

# Inspection of The Lowen School

Lower Dimson Farm, Gunnislake, Cornwall PL18 9NS

---

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 February 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
------------------------------	-------------

---

The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	<b>Good</b>
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
---------------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
--	--------------------------

Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
--	------------

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

The Lowen School is a caring school that is focused on meeting pupils' individual needs. Pupils come to the school after struggling to cope in other schools. Consequently, making sure that pupils feel safe is at the heart of the school's work. Staff are successful in achieving this. As a result, the school is a calm, safe place for its very vulnerable pupils.

When pupils join the school, they meet a skilled staff team led by an inspirational headteacher. Staff get to know pupils' needs really well. There are high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Leaders ensure that learning spaces are bespoke to each pupil and staff adapt activities carefully to meet each pupil's needs. Staff recognise when a pupil begins to get upset or frustrated, and their calming approach helps reassure pupils. As a result, the pupils feel safe, engage in learning and develop new skills.

Parents and carers are enthusiastic about the school. They appreciate the commitment staff have to their children. Parents recognise how the school's high expectations for their children make a difference to their quality of life. One parent spoke for many when they described the school as 'an amazing place with amazing people driven by their hearts.'

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

Leaders are ambitious for the pupils at the school. All pupils come to the school with significant emotional and behavioural needs. They have often experienced long periods out of formal education with minimal access to the outside world. This leads to pupils having high anxiety levels about leaving their homes. Leaders and staff share a joint determination for the pupils to feel safe at school, engage in learning and go out into the local community.

The pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully assessed by staff and form the basis for their education plans. Leaders link these plans closely to each pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Leaders have created a well-planned curriculum in mathematics and early reading. In these subjects, teachers carefully sequence what pupils learn. Staff check what pupils know and what gaps they have. They adapt learning activities for each pupil to help them master new skills.

Reading and listening to stories have a high priority at the school. There is a reading scheme for pupils for whom it is appropriate. For pupils who can already read, there are daily opportunities to practise reading. Staff encourage these pupils to read a wide range of material and extend their reading skills. The focus is on listening to stories, engaging in the story, and recalling information for other pupils.

The school has a carefully planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum that meets pupils' needs. Pupils learn about difference, diversity and respect. In addition, leaders adapt the relationships and sex education curriculum to pupils' ages and maturity. Pupils also learn about different religious celebrations throughout the year.

Assessment of pupils is precise and effective. Daily conversations in each class team help staff identify what pupils know and what they need to know next. Staff share ideas about different approaches to keep on top of what needs to change and what is working well. As a result, teachers ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on.

However, in some subjects, such as art, the planning is not yet as precise. Teachers have not clearly identified the small units of knowledge that pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge as strongly as they could in some subjects.

The school is a calm, orderly place. Pupils typically engage well in learning. Occasionally, pupils' emotions can overwhelm them. The excellent understanding staff have of their pupils' needs helps staff manage these situations well.

Leaders put the development of pupils' confidence and well-being at the heart of the school's work. Therefore, focusing on pupils feeling safe is a priority. Once pupils feel safe, staff support and encourage them to engage with the local community. For example, pupils are preparing to do a sponsored walk to raise money for a local soup kitchen. This involves visiting local shops and learning to cook soup. In addition, some pupils have to overcome anxiety about certain foods and remember to be safe when walking. All these activities support pupils in trying new things, building resilience and preparing for adult life.

The experienced headteacher leads the school well. The proprietor and an experienced chair of governors hold the headteacher to account effectively. External consultants with appropriate specialist skills and knowledge also support the headteacher effectively. As a result, leaders understand the independent school standards and their statutory obligations well, and they meet these consistently. Leaders ensure that pupils' welfare, health and safety are paramount. In addition, they ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff are very positive about how leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being. They benefit from a range of professional development opportunities. Leaders encourage staff to be outward looking and to bring new ideas into the school. All staff are proud to be part of this school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding has a high priority at the school. Staff have regular safeguarding training and are alert to possible signs of abuse. Any concerns are shared quickly with leaders, so that pupils receive any help they need. Leaders and staff know the pupils well and understand how to keep them safe, including when pupils' behaviour could pose a risk to others.

Leaders have a clear understanding of safer recruitment processes. Therefore, they make all the necessary checks before an adult starts working at the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example in the local community.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In early reading, mathematics and PSHE education, leaders have established a coherent, ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that is being implemented effectively. In these subjects, pupils gain from a well-taught curriculum. However, in other subjects, the curriculum is not as well planned. The small units of knowledge pupils need to learn are not clearly identified. As a result, activities do not support pupils in deepening their learning. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects have a well-planned curriculum so that pupils can benefit from lessons across the curriculum.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148342
<b>DfE registration number</b>	908/6011
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212967
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	4
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Southwest Complex Care Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Kerry Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tyler Collins
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£65,000 to £95,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01822 851761
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.southwestcomplexcare.com">www.southwestcomplexcare.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@southwestcomplexcare.com">admin@southwestcomplexcare.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The Lowen School is an independent special school located just outside Gunnislake, Cornwall.
- The school caters for pupils with significant and complex learning needs, including autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is registered for pupils aged seven to 18. At the time of this inspection, there were no students in the sixth form. The oldest pupil was 15 years old.
- This is the school's first standard inspection. The school was registered with the Department for Education in March 2021.
- The school is owned by South West Complex Care Limited.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## 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 had 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.

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and assistant headteacher of the school, as well as the chair of governors. Inspectors also met with the chair of Southwest Complex Care Ltd and had a telephone conversation the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading (with a focus on speaking, listening and communication), mathematics, PSHE education and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors explored safeguarding arrangements by reviewing records, checking the safety of the school site, talking to staff about how they keep pupils safe and checking the school's single central record. They met with the school's designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and other conversations they had with parents.

- Inspectors considered the views of staff through conversations and scrutiny of the responses to the online staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Burgess, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Martin Greenwood

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022