

Ocean Lodge Independent School

8 Trinity Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 7PU

Inspection dates

29 to 31 January 2019

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietor has not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The school has been through a period of considerable change in senior leadership. This has slowed down improvement.
- Self-evaluation lacks clarity. The improvement plan is not precise enough to make sure that actions will make a genuine difference to pupils' progress. There are no measurable targets.
- The quality of teaching varies too widely across the subjects offered. Expectations are too low. Pupils do not make consistently good progress over time.
- Teachers do not regularly stretch and challenge pupils, including through effective questioning, to deepen their understanding. Pupils over rely on staff to help them complete work.
- Until recently, leaders did not provide teachers with sufficient training opportunities to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further.
- Pupils' learning and progress are not monitored and assessed systematically.
- Teachers do not consistently check, set or assess homework according to whole-school policy.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed headteacher is bringing greater stability and consistency to the school. He has quickly grasped what needs to be done.
- The curriculum is carefully designed to meet pupils' needs and interests. Enrichment activities and school visits strengthen pupils' knowledge, resilience and self-confidence. Sports activities keep pupils physically active.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are given a high priority. Behaviour is managed consistently well. The tolerance and patience shown by staff is valued by pupils.
- Pupils said that they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. As a result, pupils' attendance is above the national average and punctuality is good.
- Staff are positive about the recently appointed headteacher. Staff morale is high.

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 the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all of the independent school standards are met
 - ensuring that the proprietor continues to challenge leaders and hold them to account when performance is not good enough
 - ensuring that the self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate
 - establishing a suitable strategic development plan that sets clear goals, identifies responsibilities and details how success will be achieved
 - embedding the monitoring systems, especially those around pupils' progress that the new leadership has introduced, so that leaders can demonstrate the difference their actions make on accelerating pupils' progress and improving the school
 - providing teachers with sufficient training opportunities to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that staff:
 - encourage pupils to be as independent as possible in their learning
 - raise the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school
 - set challenging work for all pupils that is matched to their ability, especially for the most able
 - use questions effectively to refine and deepen pupils' understanding of new knowledge and concepts
 - use the school's homework policy to build on the learning completed during the school day.
- 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

- Leadership over time has not been effective in ensuring that the independent school standards are consistently met.
- The school has been through a turbulent period. Changes in headship failed to provide continuity and have hampered the journey of improvement, with the school losing its focus and direction. Leaders have not held teaching staff to account rigorously enough. There is still more to do to make sure that teaching and pupils' achievement are consistently good.
- The school's own self-evaluation lacks rigour and needs further development. The development plan does not have a sharp enough focus on key school improvement aspects, such as teaching and learning, leadership and management or outcomes. Consequently, these areas require improvement.
- There is still work to do in establishing a leadership team that can drive further improvements to the quality of teaching and learning and in pupils' progress. The responsibility for improvement rests almost solely with the headteacher because the school has little additional capacity.
- Teachers do not use assessment information effectively to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' abilities. The monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress requires further embedding before it can be used with routine effectiveness by leaders.
- The appointment of the new headteacher in September 2018 is beginning to bring much needed improvements. He is intuitive about the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision and is starting to act on each area for improvement. He is dedicated to the pupils in his care and has high expectations of his staff.
- The curriculum is appropriately designed to meet pupils' needs. It helps pupils to acquire basic skills in literacy and numeracy. There is a range of bespoke options available, linked to pupils' interests and future plans. Pupils value the extra-curricular activities on offer, which have a positive effect on their wider development.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed well. Pupils learn how to respect themselves and others through the day-to-day contact with staff and their peers. Pupils' social and cultural development is encouraged, and there are ample opportunities for them to mix and meet with people from outside school.
- Fundamental British values are promoted well through personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils have regular opportunities to learn about the lives of others and reflect on their own feelings and beliefs. Talks given by the local police help to ensure that pupils have a good grasp of the law.
- Leaders ensure that all fire safety checks and risk assessments are carried out, including fire-extinguisher tests. There are emergency procedures, fire alerts and fire drills in place which staff have up-to-date training in.

- There were very few responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. The small proportion of parents who spoke with the inspector were complimentary about the support and guidance their children receive. One parent stated that, 'The school are fantastic at giving me frequent reports on how my child is doing.'
- Staff who responded to the questionnaire conveyed overwhelming support for the new headteacher. They are committed to the aims of the school. Teachers are keen to continue improving the quality of teaching and learning and say that they have benefited from training that has already taken place.
- Relationships in the school are positive and there is a noticeable sense of trust, friendliness and team spirit. This is helping to move the school forward.

