

Inspection of Coxlease School

Clay Hill, Lyndhurst, Hampshire SO43 7DE

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Coxlease School. Adults understand pupils' needs exceptionally well. They create a positive, safe atmosphere that ensures that pupils settle in quickly. Staff help pupils to understand themselves and others. Staff respond quickly and calmly when a pupil needs extra help to maintain their self-control. Pupils trust adults to help them with any friendship issues that might arise. Several pupils told inspectors how much their behaviour had improved from being at this school.

Pupils know that adults have high expectations and want them to succeed. Adults help pupils to develop confidence and independence. Consequently, they become committed to their own learning, attend regularly and take pride in their achievements. Pupils benefit from extensive opportunities to participate in activities that help to develop their character. These include trips to the science museum and the theatre. Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular clubs, including those for football, dance and the very popular chess club.

Pupils are encouraged to think about their future long before it is time for them to leave the school. Older pupils are supported to attend college or one of the school's specialist vocational learning centres. Several parents and carers praised the school's work, with one saying that the school, 'has changed my child's life for the better'.

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

Pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and behavioural needs are met exceptionally well through a personalised package of support and therapy. Leaders carefully decide what pupils need based on pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plan, as well as constant assessment of pupils' physical, intellectual, emotional and social well-being. Pupils enjoy a range of individual therapies and group lessons where they learn to understand their emotions and how to manage the behaviours associated with their SEMH needs. This allows pupils to access the rest of the curriculum and to achieve success by the time they are ready for the sixth form.

Pupils who join the school may have experienced significant upheaval in their lives. Many display extreme behaviour when they join. Sometimes this can include violent outbursts. Staff are experts in managing this behaviour calmly so that pupils stay safe. Adults constantly model positive behaviour through the respect and politeness they display when talking to pupils. Their approach ensures that, over time, pupils have fewer behavioural incidents and are able to stay calm more often. Pupils recognise the improvements they make in managing their behaviour. One said: 'I used to be a little firecracker, but now I'm much calmer. The school's helped me do this.'

Reading is prioritised throughout the school, but especially for the youngest pupils. Adults know how to unpick pupils' gaps in phonics and then provide teaching tailored to each pupil's starting point. This helps pupils to catch up, so that over time they are able to read more fluently. Occasionally, the books pupils use to practise

reading are slightly too hard for them. Leaders are working hard to address this by ensuring that the books are carefully matched to the specific sounds pupils are currently learning.

Adults' enthusiasm for reading shines through. The books they choose to read to pupils and give to older pupils to read are of high quality. Often, texts reflect aspects of pupils' SEMH needs, which further helps pupils to understand themselves. As a result of the whole-school focus on reading, pupils develop more confidence and learn to love stories and reading. This helps them to be successful in the whole curriculum.

Leaders, staff and the proprietors are ambitious for pupils' achievement. Together they make sure that the standard of education is consistently good, and outstanding in the sixth form. Pupils follow a curriculum that is broadly based on the national curriculum. Subjects such as computing, mathematics, and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are carefully structured to build pupils' knowledge so that they achieve well. Leaders are making sure that other subjects, such as history and geography, are being developed to the same high quality.

High-quality careers information, advice and guidance help pupils make decisions about what they want their future lives to be like. This is a strong aspect of the school's work. Older pupils spoke knowledgeably about what their next stages will be and how they will achieve these. Most pupils study for GCSE qualifications and then move on to college, sometimes supported by school staff. Pupils who choose a vocational pathway are taught courses such as construction or catering by experienced specialists at one of the school's vocational learning centres. The curriculum followed in these centres is superbly designed to bridge the gap between school and the workplace. As a result, typically all pupils who leave go on to successful and sustained next stages.

The proprietor ensures that new leaders get the help and support they need to be successful in their new roles. As a result, despite some significant changes in leadership, the school's management of pupils' SEMH needs continues to be of high quality, and many aspects of the school have improved since the previous inspection. Leaders have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to get even better.

Leaders are mindful that fluctuations in staffing levels due to the pandemic have had the potential to create additional pressures on staff workload. Leaders have established a range of measures to ensure that staff are able to manage their workload well. Staff are well trained to understand pupils' special educational and therapeutic needs, so that they recognise the unique strengths and vulnerabilities of each pupil. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel, and are, valued for the work they do, which helps pupils to succeed. One reflected positively that they often get to the end of the day feeling, 'I've done a little bit of the impossible today.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils develop trusting relationships with staff, which helps them to feel safe.

Adults know that pupils' additional needs make them particularly vulnerable. They know how to recognise the signs that might indicate a pupil needs extra help. Staff report concerns promptly. Leaders provide a range of specialist help for pupils who need it. The school also works well with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils get any extra help they need.

Leaders keep detailed records about safeguarding, which helps them to build a picture of pupils' needs over time. They are working to improve the organisation of these as they introduce a new recording system.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a minority of subjects, such as geography and history, the curriculum that leaders have planned is at an early stage of implementation. Leaders should ensure that all subjects set out precisely the subject content and the order in which it will be taught, so that pupils remember more and apply what they already know to new learning.

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	116586
DfE registration number	850/6017
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10202277
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	21
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services Limited
Chair	Chris Strong
Headteacher	Anthony Merriman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£80,000
Telephone number	023 8028 3633
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/coxlease-school-hampshire
Email address	coxleasereception@priorygroup.com
Date of previous inspection	11 to 13 July 2017

Information about this school

- Coxlease School is situated in the New Forest and provides education for pupils with SEMH needs, as well as other complex needs associated with autism spectrum disorder.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school was granted a material change, allowing it to increase the school's capacity to 110. There are currently 99 pupils who attend the school. These pupils are aged between eight and 19. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in the leadership of the school. The current headteacher took up post in September 2021.
- The school uses three registered and four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school runs two off-site provisions for students in the sixth form. The Hub is located at Unit 2, Rushington Business Park, Rushington Court, Totton, Southampton SO40 9NA. The Skills Centre is located at Unit 9, Milton Business Centre, Wick Drive, New Milton, Hampshire BH25 6RH.
- In January 2022, the proprietorial body for the school changed its name from Priory Education Services Limited to Aspris Children's Services Limited.

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 other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the operational director, who provides governance for the school, and held a telephone conversation with the chair of the proprietorial body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and PSHE. This involved discussions with the leaders of these subjects, checking curriculum plans, visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking with pupils and staff about learning in these subjects. The lead inspector also heard some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also explored the wider curriculum in the school by speaking to leaders about the provision for pupils' special educational needs and wider development.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and the deputy designated safeguarding lead and the site manager. They spoke to a range of staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records, including those relating to risk assessments and the safer recruitment of staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who had responded to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View. Inspectors spoke to pupils in class and around the school, and held meetings with some pupils. Inspectors considered the views of staff through conversations with them throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors also toured the school premises, including visiting the school’s two post-16 provisions, The Hub and The Skills Centre, where they spoke to leaders, teachers and students about provision in the sixth form. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation to check that the school complies with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Clive Close

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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