

The Anderson School

Enterprise Campus, Luxborough Lane, Chigwell Essex IG7 5AB

Inspection dates

1–3 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Sixth form provision	Insufficient evidence
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There is inconsistency in the standard of teaching, learning and assessment. Tasks set do not offer the right level of challenge to ensure that pupils make good progress across all subjects. Staff do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' work.
- There is room for improvement in how effectively the school communicates with parents, especially when they have concerns.
- Systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing learning are not fully embedded. This means that pupils do not make the good progress that they should.
- Systems to monitor and improve pupils' personal development are not fully developed. Outcomes across the school are not consistently good. In English and science, pupils do not make enough progress. Not all learning mentors raise expectations of pupils' work.
- Key stage 4 and key stage 5 schemes of work are not developed.
- Leaders do not check the school's work rigorously against the independent school standards.

The school has the following strengths

- This new school opened in September 2017. The new principal has high ambition and is committed to improvement.
- The governing body is determined for the school to move forward and provides a healthy balance of support and challenge.
- The curriculum is carefully constructed to meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is strong because teaching in this subject is effective.
- Staff have positive relationships with pupils. The vast majority of pupils are settled and happy at the school. Pupils feel safe.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Staff know pupils very well and provide good quality of care.

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?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders have a precise understanding of the independent school standards and that they understand how to meet all of them
 - devising and implementing a whole-school strategy to improve communication with parents
 - embedding a robust and reliable system for analysing pupils' attainment and progress
 - further developing systems for tracking pupils' progress to ensure that all aspects of pupils' personal development are incorporated.
- Improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by making sure that teachers consistently:
 - have high expectations of what all pupils should achieve during lessons
 - provide tasks and set the right level of challenge to enable pupils to build quickly on their previous learning
 - ensure that learning mentors insist on the highest standards of work by pupils.
 - ensure that the achievement of pupils across all subjects is good.
- Ensure that strategic planning is in place for the key stage 4 curriculum and the sixth form as the school increases each year.
- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Leaders recognise that further improvement is needed to make sure that teaching and pupils' achievement are consistently good.
- The school's own self-evaluation lacks rigour and lacks an evaluative focus. Leaders have not based their assessment on meeting the independent school standards. The action plan does not give these key school improvement aspects sufficient priority.
- The school's systems and procedures for recording and analysing the progress made by individual pupils are not robust and lack reliability. The newly appointed leader for assessment and data acknowledges this. Not all assessments are accurate.
- Pupils do not get the help that they need consistently. Learning mentors do not have the skills they need to effectively support learning. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- Senior leaders have not yet gained the full support of parents in what they are trying to achieve. Some parents suggested that communication between home and school could be improved. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that parents are well informed and understand how the school is working to improve pupils' progress.
- The principal has a clear vision and is ambitious for the new school which opened in September 2017. The senior team works cohesively to move the school forward. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. New systems are not fully embedded or effective.
- Leaders are working together to nurture pupils' higher aspirations. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and in social areas and are keen to achieve.
- The curriculum is well organised. School leaders are presently increasing the number of staff to include a specialist humanities teacher, a specialist arts teacher and more learning mentors. Pupils value the extra-curricular activities available, saying that these help them to build skills across different areas.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Leaders' work in this area prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have an understanding of democracy. They take part in democratic elections in school, voting for representatives on the school council.
- Leaders have carefully analysed the spending and impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Money has been used effectively to provide a breakfast club at the start of the day. This is a direct benefit to pupils in terms of engagement in lessons. It also supports a calm start to their day.
- Later this year the school are opening their new enterprise centre as part of the enterprise campus which also houses The Anderson School. It will be one of the first on-site training and learning facilities, aimed at preparing young autistic people for the world of work.

- The overwhelming majority of staff say that the school is well led and managed. Staff morale is high. They feel well supported by leaders.
- The professional development of staff is a high priority for the school. Inspection evidence confirmed that leaders ensure that teachers have access to a wide range of training on autism, including that available online.
- The school promotes equal opportunities effectively. Careful monitoring ensures that there is no discrimination within the school.

