

Cotswold Chine School

Box, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 9AG

Inspection dates

26–28 September 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership, management and governance are good. Together, they ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- School leaders have successfully overcome the school's weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and have significantly improved the quality of education and care that pupils receive.
- The passion, dedication and drive of the headteacher to provide the very best education and care for pupils shines through all aspects of the school.
- The headteacher is ably supported by his senior leaders, who share his vision. However, subject leaders are not involved in the school's improvement work sufficiently. This impedes their ability to raise standards further in their subjects.
- Teaching is good across the school, including in the sixth form provision. Teachers are highly skilled and passionate in their work. They show a determination to provide pupils with high-quality learning experiences.
- Pupils with a history of extremely complex needs and significant trauma make substantial progress from low starting points. Personalised learning programmes for each pupil ensure that their needs are met well.
- Relationships between staff and pupils in the school are strong. This enables pupils to build high levels of trust with adults in a nurturing environment.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They are kind, caring and considerate to each other.
- Pupils talk with pride about their school. They enjoy their learning. This is reflected in their regular attendance.
- Parents speak highly of the school. They appreciate the quality of education and care that the school provides for their children.
- Teachers do not consistently challenge pupils, especially the most able, in order for them to achieve their full academic potential.
- School development plans carefully reflect leaders' accurate evaluation of the school's performance. However, these plans do not show how actions taken are going to improve pupil progress.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, they do not hold leaders to account strongly enough for the quality of education they provide.

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 leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - education development plans indicate how actions taken will enable pupils to make the best possible progress
 - subject leaders have increased opportunity to monitor and further develop the quality of teaching and learning so that they know what works well and why
 - governors hold leaders more robustly to account for the quality of education the school provides.
- Continue to raise achievement by ensuring teachers provide the highest levels of challenge consistently to enable pupils, especially the most able, to reach their academic potential.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have taken swift action to tackle the independent school standards not met at the previous inspection. The school now meets all the independent school standards.
- Staff describe the leadership of the headteacher as 'fantastic' and 'amazing' and how he 'puts the child in the centre and builds the school around the child'. As a result, staff feel well supported and pupils thrive both academically and emotionally.
- The headteacher is ably supported by his senior staff, who share his passion, vision and determination to become an outstanding school. They share a strong conviction that, despite the many challenges pupils face, they can achieve and succeed both during their time at Cotswold Chine and when they leave. Staff have high aspirations for their pupils, which is clearly reflected in the strong progress that pupils make from often extremely low starting points.
- The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects. Teachers carefully plan learning activities which will motivate and excite pupils and meet their individual needs. Consequently, pupils increasingly enjoy their learning and make good progress. For example, pupils spoke with enthusiasm in the food technology lesson. They described how they had devised their menus, purchased the ingredients from local stores, and prepared, cooked and served a variety of dishes, including chicken kiev and burgers. The delight when their food was served at lunchtime was a joy to observe.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and tracking progress. They provide support and guidance where required. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and impacts positively on pupils' outcomes.
- Learning is enhanced by a wide range of additional activities and trips. Swimming, trampolining and music are among the many varied activities available to pupils.
- Excellent relationships between staff, pupils, parents and carers are fundamental to the success of this school. Pupils feel safe and secure. Staff have a deep knowledge and understanding of the many challenges that pupils face. This enables staff to support pupils' development extremely well. For example, sports coaches have been appointed to work with pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes to develop their social skills. Pupils told inspectors how these activities significantly help them with their academic studies, improving their concentration and resilience.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is carefully woven through the curriculum. The school develops pupils' understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain effectively. British values are taught explicitly through personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils talk with understanding about democracy, the rule of law, respect and equality of opportunity. For example, they spoke eloquently about the recent London terrorist attacks and the impact it has on local communities. They understand that although everyone is different, all should be treated equally and with respect.
- Subject leaders demonstrate high-quality skills and expertise. However, they are not given the opportunity to monitor and support colleagues in their specialist subject.

Teachers do not always challenge pupils in their learning to achieve the very best outcomes. As a result, pupils, especially the most able, are not consistently achieving their full academic potential.

- School development plans are detailed and fully reflect leaders' accurate evaluation of the school's performance. However, these plans do not show how planned actions are going to improve pupil progress.

