

# My Choice School – Osprey House

227 Balcombe Road, Horley, Surrey RH6 9EF

## Inspection dates

12–13 July 2016

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Insufficient evidence to make a judgement

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Outcomes for pupils

Insufficient evidence to make a judgement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the school opened in September 2015, leaders have focused too much on resolving issues with the care home and not enough on ensuring the school is effective.
- Leaders at the school have had too little impact on the attendance of pupils when they do access the school. This means that pupils do not make the most of the well-designed programmes of study and career experiences that are planned for them.
- Leaders' evaluations are not sharp enough. They focus too much on the individual stories of the children and not enough on the impact their work is having on their outcomes.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not focused precisely enough on the school's current issues.
- Leaders have been unable to ensure that performance management arrangements have helped to improve teaching and learning.
- There are no governance arrangements currently at the school. A restructure in leadership means that there is now a head of education who oversees all the schools, including the school in Osprey House. However, there is not enough accountability to ensure that this role is having the impact that is needed.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders know the individual needs of pupils very well. They plan individualised programmes of study to support pupils in accessing courses and experiences that will prepare them for their future aspirations.
- The systems for planning and reviewing pupils' individual education plans are regular and useful. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that pupils' holistic needs are considered.
- An ex-pupil is highly positive about the school and the impact of the work of the teacher. The teacher cares deeply for the well-being of pupils. She has ensured that when they are on roll, they continue to benefit from educational experiences despite the issues in the care home.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- None of the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') were unmet. However, there was insufficient evidence to judge the following standards: paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b)(i and ii), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, any of those in Part 2, and paragraph 9(b).

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring their work focuses on protecting the learning experiences of pupils when they attend the school
  - strengthening leaders' checks on teaching and learning by making them more regular and focused on pupils' learning
  - implementing better systems of accountability between the different layers of leadership at the school, including developing robust governance arrangements
  - ensuring that systems and processes are in place to maintain the effectiveness of the school during times of challenge and difficulty
  - formalising performance management arrangements
  - making better use of the opportunities of being a small school to adapt provision to meet pupils' needs, particularly to improve attendance.
- Improve the quality of personal development and welfare by:
  - ensuring the school helps pupils to improve their attendance when on roll at the school
  - helping pupils to make better use of curriculum and careers experiences that have been organised for them.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Issues in the care home, such as high staff turnover and pupils' behavioural issues, have diverted leaders' and managers' attention away from the school. Consequently, they have not had enough impact on the effectiveness of the school. Although the school got off to a good start when it opened, this has not been maintained. As a result of the pupils' specific behaviour issues, those who attended the school when it opened have left. One pupil has used the school since that time, but has also now left and so there are currently no pupils on the school roll.
- The issues in the care home led to the teacher having to use her time to maintain stability for the pupils who live in the care home and not in attendance at the school. This led to a prolonged period where pupils' learning could not be prioritised. Staff were frequently required to maintain staffing ratios during the day, for example. The issues in the care home have very recently been resolved. However, it is too soon to judge if this has had an impact on improving the school's effectiveness, because there are no pupils currently on roll.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning could not take place during the period of instability in the home because lessons were too infrequent and leaders' attention was given to improving issues within the home. There are plans in place to carry out regular checks but, as yet, these have not been carried out.
- Leadership and management have recently been strengthened. The former headteacher of the school is now the head of education across all My Choice schools. This means that she is now much better placed to take a strategic overview of the school, and support staff when there are issues in the home, to ensure learning holds the priority in the future. The headteacher has also brought much-needed stability and resilience to leadership. She has clear plans for improving how teaching and learning is delivered and monitored. However, this is yet to have an impact in My Choice – Osprey House because of the issues experienced in the home and the lack of pupils on roll currently at the school.
- Assessment information about previous pupils shows that they made solid progress both academically and personally. However, at the time of the inspection there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders are not able to show that performance management arrangements improve the quality of teaching and learning because there have been too many changes at the school.
- Leaders plan individualised curriculum experiences for pupils. Each experience is built around the individual education plan targets for the pupils. This means they are rightly holistic and focused on academic and personal needs, as well as the career choices of the pupils. However, leaders have been unable to ensure that pupils make the most of these opportunities. This is because they have not been able to avoid issues in the home and improve attendance which has had a detrimental impact on pupils' experiences.
- Policies and procedures are in place that ensure that the independent school standards are likely to be met when pupils attend the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - There are currently no recognised governance arrangements for the school. However, the headteacher is held to account by the head of education. The head of education reports to the proprietors, but formalised meetings do not take place. The proprietors were not available for interview during the inspection. There was no evidence to show that they monitor the effectiveness of the school. Nor do they hold the head of education robustly enough to account for the school's effectiveness.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is an appropriate safeguarding policy for the school. This makes useful reference to the latest version of the government guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'. Staff benefit from appropriate training to ensure they can implement the policy appropriately. There are clear lines of responsibility for staff and they follow these diligently. Care home staff work closely with school staff, particularly now that the high turnover of staff in the care home has been successfully remedied. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to ensure that they provide appropriately for vulnerable pupils who attend the school. Checks on staff suitability upon recruitment are appropriate and recorded on a single central register.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Insufficient evidence to make a judgement.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. When pupils are on roll at the school, they do not attend frequently enough to benefit from the well-planned personal development lessons. Leaders have been unable to sustain improvements to attendance, particularly when there were issues at the home.
- Leaders ensure that the bespoke curriculum that they plan for pupils is directly linked to pupils' career aspirations. For example, a pupil who was interested in a career in the mounted police had work experience in a stables arranged for her. Nevertheless, due to their low attendance, pupils do not profit sufficiently from what is planned.
- An ex-pupil who spoke to the inspector spoke very positively about how her needs had been met when she moved to the home. She rightly believes that the teacher has put her personal development and welfare at the fore of her work. However, her attendance and engagement in what had been planned for her remained limited.
- Leaders have ensured that curriculum planning takes into account pupils' personal development and welfare needs. This means there are useful programmes of study around how to keep safe, develop safe relationships and respond appropriately in times of conflict. Due to the small numbers the school is set up to provide for, these plans are adapted to the specific needs of pupils. However, it was not possible to review the impact of these plans at the time of the inspection.
- Clear and effective health and safety policies are in place, For example, policies linked to first aid, fire safety and risk assessments all meet statutory requirements.

