

Inspection of Cotswold Chine School

Box, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 9AG

Inspection dates: 25–27 January 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this warm and happy school. Staff promote positive relationships effectively. This helps pupils to feel valued and safe. Education staff work closely with care and therapy staff to collectively secure a holistic view of pupils needs and challenges. This helps pupils to settle quickly, reengage in learning and secure stronger, personalised outcomes.

The school's curriculum has understanding pupils' trauma and barriers to learning at its heart. Pupils benefit greatly by responding positively to the tailored provision they receive. Regular, focused therapeutic support enhances pupils' well-being considerably.

Most pupils have complex needs associated with their social, emotional, communication and interaction difficulties. Many come to the school following a fragmented education experience. They arrive reluctant to engage. Staff utilise their expertise to get to know pupils extremely well. Pupils' behaviour improves dramatically. Pupils reengage and develop a love of learning.

Everyone gets on very well together. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem. Leaders ensure that the whole community has high expectations of pupils. Parents and carers praise the school. Some say it has transformed their children's lives.

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

Leaders have a compelling rationale for the curriculum. They aim to provide pupils with the skills to manage their own challenges, as well as secure the knowledge they need to succeed. Leaders are clear that each child needs exactly the right curriculum for them. Therefore, the curriculum is underpinned by a range of robust assessments. These are undertaken by skilled staff. From this, barriers to and gaps in learning are identified. Teachers and therapists work together to deliver the intended curriculum in an accessible way for every individual.

Leaders have rightly been looking to strengthen the academic element of the curriculum. Subject leadership has recently been reorganised. This has helped raise the profile of every subject and make the best use of the expertise of staff. Leaders ensure that their subjects cover the scope of the national curriculum, while being sequenced appropriately to allow pupils to learn and remember key knowledge. Four distinct pathways ensure that pupils are grouped according to their level of cognitive ability and emotional self-understanding.

Teachers implement the curriculum skilfully. Teachers sequence learning so that pupils learn new knowledge that flows from previous learning. Pupils achieve well. However, pupils do not access all aspects of the curriculum consistently. Sometimes pupils are regularly absent, or have therapy intervention that takes them away from lessons. This means that parts of the sequenced learning are occasionally missed. Leaders have not secured systems to ensure pupils catch up on missed content.

Nevertheless, the successful curriculum builds pupils' overall literacy, numeracy, oracy and social skills very well. Pupils learn strategies to improve their communication. As time passes, they learn to interact successfully with others. Pupils' confidence grows rapidly. When appropriate, pupils attain appropriate accredited qualifications, including vocational qualifications and GCSEs.

The overall reading curriculum is effective. Pupils learn to re-engage in reading and the enjoyment of books. Teachers are skilled and support pupils to build resilience. A range of strategies promote a love of reading. Staff use texts well to help pupils empathise with characters and explore social issues. Teachers deliver phonics in a systematic way for those pupils still needing to learn to read. However, they rightly recognise that this could be stronger.

Pupils' personal development is promoted and provided for exceptionally well. Leaders have invested in innovative therapeutic approaches. This allows teachers and therapists to identify barriers to pupils' learning and overcome them. Staff help pupils understand themselves better so that they can manage their anxieties independently. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to understand social issues. Extracurricular activities enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils learn about British values, including the importance of diversity and the protected characteristics. Pupils work together and develop leadership skills as ambassadors, or through work experience. Consequently, pupils learn to be self-aware, positive contributors and how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders have secured strong provision for post-16 students. Most students study at a second school site. As with the rest of the school, leaders have determined that students will follow a study programme that is personalised. Students become increasingly independent. Careers guidance supports each student well. Typically, students move on to other forms of education or training. Staff make sure that students are prepared well for their future lives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding very seriously. Pupils say that they feel safe. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained and watch out for any signs that a pupil may be at risk. Staff prioritise pupils' well-being. They work effectively with each other and other agencies to protect pupils. Staff follow school processes precisely. For example, records relating to behaviour and safeguarding are appropriately detailed. Leaders follow up on any safeguarding concern diligently and double check that procedures are followed correctly.

Pupils have lots of opportunities in the curriculum to learn about keeping safe. For example, they learn about issues that are important because of their vulnerability. They learn about how to keep safe online. Staff keep in touch with parents or carers so that any concerns are discussed immediately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Leaders know that communication, language and learning to read are key to accessing the wider curriculum. They have rightly looked to establish these as the core of their academic curriculum. Although they have introduced a systematic approach to teaching reading, they rightly know this could be even better. Leaders should deliver on their plans to improve teachers' skills in teaching reading, particularly for those who still use phonics.
- Leaders have introduced several ways to ensure pupils get access to a broad, balanced curriculum that meets their needs. This includes reorganising who is responsible for different parts of the curriculum. Curriculum planning has significantly improved as a result. However, the organisation of the curriculum means that sometimes pupils miss parts of what they are learning in some subjects. Leaders should consider how they can ensure that any parts of the curriculum that are missed are caught up in a way that ensures pupils remember key concepts over time.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	115802
DfE registration number	916/6040
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10201935
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	9
Proprietor	Novalis Trust
Chair	Gordon Cole
Headteacher	Hannah Dury
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,282.50 to £73,710
Telephone number	01453 837550
Website	https://cotswold-chine.org.uk
Email address	info@novalis-trust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–28 September 2017

Information about this school

- Cotswold Chine is an independent special school. The school is part of the Novalis Trust, which is a charitable trust. The chief executive manages the trust on behalf of the trustees. Pupils in the sixth form learn on the site of William Morris College, which is part of the same trust. Most pupils live in children's homes that share the school site or nearby village. These homes are also run by the trust. Some pupils only come to school for their education.
- The main school premises are located on the edge of the village of Box, Gloucestershire, GL6 9AG.
- Most pupils have an education, health and care plan. All pupils are placed at the school by their respective local authority. Most pupils live in homes that are also managed by the trust. Some are day pupils.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The last standard inspection of the school was in September 2017. An additional inspection was carried out in December 2020, when it was found that all standards were met.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, including the headteacher. Inspectors also met with representatives from the trust, including the chair of trustees and chief executive officer. Inspectors discussed leaders' evaluations, priorities for improvement, systems for monitoring and accountability, as well as the curriculum.
- Inspectors did deep dives into four subjects: early reading, science, mathematics and personal, social and health education. Inspectors met with senior and subject leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors also visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work and talked to pupils. Inspectors reviewed some subject planning and spoke to leaders about other subjects. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised feedback from 11 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online parent survey, and the free-text responses from those parents.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement, external reports and paperwork relating to the work of the management committee. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures including those that relate to the curriculum.

- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead, the school business manager, the headteacher and centre leads, reviewing safer recruitment processes, and speaking to staff and to pupils. Inspectors analysed safeguarding procedures relating to the use of alternative provision and visited the Gloucester Youth Project to check arrangements were appropriate. Inspectors also scrutinised school policies, governance arrangements, records of concern and links to other agencies.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Richard Vaughan

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022