Governance

- The chief executive officer is highly ambitious for the school and its pupils. He has a realistic understanding of the school's development since it opened.
- The governing body ensures that its statutory duties are met. It has ensured that the school has published a suitable safeguarding policy on its website.
- The school's governing body, led by an effective chair, provides strong support and challenge for the school to improve. Governors bring a range of knowledge and professional expertise to the school to oversee its development. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They receive regular reports from the principal about the school's progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a safeguarding policy published on its website which takes into account the latest statutory requirements.
- Leaders and governors fully understand how to recruit safely. All required checks carried out prior to commencing employment are rigorous.
- Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including the government's 'Prevent' duty to combat the risks of radicalisation and extremism. The school is committed to keeping pupils safe. All staff have received appropriate and up-to-date training in safeguarding children. This includes those who lead on safeguarding.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff have received and read the latest guidance on safeguarding, 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016). They understand what to do if they are concerned about pupils.
- Effective systems are used to monitor those at risk of harm.
- Leaders have a precise understanding of the context in which pupils and their families live. Staff, irrespective of their role, know the pupils extremely well.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including when using social media. They indicate that they are happy and safe at school. They know that staff in school will support them if they have any worries or concerns.
- The school site is well kept, well supervised and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable. The tailoring of teaching to pupils' specific needs is inconsistent within classes and across subject areas. Where the learning is less effective, pupils' work does not challenge them. In English and science, pupils do not make the progress that they should.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively. This means that teachers do not respond quickly enough to pupils' needs. Assessments are not always accurate.
- Learning mentors do not consistently provide effective support for pupils, to help them practise and consolidate their learning. Teachers do not consistently direct the work of learning mentors effectively for pupils to benefit from this additional support.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils trust the adults they work with. As a result, they focus well on the tasks they are given, with positive attitudes.
- Where pupils learn best, for example in mathematics, teachers plan lessons that require pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning. Pupils are able to apply their knowledge and solve problems by thinking for themselves.
- Where learning is successful, teachers ask questions which are precisely matched to the needs of pupils. They stretch pupils' thinking and extend their learning. This is particularly the case in 'life skills', where pupils were seen to examine the way they deal with their emotions.
- Reading is promoted well. Daily opportunities for pupils to read and the school's library give reading a high profile. Pupils make consistently good progress in developing their comprehension skills.
- The atmosphere in classrooms is calm and conducive to learning. Relationships in lessons are positive and respectful. Teachers create clear and efficient routines, in line with school policy. Pupils are attentive and keen to do their best.
- Pupils told the inspector that they enjoy their lessons and that staff help them to boost their self-esteem and confidence. One pupil, who echoed the views of many, said, 'The lessons are cool. The staff help you to understand things.' Another said, 'I can always turn to someone if I need help.'
- As pupils' self-esteem and confidence increases, they become confident young learners who show a passion for learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Social times are well supported by adults to ensure that pupils develop their interpersonal skills, especially during the breakfast club. The dining area encourages pupils to eat together and they do so in a quiet and polite way. Pupils learn appropriate communication and interaction and demonstrate the utmost respect for their peers and adults.

- Pupils are highly self-reflective and state that they feel safe, secure and well cared for. Those pupils who are members of the active school council take pride in their role, feel that they have a voice and are keen to represent the views of their peers. This helps to develop pupils' independence and responsibility.
- Pupils receive suitable careers advice and guidance. Since the school opened, leaders have been busily arranging opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work. Leaders are developing further opportunities for pupils to gain business experience through on-site enterprise activities. The school is planning to provide further training for pupils in the skills they need to apply for work and to become confident in interviews.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils conduct themselves well around the school. Movement around the school is appropriately managed by adults, so there is limited opportunity for negative situations to arise. A positive, caring atmosphere prevails.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good. Throughout the inspection they were polite, respectful and courteous. Pupils value and understand the school's system for rewarding their effort and progress in learning. Leaders have set high expectations for behaviour. Pupils understand, and most meet these expectations.
- The vast majority of pupils arrive at lessons ready to learn. A large majority of pupils demonstrate classroom behaviour of a high standard, regardless of the quality of teaching. They are committed to their learning and have respectful attitudes towards visitors and their peers.
- Pupils told the inspector that bullying is rare. Pupils are very confident that any concerns can be shared with adults in the school, whom they trust to handle any potentially awkward situations sensitively and to resolve problems quickly.
- The school has revised its behaviour policy. It is routinely applied by all staff. Staff keep careful records of any incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders analyse these records to identify triggers and patterns of behaviour. They introduce appropriate strategies personalised to the pupils to help them improve their conduct.
- Staff are skilful in managing any potential disruption sensitively and consistently well. This demonstrates teachers' and learning mentors' strong knowledge of pupils and their confident approach to handling potentially volatile behaviour. The therapy team works closely with teaching staff to reduce pupils' anxieties and to enable them to engage in their learning more effectively.
- The school maintains up-to-date admissions and attendance registers. Pupils typically have a history of poor attendance when they join the school. However, their attendance has improved considerably. Pupils want to go to school. The school has robust procedures in place to monitor attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress from their starting points is not yet good. Their prior attendance at school has often been disrupted. Most pupils entering the school have poor writing skills.