### Behaviour

- Insufficient evidence to make a judgement.
- Leaders have successfully ensured that there are appropriate policies for managing behaviour and anti-bullying. The behaviour policy makes clear what sanctions would be used in the case of pupils' misbehaviour. There are also clear systems for use if an issue with serious misbehaviour occurs, such as how this will be recorded and followed up. Similarly, there are clear, detailed policies to promote anti-bullying. The quality of these policies means that the relevant standards are likely to be met when pupils are on roll at the school.

## Outcomes for pupils

- Insufficient evidence to make a judgement.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142328
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012975
<b>DfE registration number</b>	936/6005

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School status</b>	Independent boarding school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	0
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	My Choice Children's Homes Ltd
<b>Directors</b>	Mr Alex Hyland and Mr Peter Kazmarski
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Evans
<b>Telephone number</b>	01444 446920
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.my-choice-homes.com/my-choice-school">www.my-choice-homes.com/my-choice-school</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:a.murphy@my-choice-homes.com">a.murphy@my-choice-homes.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- My Choice is a company providing residential care for children looked after. Osprey House is a very small independent special school situated in a large house in a residential area in Surrey. The school is registered for three pupils and operates in a room within the children's home. The school provides education for boys and girls aged from 11 to 16 years who are unable to attend mainstream school. This means the roll of the school can change rapidly. Not all children who live in the home make use of the school, because they can access mainstream provision. The school was registered in September 2015.
- The school admits students who have severe social, emotional or behavioural difficulties which prevent their attendance at a mainstream school. Students typically join the school with a history of disrupted education and have a statement of special educational needs and are in the care of the local authority that places them. When the school opened, it had two pupils. The last pupil to attend the school left at the end of their Year 11.
- The teaching staff are led and managed by a headteacher who works across the other My Choice schools. She started when the school opened. This followed the promotion of the former headteacher, who is now the head of education. The current teacher also joined the school when it opened in September 2015.
- The school aims to 'provide a holistic framework in which young people's emotional, cultural, religious, social, intellectual and health needs are met'.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- No lessons were observed because there are currently no pupils on roll. No work by pupils was available for scrutiny at the time of the inspection. This meant that there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes or how well behaviour is managed.
- There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the following independent school standards: paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b)(i and ii), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, any of those in Part 2, and paragraph 9(b).
- The inspector reviewed the school's management plan and documentation, including curriculum and lesson plans, individual education plans, paperwork used to record outcomes at personal education plan review meetings and assessment information that was shared by leaders. Meetings were held with the head of education, the headteacher, the teacher and one former pupil.
- The inspector also examined policies, procedures and other documentation relating to the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- This was not an integrated inspection. A social care inspection will take place in due course.

## Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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