Governance

- Following the previous inspection, governors quickly developed their roles and responsibilities. They ensured that they had the necessary training and guidance in order to secure the rapid improvement of the school. They worked tirelessly with leaders to ensure safeguarding measures were put in place. They continue to monitor all aspects of safeguarding in the school so that pupils remain safe.
- Governors have a wide range of skills and expertise to support leaders in the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, they do not routinely check that actions identified in the school's development plan are making a marked difference to pupils' achievement. Therefore, while governors carefully monitor the care of pupils, they do not consistently hold leaders to account for the quality of education that they provide for pupils.
- Governors closely monitor school finances to ensure the financial stability of the school. For example, they have been instrumental in securing the finance for the recent building project to ensure that pupils have access to a high-quality learning environment.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Rapid action has been taken by leaders, including governors, to tackle the aspects identified at the previous inspection as being inadequate.
- The nature of the school means that pupils who attend are vulnerable in a variety of ways. Leaders and staff show an unwavering determination to ensure that processes, systems and checks to safeguard pupils are rigorous, robust and continually monitored to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They work effectively with outside agencies and parents to minimise risk to pupils. Indeed, parents express no concerns about the safety of their children while at school. 'This is a therapeutic school, which is just what my child needs. They focus on ensuring that every child is able to learn through being safe and happy,' was typical of the responses received from parents.
- There is a strongly embedded culture of safety and security, which is evident throughout the school. Staff understand that they all share responsibility for safeguarding. There is a shared understanding of the need to protect each pupil from all potential risks.
- Staff receive high-quality training and regular updates on current guidance and legislation on keeping pupils safe. This enables all staff to quickly identify any changes in pupils which may suggest they are at risk of harm and take prompt action with confidence.

- Leaders, including governors, understand the importance of recruiting safely. The school's procedures to check the suitability of staff to work with pupils are robust. All staff are carefully vetted prior to starting employment at the school.
- New staff receive effective safeguarding training as part of their induction. They know the systems to follow and who the designated safeguarding leads are should they have any questions or concerns about the safety of a pupil.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors talked openly about how they feel safe in school, reflecting the high levels of care and guidance that staff provide. Pupils are confident that they can talk to any member of staff about any worries or concerns, and know they will be supported well. This was exemplified by a pupil who described the school as 'heaven'.
- Leaders ensure that the policy and procedures for safeguarding are readily available to parents and carers. These documents are easily accessible on the school's website for ease of access.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked hard to ensure that the quality of teaching is good. Teachers show drive, dedication and resilience, with an aspiration to provide pupils with high-quality learning experiences.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and are pivotal in pupils' academic and emotional development. Staff provide a positive and nurturing environment, which helps to restore pupils' confidence to explore new challenges and instils a desire to learn. For example, in mathematics, pupils were learning about money, calculating the cost of items and the change required. They were then able to successfully use this knowledge when working in the school's coffee shop, bringing a purpose to their learning.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils. They develop pupils' key skills in reading, writing and mathematics effectively while they maintain pupils' interests and motivation. This was exemplified when pupils were able to read and follow recipes to make their own chosen meals using fresh produce they had bought themselves at the local butchers.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm lead pupils to quickly engage in their learning. Teachers carefully use information on what each pupil knows, can do and understand to plan activities which precisely meet their needs. This increases pupils' confidence and self-belief to become successful learners and make good progress.
- Teachers are skilful in how they question pupils to check their understanding and to probe and deepen their knowledge. This contributes successfully to good outcomes.
- The most able pupils typically make good progress. However, more challenge is required by teachers to ensure that these pupils fulfil their full academic potential and gain the qualifications they require to achieve their aspirations.
- Teachers and therapists work well together. They set challenging targets for pupils, which help them to secure their next steps in learning, personal development and behaviour. Consequently, each pupil understands what is expected of them in their work and behaviour. This was seen in a session led by the speech and language therapist. Pupils were learning how to conduct conversations and how to read body language. This was

replicated in the behaviour and high-quality social skills that inspectors observed during the inspection.

- The school employs specialist teachers who are highly skilled in the subjects they teach. They set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Support staff take a crucial role in helping pupils with their learning. For example, in woodwork, staff enabled pupils to excel in the design and production of items such as a table tennis bat and a jewellery box.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say, 'staff help us so much, they are caring, we love it here'. This helps them to settle when they first arrive at their school and to support them in managing their feelings of anger, anxiety and low self-worth.
- Leaders ensure that risk assessments are firmly in place and are adhered to. They are closely monitored and amended when required, to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Individual risk assessments and safety plans carefully set out the strategies that staff need to implement to manage pupils' behaviour. In addition, leaders ensure that the site is safe and appropriately secure. For example, detailed risk assessments are in place for the duration of the current building work.
- Staff receive high-quality training in physical restraint procedures. Consequently, staff are confident in how best to manage the most challenging pupil behaviour. Incidents involving physical restraint are recorded in detail and evidence shows that the number is quickly reducing. Pupils echo this and comment that they are rarely restrained.
- Pupils' attendance is good. Leaders carefully monitor the attendance of each pupil and take rapid action if it falls below their high expectations. Pupils say that they like school and are keen to attend. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of care and welfare their children receive. Many make positive comments about the school, including 'our child has been on a transformational journey'. Another parent stated that their child is 'now 'in a far better position to engage with the world, I doubt this could have been achieved anywhere else'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils who attend the school have extremely challenging behaviour associated with the trauma of their earlier life and their complex needs. The training provided by the school, coupled with their care and nurture, is supporting staff to manage pupils' behaviour well. As a result, the number of fixed term exclusions is low.
- Teachers plan and deliver lessons that excite and motivate pupils to learn. Pupils describe how teachers make them work hard and comment, 'but we want to work hard'. Such positive attitudes enable pupils to make strong progress in their work.
- Staff keep careful records of any incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders analyse these records to identify triggers and patterns of behaviour. The therapy teams work closely

