

Fairlight Glen Independent Special School

Verona House, 45 Station Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 5QQ

Inspection dates

27–29 November 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have made the necessary improvements to ensure that all the independent school standards are met, and the school is now good.
- Leaders plan a bespoke curriculum for each pupil that develops their basic skills in English and mathematics and builds on their interests.
- Pupils make good progress academically and socially. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning normally improve considerably during their time at the school.
- Leaders have maintained and built on the good teaching seen during the last inspection. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and engage pupils well in worthwhile and interesting activities.
- Occasionally teaching does not challenge pupils, especially the most able, to achieve as much as they could.
- Classroom assistants have useful individual skills and expertise that they bring to the school. However, they are not always effective in supporting learning across all aspects of the curriculum.
- The proprietor and staff know each pupil as a unique individual and take effective steps to improve pupils' attendance and well-being.
- Pupils are sociable and generally behave well at school. They respect and appreciate the clear boundaries set by leaders and staff.
- There are strong partnerships, both with parents and with carers and other professionals who work with pupils.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are safe in the school. Leaders and staff work hard to teach pupils how to stay safe from harm, both in and out of school.
- At the start of the inspection, leaders had not ensured that all policies and practices had been updated to reflect the latest education guidance and best practice.
- While the school strongly encourages pupils to have healthy lifestyles in many respects, it does not do enough to discourage pupils from smoking.

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?

- Further strengthen the work of leaders and the proprietor, by:
 - training an additional member of the leadership team to be a designated safeguarding lead
 - ensuring that policies and practices consistently follow latest government guidance for education
 - recording incidents of poor behaviour factually.
- Improve teaching to produce outstanding outcomes for pupils, by:
 - providing appropriately challenging activities, especially for the most able
 - improving the subject knowledge of classroom assistants
 - entering pupils for the highest qualifications possible.
- Implement a programme to help pupils to stop smoking.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have the strong ambition to provide a good education for pupils, some of whom are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. They create a climate for learning where pupils can be themselves, learn to trust others and feel trusted themselves.
- Increased rigour from leaders in the monitoring of teaching and pupils' performance has helped to sustain good teaching and outcomes, and has led to improvements in pupils' personal development and welfare. Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards have been met.
- Leaders have created a strong team ethic. Everyone works together to support the pupils as well as they can. Regular training and professional development, especially around safeguarding, is planned and takes place to keep staff up to date.
- The curriculum is well planned and tailored to the needs of each individual pupil. At the core are the key skills of English and mathematics and a carefully thought-out programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils also have the opportunity to study art, music, languages, science and humanities, and make use of a gym for physical education. All pupils swim each week. Additionally, pupils take part in activities such as horse riding or fitness training that build on their interests and aspirations.
- Staff and pupils spend time usefully together before lessons start, and at break and lunchtimes. Open, honest and frank discussions about a range of topics between staff and pupils during this social time help pupils to prepare for life in modern Britain. Some enjoyable activities, such as staff and pupils completing a daily crossword together as a group, model lifelong learning and promote positive social interactions.

Governance

- The school does not have a governing body. The proprietor oversees the work of the headteacher, who has day-to-day responsibility for the running of the school. The proprietor knows the school and the pupils well. Her experience of running the wider company underpins her strong understanding of safeguarding and ensures that she takes effective action to keep pupils safe from harm. The proprietor has put plans in place to engage an educational consultant in an advisory role to help improve the school further.
- School policies and procedures that had been approved by the proprietor are fit for purpose. However, in some instances they were based on social-care requirements rather than educational guidance. A few administrative changes were made to these documents during the inspection so that the proprietor could evidence that the independent school standards were fully met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe at school. Staff know the pupils exceptionally well as individuals and have a heightened awareness of the risks pupils are exposed to. There are extensive risk-assessment systems in place to keep pupils safe in a range of situations and when completing different activities. Staff also help pupils to manage risk sensibly.