- Weaknesses in the school's tracking of pupils' progress, particularly relating to their starting points, make it difficult to judge how much progress is made over time. The assessment of pupils is not fully embedded.
- The work in books shows that pupils' progress is variable across the curriculum. The small number of pupils who have been absent do not always catch up with the work they have missed, resulting in gaps in their learning and limited progress over time.
- Pupils make better progress in mathematics. This is because the teaching of mathematics is stronger.
- Disadvantaged pupils make faster progress than other pupils in mathematics and science because of the effective support they receive. Nonetheless, work to improve the outcomes in English for the disadvantaged, focusing on language and comprehension skill development, is leading to some improvement.
- Pupils mostly read fluently and with understanding. The quality of their handwriting and the presentation of their work need further development. The vast majority of pupils treat their books with pride.
- Staff prioritise getting pupils to settle into school promptly, and prepare them for learning. Pupils are supported in building their self-esteem and confidence in order to access learning. They develop social skills through their interaction with others that enable them to mix well and engage in learning.
- The core aim is for employability and for pupils to move onto further education or full-time employment when they leave the school.
- No school performance information for key stage 4 exists as the school currently caters for key stage 3 pupils only. Pupils will enter into key stage 4 in September 2018. Key stage 4 schemes of work need development.

Sixth form provision

Insufficient evidence – amnesty granted

- The school is registered to accept pupils up to 19 years of age. There are presently no students in the sixth form. The school plans to open the provision in September 2020.
- The school is planning for cohorts to study level 1 and 2 qualifications which are industry-related, for example in construction, hospitality, office skills and information technology.
- Accommodation is available to support the delivery of courses when the school expands.
- The school does not have detailed schemes of work in place for the sixth form.

School details

Unique reference number	144775
DfE registration number	881/6068
Inspection number	10046992

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	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	None
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	National Autistic Society
Chair	Carol Homden
Headteacher	Gary Simm
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,596 to £71,998
Telephone number	02033 750100
Website	www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/anderson.aspx
Email address	theandersonschool@nas.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Anderson School is a special independent school, which caters for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities relating to autistic spectrum disorder, including pathological demand avoidance.
- In May 2017, the DfE commissioned Ofsted to conduct a pre-registration inspection. All of

the independent school standards that were checked at that time were deemed likely to be met.

- The school is registered for pupils between the ages of 11 and 19 years.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans and are placed by a range of local authorities.
- The proprietorship is the National Autistic Society (NAS). There is a governing body.
- The NAS is involved in the proprietorship of six other independent schools and special free schools that are registered with the DfE, and a school in Scotland.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector toured the premises and considered a range of information and evidence in relation to the independent school standards.
- The inspector observed learning in all classes, all of which were visited jointly with senior leaders. In addition, the inspector walked around the school with senior staff, visiting all classrooms and facilities to observe pupils at work and evaluate the quality of their behaviour.
- The inspector held meetings with the chief executive officer, the principal, senior leaders, a group of pupils and a parent.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of governors and a parent.
- The inspector looked at:
 - documents relating to safeguarding
 - risk assessments
 - leaders' self-evaluation document
 - the school's development plan
 - records of pupils' progress and attendance
 - the behaviour logs
 - a range of school policies
 - evidence of staff training, including that for autism.
- Other information provided by senior leaders relating to the independent school standards was also taken into consideration.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 23 free texts from parents. The inspector considered 22 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
 - involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - shows a good understanding of aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress
- (paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)).

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently
- (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).

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