

# Inspection of Chances Educational Support Services

Red Rock, Sandy Lane, Dawlish EX7 0AF

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Inspection dates: 11–13 February 2020

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud of this school and their achievements here. All pupils have had negative prior experiences of school. Many have missed a lot of their education. For many, their behaviour has led to exclusions in their home schools. Nonetheless, despite these issues, staff empower pupils to believe that they can achieve and help them to do so. Staff re-engage pupils with learning and help them to achieve qualifications. With the support of skilled outreach workers, most pupils reintegrate into mainstream school successfully.

Staff help pupils to understand and to manage emotions. When pupils' behaviour falls short of leaders' high expectations, they take a short time out and soon get their behaviour back on track. Consequently, another pupil's learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils benefit from the soothing influence of Kuma, the school dog.

Pupils respect one another. They get on well together in lessons and at social times. They feel safe and value the care staff give them. They say that bullying does not happen. Staff act swiftly at the slightest sign of bad feelings.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

This is a well-led school. Leaders' emphasis on resilience, respect and opportunity is borne out in every aspect of the school's work. Staff work as a close team. They are consistent in their application of school policies. Pupils respond well to the clear boundaries set. The headteacher leads with humility and determination. Leaders' close work with pupils' home schools has been the key to the school's rapid improvement. The well-managed induction of pupils helps them to settle quickly.

Staff already have a good understanding of what pupils can and cannot do when they join the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, get off to a strong start. Many pupils successfully return to their home schools within eight weeks of joining Chances. For others, their time in Chances may be longer but is nonetheless successful.

Leaders have established an orderly and purposeful school environment. Pupils value the recognition staff give to their work through the school's displays. Their academic learning is at the forefront of the school's work. No time is wasted in doing everything possible to prepare pupils for success. Teaching staff use information well to tailor pupils' individual plans. The finely tuned curriculum helps to fill deep-seated gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils gain in confidence and experience success as learners. Many pupils achieve the qualifications they hope for, including GCSEs.

Senior leaders have been thinking hard about the curriculum the school offers. The strong focus on the teaching of reading has inspired pupils to read for pleasure. Leaders have strengthened the mathematics curriculum. As a result, teachers have

bolstered pupils' ability to remember key facts. This has supported pupils' resilience when solving problems using Pythagoras' theorem, for example.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and covers pupils' needs. For example, pupils gain important life skills in food technology. They learn about nutrition and how to keep healthy. They prepare and serve meals skilfully and hygienically. This small school has limitations in terms of practical sessions in science and language teaching. However, leaders draw upon the expertise and facilities in feeder schools to ensure that pupils do not miss out on a rich education.

Strong relationships between staff and pupils are key to pupils' positive attitudes. Leaders have recruited well so that all staff are fine role models to develop tolerance and harmony. The school's key worker system supports staff in getting to know pupils very well indeed. One-to-one sessions are used to support pupils in dealing with any worries they may have, as well as helping them to consider future careers. This is particularly strong in key stage 4. Staff liaise well with home schools. Together, they make sure that pupils have appropriate work experience. Staff support pupils in writing applications and preparing for interviews.

The proprietor ensures that leaders have a strong awareness of the independent school standards (ISS). The trust board provides effective challenge. It ensures that local governors conduct careful checks during frequent visits to the school to make sure that all of the ISS are met consistently. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders of feeder schools, and a carer who spoke with the lead inspector, were unanimous in their appreciation of the school's work. They commended school staff for turning around the fortunes of the often-troubled pupils in their care.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders fulfil the requirements of the latest statutory guidance. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that all staff have the safeguarding training that they need to keep pupils safe. Daily briefings for staff help to keep pupils' well-being at the forefront of their minds. Staff have a strong understanding of what to look out for and what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders work closely with families, home schools and external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the care they need when they need it.

Pupils are taught well about the risks they may face. Tutorials and one-to-one sessions support pupils' understanding and management of risk.

Leaders quickly resolved some omissions in the administration of the school's single central record during the inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Careers guidance is not as strong for key stage 3 pupils as it is for pupils in key stage 4. Leaders should further enhance the curriculum to better prepare pupils for their long-term futures.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143407
<b>DfE registration number</b>	878/6066
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121023
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	27
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	27
<b>Proprietor</b>	Melanie Walker
<b>Chair of trustees</b>	Leon Winston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Hayes
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£2,926 to £12,844
<b>Telephone number</b>	01626 864 412
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.spacepsm.org/services/chances/">www.spacepsm.org/services/chances/</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:chances@spacepsm.org">chances@spacepsm.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–14 June 2018

## Information about this school

- Chances is funded by commissioned places for pupils who are disengaged or experiencing difficulties in their mainstream school. Most are referred because they have displayed disruptive behaviour at their previous school. Most pupils attend half-term, full-time and part-time placements. In addition, the school offers outreach work in schools and bespoke packages involving individual lengths of attendance and types of support.
- All pupils are dual-registered with mainstream schools throughout their time when involved with Chances.

- The last standard inspection took place in June 2018. At this time, the school was judged as requires improvement. All of the independent school standards were met.
- The board of trustees delegates accountability to a local governing body.
- The school changed from a two-site school to a one-site school in September 2018.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We held separate meetings with the proprietor, the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer. There were several meetings with senior leaders. We also met other leaders, including subject leaders and the designated safeguarding lead.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. In each of these subjects, we met with teachers, considered curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and considered pupils' written work.
- We reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school. We looked at the school's website, school policies and documents relating to health and safety. To check the independent school standards relating to the health and safety of the premises, we had a tour of the school and met with the premises lead.
- We reviewed a range of safeguarding information, including the checks that leaders make prior to employment. We checked the school's safeguarding policy and spoke to staff about the school's safeguarding procedures.
- We spoke to leaders of Chances' feeder schools. An inspector also held a telephone call with a parent. We scrutinised the eight responses to the staff questionnaire, as well as meeting with a wide group of staff to gather their views about the school. We considered the two responses to the online pupil questionnaire and met with several pupils to gain their views of the school.

## Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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