

# Cross Keys Learning

Suite 1, The Lead Centre, Dane Valley Road, St Peter's, Broadstairs CT10 3JJ

## Inspection dates

26–28 February 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	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not ensure that they monitor pupils' progress well enough across all areas of learning.
- Currently, governors do not have a strong enough understanding of the school's effectiveness. They do not challenge leaders robustly enough about the quality of teaching and learning.
- Some pupils do not attend the school regularly enough. A small number of pupils regularly arrive in class after lessons have begun.
- Outdoor recreational facilities are limited. Leaders are developing ideas with staff and pupils to address this. However, these plans are in their infancy.
- High expectations are not typical throughout the school. Consequently, some staff do not set work that is sufficiently demanding for pupils.
- Teaching does not consistently take into account what pupils do and do not know. Because of this, learning is not always tailored suitably to pupils' needs.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Proprietors have pupils' best interests at heart. They have developed a school culture that builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Leaders have created a suitable curriculum. It provides pupils with the opportunity to build on their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils are tolerant and respectful. For example, they know not to discriminate against anyone for their faith, gender or sexual orientation.
- Leaders have created a vigilant culture of safeguarding. They know pupils well and protect the most vulnerable from harm.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and typically improves further over time. Staff set high expectations regarding behaviour to which pupils respond positively.

### 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 the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - assessment systems are refined to monitor more precisely pupils' development and progress
  - those responsible for governance hold leaders rigorously to account for all aspects of the school's work
  - levels of attendance and punctuality continue to improve
  - the outdoor recreational area is developed further so that pupils have a range of suitable options available to them during unstructured times.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and do
  - accurate assessment informs staff's planning so that learning is tailored more appropriately to pupils' needs.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had only recently taken up post. As a result, proprietors are still involved in the day-to-day running of the school. Important procedures, such as the monitoring of teaching and learning and pupils' achievements, are not fully developed and embedded. Consequently, leaders do not have a sharp understanding of the school's effectiveness or of pupils' progress.
- The school's assessment systems lack precision. They do not provide pertinent information to check that pupils are making suitable academic progress, including in English and mathematics. As a result, leaders are unaware that some pupils are not achieving highly enough in some subjects.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the school. Everyone shares high aspirations for pupils to achieve well. Together, they are beginning to plan successfully for further school improvement. Leaders are ambitious for Cross Keys Learning to blossom into a successful centre for education.
- Staff enjoy working at the school. They work effectively together and support each other well. They develop strong relationships with pupils and have a genuine desire to see pupils succeed.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders evaluate and review it regularly, informed by the views of staff and pupils. Pupils are provided with a range of subjects and examinations that take into account their interests and aspirations. Overall, the curriculum is well planned and often sparks pupils' interest.
- Parents and carers are complimentary about the school. They state that communication between home and school is 'a real strength' and 'staff are very supportive'. One comment, typical of many, was, 'My child now looks forward to going to school and always has a smile on his face knowing that they attend Cross Keys Learning.'
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Leaders have planned for this, and the promotion of British values, exceptionally well. They are tenacious in providing learning that helps pupils mature into fully integrated members of the community. Pupils rise to this challenge, wholeheartedly embrace this learning and are usually considerate and respectful of themselves and others.