- Staff are well trained in safeguarding and meet together daily as a team to discuss the safety and well-being of pupils.
- Leaders work well with other professionals, including heads of virtual schools, and children's services, to keep pupils safe.
- The proprietor is currently the named designated safeguarding lead. She is appropriately trained and available every day during term time. Additional training is planned for the headteacher and deputy headteacher to take on the designated lead roles in the future.
- There have been no new school staff employed since the previous inspection. Recruitment checks for existing staff have been completely correctly.
- The current safeguarding policy meets requirements. It is available from the school by request as the school does not have a website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations. They build positive relationships with pupils and get to know them as individuals. This enables them to engage pupils in purposeful activity. Calm encouragement from teachers and classroom assistants reassures pupils in maintaining positive attitudes to their work.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught well. For younger pupils, teaching is planned based on an excellent understanding of what pupils can already do. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding progressively. For example, in a key stage 3 mathematics session the pupils were able to solve increasingly difficult algebraic equalities.
- Older pupils complete guided online tasks using a programme that quickly assesses and builds on pupils' previous learning. Teachers and classroom assistants carefully coach pupils through these tasks, enabling them to make good progress from their starting points in developing their English and mathematical skills and knowledge.
- Teachers provide pupils with constant verbal feedback to keep them on track, offer reassurance about what has been achieved, and challenge them to do even more. However, the most able are not consistently challenged to achieve the highest standards.
- Reading is promoted well throughout the school. Most pupils enjoy reading and can talk about what they like to read for pleasure.
- Classroom assistants have specific expertise in some areas of the curriculum. For example, they lead very high-quality teaching in art, and provide knowledgeable advice in the gym. Classroom assistants support teachers well in managing behaviour and often learn alongside the pupils to model positive attitudes. However, classroom assistants do not have the skills and knowledge to move learning on at pace in all curriculum areas.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils generally join the school with gaps in their schooling. Many have poor emotional

well-being and a lack of self-confidence.

- Staff get to know pupils as unique individuals. Staff understand and value pupils' personal qualities and help them to become accustomed to the positive school environment that Fairlight Glen provides.
- Staff care deeply about pupils' well-being. They encourage pupils to live healthy lifestyles, offering helpful guidance on staying fit and enjoying a healthy diet. However, the school allows some individual pupils to smoke during breaktimes for specific reasons.
- The school has extremely effective systems in place to liaise with parents and carers, and with managers of the company's four children's homes. The school works well with virtual schools (support programmes for children looked after) to access impartial careers advice for pupils.
- There is very little bullying or use of racist language.
- Appropriate steps are taken to keep pupils safe in school, including when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils have excellent attendance. Invariably this shows an improvement on their attendance at previous schools.
- The school is working determinedly to re-engage the few pupils whose attendance is poor, and encourage them to attend more regularly.
- Pupils generally follow the code of conduct and know what is expected of them. Incidents of serious misbehaviour are recorded and followed up with appropriate sanctions. Some recording of these behaviour incidents strays from being factual and offers opinion and comment that may not always be helpful.
- Staff are well skilled at distracting from and challenging lower-level misbehaviour and the use of bad language. They quickly bring pupils' focus back to learning, so that lessons can proceed without further interruption. Pupils generally take a pride in their work, presenting it neatly and with care.
- Over time the behaviour of pupils generally improves because of the clear expectations within the school. Exclusions are rare but used appropriately.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make strong progress from their starting points academically, socially and in terms of improving their attendance.
- Pupils develop skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics very well and are taught how to apply these skills to real-life situations. Some pupils enjoy reading and can talk enthusiastically about books they have read for pleasure.
- Pupils also develop knowledge and skills in a wide range of other subjects and work diligently towards achieving level 1 and level 2 certificates. Outcomes in art, in particular, are strong.

- Pupils who have attended the school the longest make the most sustained progress and catch up to work at the expected standard for their age in a wide range of subjects. However, they, and most able pupils, do not have the opportunity to work towards broader GCSE qualifications.
- Sometimes placements come to an end at short notice due to no fault of the pupils or school. In these cases, pupils are less well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, where the school is able to plan with others the next steps for pupils, including moves to colleges and mainstream schools, then it does so successfully.

School details

Unique reference number	135623
DfE registration number	886/6132
Inspection number	10054079

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	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Proprietor	Sarah Norman
Headteacher	Chris Cordes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,600–36,400
Telephone number	01227 741 113
Email address	education@pilgrimscorner.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2016

Information about this school

- Fairlight Glen is an independent special school located in a residential area of Herne Bay, Kent. Nearly all pupils are looked after and are in the care of the proprietor, Pilgrims Corner Ltd, which operates four children's homes that are open 52 weeks a year.
- The school, which opened in 2008, provides education for 38 weeks a year. Nearly all pupils have needs associated with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, alongside associated learning difficulties and autism.
- The school is registered for up to 12 pupils aged between eight and 18 years. Prior to attending this school, some pupils had been out of formal education for significant periods.
- Pupils have been referred by local authorities nationally. The school's aim is to re-engage pupils in education so that they can achieve as much independence as possible.
- The last full inspection of the school was in September 2016, when the school was found

to have unmet independent school standards.

Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector met with the headteacher, all staff and the proprietor throughout the inspection.
- The inspector observed learning in four sessions and looked at a range of pupils' work across the curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to pupils in lessons and during free time.
- The inspector spoke to a parent by telephone. There were no responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- A wide range of documentation relating to the independent school standards, safeguarding, behaviour and teaching was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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