

Inspection of Orchard Manor School

John Nash Drive, Dawlish EX7 9SF

Inspection dates: 15–16 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are not kept safe. Registration processes are not followed closely enough. Therefore, at times adults do not know if pupils have arrived at school or whether they are absent. This is a significant safeguarding risk.

Pupils forge positive friendships during their time here. They particularly enjoy playing football together during social times. Pupils are not unduly concerned by bullying.

Pupils readily identify many aspects of schooling that they enjoy. At the top of pupils' lists of positives is the way that staff make their education an enjoyable experience. Staff know their pupils well and have high expectations of what pupils are capable of. In return, pupils try their best and are determined to succeed. They respond well to the ready encouragement that is on hand.

Pupils say that they like learning in this school, including in mathematics, science and cookery. However, the learning in some subjects is not well planned to promote secure learning. Nevertheless, most pupils feel that learning is fun. They say that sometimes they are distracted by others' behaviour. However, pupils are confident that staff manage such situations effectively.

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

Leaders do not maintain accurate attendance information. Pupils' registration status is not always recorded consistently or correctly. Incorrect changes are made to pupils' registration marks without adequate justification. The statutory guidelines for maintaining pupils' attendance records are not followed. All this means that pupils' attendance rates look better than they are.

Since the school amalgamated in September 2018, staff have had to adjust to considerable change. Leaders have overhauled many systems and processes and introduced new ways of working. Leaders' school improvement planning is detailed and sets out appropriate school improvement priorities. Some aspects are improving securely, such as a reduction in the incidents of bullying. However, everyone's efforts are not yet cohesive. Leaders have not yet gained the full confidence or trust of staff. Many staff say that they do not feel valued or treated with respect. Staff do not feel empowered nor a proactive part of the school's improvement journey.

Leaders have strengthened the school's curricular offer. They are determined that pupils are well prepared for their adult lives, gaining the qualifications they need to be successful when they leave. Leaders make sensible decisions about the subjects on offer and how they will be implemented. New subject leaders are beginning to take greater ownership of the school's curriculum. With support, these leaders have produced helpful subject overviews. These demonstrate a clear and logical sequence to pupils' learning. This approach is making a positive difference, although the changes are not yet sufficiently embedded to ensure a consistently good quality of education.

Leaders have implemented a consistent approach to teaching in some subject areas. Staff demonstrate secure and shared subject knowledge that is supported well by useful training. Useful and proportionate assessment processes have started. However, there is some inconsistency in how teachers make use of this information to guide pupils' future learning. In some instances, there is a mismatch between learning goals and pupils' capabilities.

Opportunities for pupils to read and learn about books are securely evident throughout the school. Most pupils are reading books that match their capabilities and interest level. Leaders are rightly prioritising the teaching of reading and making appropriate adaptations as new ways of working take hold.

Pupils' life skills and their resilience are developed well. For instance, sixth-form students confidently set up lunchtime without the need for adult intervention. Staff strongly promote pupils' independence through the adoption of well-established routines. Pupils are confident because staff create an ethos of belonging.

Sixth-form students are benefiting from the move to a new purpose-built facility. This provides an attractive place to learn. Pupils are treated as young adults and benefit from the school's very personalised approach. Key areas such as literacy, numeracy, employability and the development of life skills are prioritised in equal measure. This means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage.

Governors have played an instrumental role in supporting the amalgamation process. Governors are aware that there remains tension between leaders' priorities and levels of staff engagement and confidence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders do not know, or record accurately, which pupils have arrived on site and which pupils have not. Accounting for pupils' whereabouts is not taken seriously enough. This puts pupils at risk.

When concerns arise about adults or pupils, leaders ensure that they seek relevant advice or intervention from a range of services. The appropriate course of action is followed. However, in some instances, first-hand accounts are not recorded. Although concerns are dealt with satisfactorily, there is a lack of emphasis on the importance of first-hand reporting.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's registration processes are not followed carefully enough, and this leaves staff unclear of pupils' whereabouts. Frequently, pupils' attendance is

either not recorded at all or inaccurately recorded. This poses a safeguarding risk. Leaders need to make sure that all pupils are accounted for and are kept safe.

- Staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. When concerns arise, leaders take appropriate action. However, record-keeping systems need to strengthen so that all concerns are carefully recorded first-hand.
- The school's attendance information is inaccurate. Recording pupils' attendance information correctly is a statutory obligation. Leaders need to ensure that the school's attendance processes comply with the Department for Education's requirements.
- The school's curriculum is well sequenced. However, it is very new and, consequently, staff are still getting to grips with leaders' expectations. Leaders should ensure that staff continue to receive support and guidance to implement leaders' curricular expectations confidently and skilfully.
- The school has undergone significant change. Leaders have brought about improvement, and expectations have risen considerably. Nevertheless, some staff and parents and carers remain unsettled by the rapid rate of change. Some staffing arrangements are still not fully established. Leaders need to ensure that they gain the full confidence of everyone, so to unify the school community towards common goals.

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](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113656
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10122318
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maggie Carter
Principal	Mark Rose
Website	www.orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 March 2015

Information about this school

- In September 2018, Ratcliffe School amalgamated with Oaklands Park School. The school retained the same registration status as Ratcliffe School, and Oaklands Park School closed. The newly amalgamated school was renamed Orchard Manor School.
- The school has extended its age range and now includes a sixth form.
- The senior leadership team comprises an executive principal and two deputy principals (one who acts as head of education and the other as head of care). There are also five assistant principals who share a range of responsibilities. The executive principal joined the school in April 2017. The vast majority of other senior leaders joined in September 2018.
- Since September 2018, some teaching staff have left. The school is currently recruiting additional non-teaching staff.
- Ratcliffe School was previously inspected in March 2015.

- Orchard Manor School is part of the SENTient Trust, a cooperative foundation trust formed in 2012, with eight other special schools in Devon.
- All pupils attending Orchard Manor School have an education, health and care plan. The school caters primarily for pupils who have communication and interaction difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions and associated learning needs. Some pupils have other needs, including severe learning difficulties and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Some pupils attend alternative provision at Bicton College and Combe Pafford School.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Very occasionally, Ofsted will delay the publication of a report to ensure full consideration of concerns identified after the inspection visit. In rare instances, this process may cause Ofsted to conclude that the inspection is incomplete. This happened at Orchard Manor School. Her Majesty's Inspectors returned to the school on 29 January 2020 to gather additional information to secure the evidence base. In such cases, the inspection report is not published until Ofsted is satisfied that the inspection is secure.
- We held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and some staff.
- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, physical education (PE) and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education to evaluate the quality of education. We discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers, from the lessons visited, about the curriculum.
- Procedures and practice for keeping pupils safe were thoroughly evaluated. The school's single central record was reviewed. We met with the designated safeguarding lead, scrutinised documentation, including a sample of case files, and spoke to pupils and staff.
- Meetings were held with two governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to the school's improvement partner and a representative from the local authority. A conversation was held with the head of learning and education from Devon County Council.
- We met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. No pupils responded to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- During the inspection, survey responses from 99 members of staff and 32 parents, including 24 free-text comments, were considered. We also spoke with some staff to gather their views.

Inspection team

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