with teaching staff to reduce pupils' anxieties and enable them to engage in their learning more effectively and complete work to a high standard. Pupils' individual learning passports ensure that all staff understand clearly what helps and what hinders pupils with their learning. This contributes to the good progress in their academic and personal development.

- Pupils are highly self-reflective. They recognise that at times they display extremely challenging behaviour. However, they confirm that they feel safe, secure and well cared for.
- Pupils are supervised well at all times as they move around the school and in lessons. However, staff also place their trust in pupils. For example, leaving the classroom to have time to reflect as part of their safety plans. This helps raise pupils' self-esteem and morale.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities. They spoke with maturity on the impact that sport has on their behaviour and learning. Playtimes are sociable times, when they welcome the opportunity to play games such as hockey and football with the sports coach.
- Pupils describe how staff listen to their views. There is an active school council which helps to develop pupils' independence and responsibility. As a result, pupils feel that they have a voice and can see the changes in the school that they have instigated.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Many pupils join the school with extremely negative experiences of education, low self-esteem and low aspirations. Often, there are significant gaps in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills because of previous poor attendance and attitudes to school.
- Pupils study a range of accredited courses, including GCSEs. Subjects include English, mathematics, science, information technology, art and preparation for working life. Pupils are typically successful at completing their chosen subjects. Staff work tirelessly to raise pupils' aspirations. They encourage pupils to achieve the right qualifications to achieve their ambitions, for example joining the police force.
- The number of pupils achieving accredited qualifications is rising year-on-year. For example, in 2017 pupils achieved GCSEs in English, mathematics, science, photography and art and design, an increase from previous years.
- Leaders provide pupils with high-quality external and impartial careers advice. This helps pupils to move into further education, employment or training when they leave the school.
- Current pupils are making good progress in all year groups. There is no discernible difference in the achievement of different groups of learners. However, leaders recognise that there is more work to be done in order that pupils achieve their full academic potential, especially the most able. This is because sometimes teachers do not plan activities that are sufficiently challenging to enable these pupils to make the strongest progress.

Sixth form provision

Good

- All aspects of sixth-form provision are good. Leaders and managers ensure that the good progress gained by pupils in the main school continues in the sixth form.
- Relationships between staff and students are exemplary. These relationships are based on mutual respect and the understanding of staff for each individual student and their individual needs.
- Students receive high-quality careers advice from staff and an independent careers consultant. They have appropriate experiences of the world of work. Students speak with pride about the work experiences they have in their locality. They use their increasing skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics to good effect. For example, the school's café is a firm favourite. Here, students have the chance to hone their skills, meeting and serving the local residents who make use of this facility.
- Teaching in the sixth form is effective. Teachers have a detailed understanding of the learning needs of each pupil. They plan learning activities which carefully meet their needs. They question students effectively to check their understanding, embed learning and challenge their thinking. Consequently, students typically make good progress in their learning across the subjects they are studying. However, leaders are not complacent and are aware that further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that students make the very best possible progress and fulfil their potential.
- Students speak with enthusiasm about their new common room. They appreciate the trust of staff to use this facility, which enables them to further develop their social skills and independence. For example, they welcome the opportunity to make drinks and socialise with their friends.

School details

Unique reference number	115802
DfE registration number	916/6040
Inspection number	10035561

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 Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	13
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Novalis Charitable Trust
Chair	Jake Lukas
Headteacher	Tim Makaruk
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,282.50 – £73,710
Telephone number	01453837550
Website	www.cotswold-chine.org.uk
Email address	mail@cotswold-chine.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–15 October 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 an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. Their needs are related to social, emotional or behavioural difficulties due to significant trauma in their lives. Most pupils have additional communication and learning difficulties.
- The school does not use any alternative provision. There is no off-site unit run by the school or in conjunction with other schools.
- The school is currently undergoing a building project to provide additional facilities for pupils which includes a sports hall.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class; all observations were conducted jointly with leaders. The quality of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, staff and governors.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to listen to their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's development plan, and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress. Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered the eight responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 10 text messages were taken into account. Inspectors spoke to a parent informally at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tonwen Empson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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