Governance

- The proprietor takes responsibility for the governance of the school.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the independent school standards concerning the quality of teaching are met. The proprietor is realistic in her judgement about the school's effectiveness and wants to expand the governing body to provide further support and challenge.
- The proprietor visits the school regularly. She shares the commitment and ambition of the headteacher to make significant, sustainable improvements to the school. The proprietor rightly states that the school is on a journey and that the headteacher understands what needs to be done to improve the school.
- The proprietor is planning to use the expertise of educational professionals as critical friends to acquire a greater understanding of the school's provision and outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and the proprietor have created a safe culture. The school's safeguarding policy, which is published on the school website, takes into account current government requirements.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with children. In accordance with Section 60 of the Equality Act 2010, the school does not ask health-related questions of applicants before a job offer.
- Gaps were seen in some staff records of pre-employment checks on the single central record, which records staff recruitment and vetting procedures. However, leaders took immediate action to remedy these administrative errors when it was brought to their attention.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding training for all staff, including 'Prevent' duty training, is kept up to date. Staff are highly attuned to possible safeguarding risks to pupils, such as exposure to drug abuse and sexual exploitation. They have a detailed understanding of the risks associated with the criminal exploitation of children known as 'county lines'.
- Procedures to protect children at risk of harm are well established. Child protection arrangements are secure. Staff work well with external agencies and are well trained to spot the signs and symptoms of abuse.
- The school conducts detailed risk assessments for all off-site activities to make sure that

pupils are kept safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are safe. The site is fully secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the school is too variable across different subjects, leading to uneven rates of progress. Teaching is improving, but it is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Teacher expectations are not high enough to build quickly on what pupils already know.
- Teachers' planning does not ensure that the needs of pupils of all abilities are met consistently well. This acts as a barrier to progress. Teachers do not always make use of their information about what pupils already know in order to build on prior learning and set demanding objectives for them to achieve.
- The pace of learning in some lessons is too relaxed. Teachers do not make clear what they expect pupils to achieve and, as a result, the learning slows. In some lessons, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use the new knowledge and skills they learn, so they do not deepen and extend their learning.
- Staff provide support, but some pupils become overly dependent on it. When staff move to another learner, some pupils slow down or give up too easily. An over-reliance on simple, closed questions and simple activities prevents pupils from deepening their learning.
- Homework is not regularly set for pupils to consolidate their learning.
- Pupils enter the school with below average attainment and often with weak literacy skills. English lessons do much to address these deficiencies. The inspector saw some good examples of pupils writing at length across a range of subjects. Pupils routinely use subject-specific terminology in their written work.
- The teachers have good subject knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teachers with strong practice are encouraged to share their ideas in professional development meetings.
- In subjects such as English and personal, social and health education (PSHE), assessment information is used effectively, and pupils' progress is good. For example, in English, activities are set that challenge pupils to think more deeply. Expectations are made clear and no learning time is lost.
- The presentation of pupils' work is typically neat and tidy. Most pupils take pride in their books and come to lessons with the correct equipment.
- Teachers communicate well with pupils, developing warm relationships and managing behaviour effectively. Pupils commit to work willingly in the vast majority of lessons. Low-level disruption is rare, and teachers deal with any issues quickly before they interrupt learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Strong pastoral care supports individual pupils well, and this promotes their good emotional and

personal development.

