week: £109,200–192,000
Telephone number	01453 837550
Website	www.cotswold-chine.org.uk
Email address	mail@cotswold-chine.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2015

Information about this school

- Cotswold Chine School is an independent charitable special school.
- The school, located in a semi-rural location, is a member of the Novalis Trust, a charitable trust. The Chief Executive manages the trust on behalf of the trustees.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. Their needs are related to social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Some of the pupils have additional communication and learning difficulties.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are almost three times as many boys as girls. Fourteen pupils attend the school daily, the rest reside in children's homes run by the Novalis Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision and there is no off-site unit run by the school or in conjunction with other schools.
- The school was previously inspected in November 2013.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was brought forward by the Department for Education due to concerns that it had about the safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspector visited classes and carried out joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings and reviews of school documentation were conducted with the headteacher, senior leaders, an external consultant working with the school and the chair of the trustees.
- A meeting was held with the senior leaders of the school and residential provision in conjunction with those inspecting the Trust's children's homes that was aligned with this inspection.
- Discussions were held both formally and informally with pupils about their experiences in school.
- The inspector attended a school assembly.
- The inspector observed pupils arriving at school and at break, lunchtime and at the end of the school day.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including information about pupils' performance and progress, their written work, procedures for safeguarding and for monitoring attendance, the school's improvement planning and those that are required to judge if the school meets the standards for independent schools.
- The inspector took account of the views from an email sent by a trustee, an email from a parent, the 25 completed staff questionnaires and the eight responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Steffi Penny, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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