## Governance

- Proprietors do not yet have an accurate picture of how well pupils are achieving. Systems are not yet embedded to enable the proprietors to check rigorously the quality of learning at the school. This limits their ability to drive ongoing improvements.
- Proprietors have worked hard to set up the school and ensure that all policies and procedures are in place. Their careful work and determination have ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- Proprietors operate an open-door policy that staff appreciate. Staff feel well supported by the proprietors, who are keen to invest in their ongoing professional development.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All statutory policies and procedures meet current government guidance. The safeguarding and child protection policy is published on the school's website.
- When recruiting staff, leaders carry out all necessary background checks to ensure that future employees are suitable to work with young people. This information is recorded accurately on the school's single central record of employment checks. The proprietors check this document regularly as part of their ongoing monitoring of safeguarding.
- The school's risk assessment policy meets statutory requirements. Staff use this well to minimise risks in and around school and to keep children safe. For example, the fire safety risk assessment is complemented by appropriate evacuation practices. As a result, the safety of pupils and staff is upheld.
- Leaders have forged strong, effective links with external agencies. Where appropriate, they proactively seek advice to support pupils and manage any safeguarding concerns. These productive relationships help protect children from harm.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know how to use the internet and social media responsibly. Additionally, pupils are aware of the dangers and risks associated with gang activity and 'county lines' in the local area.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- High expectations do not consistently abound across the curriculum. Some staff do not demonstrate a secure understanding of what pupils are capable of achieving.
- Teaching does not routinely take into account what pupils do and do not know. Assessment systems across the curriculum are not suitably refined. As a result, staff do not have sufficient information to plan learning that meets pupils' needs.
- Some staff demonstrate strong subject knowledge. Typically, they make good use of precise questions that are matched well to pupils' prior knowledge and help tackle misconceptions. Consequently, where this practice is most effective, pupils consolidate their learning appropriately.
- The teaching of art, physical education, computing and design and technology engages pupils' interests effectively. In these subjects, pupils respond positively to the tasks set and participate enthusiastically in learning. Frequently, pupils state that these are their favourite subjects.
- Some staff are adept at incorporating pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plan targets into lessons. This works most successfully when learning is broken down into manageable steps. Mostly, pupils are supported effectively to make good progress against their individual targets.
- Praise is used consistently well in lessons to motivate pupils who are struggling. Staff use a variety of strategies to reward pupils and to inspire them to learn. Importantly, staff are sure to share pupils' successes with parents.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. For instance, they recalled with interest their study of Mexican traditions and native Indian art. They have an appropriate awareness of different religions, such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam.
- Through their words and actions, pupils show high levels of tolerance and respect for their peers. They uphold positive views of the protected characteristics that are covered by equalities legislation, such as sexual orientation and gender identity. Leaders support this successful work by providing access to relevant support groups.
- Pupils' mental health is supported to a high standard. For example, throughout the year, there are various 'focus weeks' that provide important information for pupils to manage their well-being.
- Pupils have access to good-quality independent careers advice. This prepares them well for their next steps in education, training or employment.
- Provision for pupils to play outside is limited. While there is outside space for recreational use, it lacks basic resources for pupils to enjoy fully their free time. This was highlighted when pupils commented, 'There is nothing to do outside.'

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Staff provide pupils with consistent messages about acceptable behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour are tackled swiftly and appropriately and, as a result, are rare.
- In and around school, pupils follow the clear instructions of staff. They are supported to reflect upon their behaviour and encouraged to make the right choices. The school is calm, safe and orderly.
- Pupils join the school having been excluded from, or having been out of, education for several years. Since joining Cross Keys, most have successfully embraced learning and now attend at a much higher rate than they have done historically.
- Despite this increasing engagement, a few pupils still miss too much school. Some do not arrive punctually in the morning. Leaders are aware of this but have not yet ensured that rates of attendance for these pupils are high enough.

## Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Currently, pupils do not make consistent progress in English and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that some pupils make too little progress in these subjects over time.
- Some most-able pupils do not make strong progress across the curriculum. This is because learning is not matched closely enough to their levels of understanding.

- Across the curriculum, pupils' progress varies. Staff do not ensure that, across all subjects, there are consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Over time, some pupils make strong progress in their basic writing skills. They begin to write fluently, make sound vocabulary choices and structure their writing for a variety of audiences. In the best examples, pupils demonstrate a growing ability to edit and correct their work.
- Pupils make good progress in science. They typically build upon prior learning to deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, key stage 3 pupils demonstrated in their exercise books their thorough understanding of food chains and food webs.
- Pupils develop their communication skills well. Over time, staff enable pupils to interact successfully with their peers. Consequently, pupils' social and emotional skills flourish.

## School details

Unique reference number	145574
DfE registration number	886/6149
Inspection number	10080964

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietors	Sharon Mount and Stephen Fuller
Headteacher	Nadia Law
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,500
Telephone number	07936 243 771
Website	<a href="http://www.crosskeyslearning.com">www.crosskeyslearning.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:sharon.mount@kentmentorsupport.co.uk">sharon.mount@kentmentorsupport.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Cross Keys Learning is an independent co-educational special school for pupils aged 11 to 16 with social, emotional and mental health needs. The majority of pupils have suffered severe emotional trauma at some point in their lives. Most pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school caters for a maximum of 10 pupils. There are currently 10 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are children looked after, living with local foster families or in children's homes.
- This is the first inspection since the school opened in September 2018. The school does not use alternative provision.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2018. Due to previously agreed absence with

the proprietors, she was not present throughout the duration of this inspection.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school.
- Meetings were held with proprietors, the quality assurance lead, the behaviour manager, staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils through both formal and informal discussions.
- Several parents' views were considered through informal discussions on the telephone. Six responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were also reviewed.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the school's initial improvement plan, records of meetings, curriculum plans and schemes of work, and records of pupils' achievements. Information about safeguarding arrangements was checked, including the single central record, risk assessments and a range of policies.
- All of the education independent school standards were checked during this inspection.

## Inspection team

Emma Sanderson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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