- Staff are vigilant and sensitive to pupils' welfare needs. They have a good understanding of each pupil and their family and have built strong relationships and trust with pupils. Consequently, pupils have adults they can confide in and they feel safe when at school.
- The school has developed a nurturing environment where pupils can understand and manage their emotions and behaviours well. The lead mentor provides valuable support and guidance to pupils to help manage any anxieties or worries. This enables the pupils to engage fully in school life.
- A police officer visits the school on a regular basis to provide welfare support and guidance to the staff and pupils.
- To support the development of social skills, the school organises regular trips, such as archery, bowling, golf, go-carting, fishing, and visits to the beach and zoo. These trips and outdoor activities provide unforgettable experiences for the pupils.
- Pupils become more confident learners over time because the staff offer them regular reassurance and support. The small scale of the school and the knowledge of each individual pupil ensure that pupils settle quickly to their learning.
- The inspector found pupils to be polite, courteous and well mannered. Several of them were keen to share their positive views of the school with the inspector.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils understand the school's expectations of their behaviour. Pupils who are new to the school adjust quickly to meet expectations about their behaviour.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the building, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. They have good attitudes to learning and, where teaching is at its best, show immense enjoyment in learning.
- Staff are trained thoroughly in how to manage pupils who have behavioural difficulties. Instances of challenging behaviour are managed well. Improvements in behaviour since the previous inspection have resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of occasions where staff have needed to restrain pupils physically. Such occasions are now rare.
- Pupils show tolerance and understanding towards each other. They respect each other's views. Where a pupil makes the wrong choice, staff are highly skilled in raising the awareness of how a pupil might change their behaviour.
- Pupils' work adorns the walls alongside safety information. Displays are in good condition and have not been ripped or torn.
- No litter was seen around the school site.
- The school retains an up-to-date attendance and admission registers. Attendance is monitored on a pupil-by-pupil basis. Where attendance in the past has been an issue in previous schools, it improves considerably. Attendance is above the national average.
- On occasion, where teaching requires improvement, some individual pupils lose concentration and interest in the activities, though their behaviour rarely disturbs the rest of the class because it is quickly managed by staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils often join the school with levels of attainment that are well below age-related expectations. Most pupils have large gaps in their prior learning because they have missed school due to their poor behaviour, attendance and/or social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- Observations of teaching and scrutiny of work by the inspector showed that pupils' progress varies depending on the quality of teaching. Generally, pupils do better in English than they do in mathematics.
- Leaders assess pupils when they arrive at the school to see what they can do well. However, teachers do not always set work that is difficult enough. As a result, not enough pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Prior to September 2018, progress in science was too slow. Pupils had very limited time to study science in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding. The subject is now timetabled so that pupils can study it in greater depth. Pupils are having to 'catch-up' on the concepts they should be familiar with.
- Staff prioritise supporting pupils to settle into school promptly and prepare them for learning. Pupils quickly gain in confidence. They develop their social skills through their interaction with others, which enables them to mix well and engage in learning.
- Education, health and care (EHC) plans include education-based outcomes and healthcare needs. Information is meaningful and the plans in pupils' folders are updated on a regular basis.
- Pupils can study for a range of nationally recognised accreditations, including functional skills qualifications, entry level certificates and GCSEs. Pupils are provided with work experience opportunities suited to their individual needs.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their health and physical skills. The school uses a local sports venue for physical education.
- The effective careers information and guidance support enable pupils to make well-informed decisions about the future. This prepares them well for life after school. Records show that most pupils who leave the school at the end of Year 11 go on to apprenticeship positions or college placements to continue their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	137562
DfE registration number	882/6010
Inspection number	10090995

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Sue Potton
Chair	Sue Potton
Headteacher	Joel Kerr
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000
Telephone number	01702 332 181
Website	www.oceanlodgeschool.com
Email address	info@potton-homes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 November 2017

Information about this school

- Ocean Lodge Independent School is owned by Potton Homes and is an independent special day school.
- The school opened in October 2011. It was last inspected in November 2017, when the quality of education was found to be requires improvement.
- The school is registered for 10 boys and girls between the ages of seven and 16 years, all of whom are referred by several local authorities. Some pupils live in accommodation provided by the company and a few are in foster care.

- There are currently six pupils aged 14 to 16 on roll.
- The school started to use an alternative provider, Southend Adult Community College, on the week of the inspection. It is too early to comment on the quality of provision in this report.
- In March 2016, the proprietor applied to open another site in Linford, Essex. This site is registered for three pupils and is currently not used for education purposes.
- The majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan arising from their SEMH needs. Some pupils have additional needs associated with autistic spectrum disorder.
- All pupils currently on roll are White British.
- The care provision provided by the company was not part of this inspection.
- The school does not receive the pupil premium funding for its pupils.
- A new headteacher took responsibility for the leadership of the school in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector toured the school.
- The inspector observed learning throughout the school.
- The single central record of employment checks was scrutinised.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of Hampshire Local Authority.
- Six responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were considered.
- There was one response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The inspector spoke to the parents who were available.
- The inspector spoke to the police officer who visits the school on a regular basis.
- There were no pupil questionnaire responses. The inspector spoke to pupils informally on each day of the inspection.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, safeguarding documents, policies, behaviour and attendance records, information about the curriculum and information about progress.

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

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) 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;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(g) 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.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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