

# The Lowen School

Lower Dimson Farm, Gunnislake, Cornwall PL18 9NS

**Inspection date**

13 October 2022

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

#### *Paragraph 2*

- The Lowen School specialises in bespoke provision for pupils with complex needs. Leaders have established a carefully designed curriculum to meet two very specific cohorts. The 'formal' curriculum caters for pupils who are beginning to access the national curriculum. The 'semi-formal' curriculum is for pupils with more profound and complex needs. Both are ambitious and highly tailored to meet the needs of each individual pupil. Consequently, the design of the curriculum is easily adapted to meet younger pupils' needs should the material change be granted.
- Staff have appropriate experience in education, including in specialist settings. They use this experience, and the vision of leaders, to implement the clear and appropriate curriculum policy. The policy appears on the school website. It details clearly the bespoke approach taken by the school to meet individual needs. All policies relating to the curriculum reflect the aims and values that underpin leaders' vision. They have fundamental British values weaved throughout them.
- All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Curriculum planning and assessment are underpinned by these plans. Pupils' progress is measured against the levels of their engagement, their abilities in literacy and numeracy and the planned outcomes in their EHC plans. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. Plans to extend provision to include younger pupils are well conceived. They are rightly designed to build on the successes already experienced by current pupils.
- Personal, social and health education is an established part of both curriculums. As such, pupils benefit from learning opportunities that align well with the school's aims and vision. The expectations of the independent school standards (the standards) are considered carefully. This includes relationships and sex education, tailored to the level of need of the pupils. Consequently, pupils benefit from a well-rounded education. This will be the same for younger pupils.

- Pathways into adulthood are an integral part of the curriculum. This means pupils access appropriate careers advice and support in developing their independence as they move into key stage 4. Leaders have appropriate plans to build on this further as current pupils get older.

### *Paragraph 3*

- Teachers share the same enthusiasm and passion as leaders. Teaching facilitates the successful implementation of the well-designed, individualised curriculum. Teachers are well qualified. They use well-conceived planning to deliver lessons, aimed to secure progress for individual pupils. Support staff are skilled, experienced and well trained. Everyone utilises every moment to engage, enthuse and interact with pupils.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils make a significant contribution to provision. Staff know their pupils exceptionally well because their use of assessment is very well developed. Consequently, lessons are very well planned to ensure that pupils are given the opportunities they need to take the next steps in their learning.
- Some staff have expertise in early years practice. This helps ensure that the school is well placed to take younger children should the material change be granted.

### *Paragraph 4*

- Leaders have developed a useful and wide-ranging system for assessing pupils' progress over time. When pupils arrive at the school, leaders utilise rigorous assessment processes to understand pupils' needs in detail. These assessments are carried out across the first 12 weeks after the pupils arrive. From this, bespoke plans are developed and tracked. Parents are informed of progress against these plans on a 12-week and annual cycle. Leaders use this to inform the annual reviews of pupils' EHC plans.
- Leaders intend to use these established processes with younger pupils should the material change be granted. Furthermore, leaders already use an online reporting system set up to cover the early years foundation stage curriculum.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

## Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

### *Paragraph 5*

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively weaved through all parts of curriculum planning. Pupils benefit from daily routines and activities to promote social development. This is enhanced by regular trips and visits to the local community and beyond. Spiritual experiences are planned in science and outdoor learning. Cultural differences are celebrated, including through the study and celebration of a range of faiths. The design of the curriculum and its successful implementation mean that pupils develop improved social skills rapidly once they start at the school.
- Opportunities to learn in the real world are a central element of the curriculum. As such, pupils benefit from plentiful opportunities for self-exploration within the natural world. They also benefit from opportunities to learn through their own interests. They are helped in their preparation for adulthood through shopping, self-care and the promotion of their independence.

- All elements of the current curriculum will be included in the design of the curriculum for younger pupils.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34*

- Leaders at all levels work effectively together. Their shared vision to improve outcomes for pupils through an alternative education underpins their work. This has led to leaders' request to extend provision. There is a strong moral imperative to provide earlier intervention for pupils with the most complex needs.
- Leaders' actions and plans for improvement give appropriate consideration to the independent school standards. Leaders continually strive to find ways to improve how the school can effectively meet the needs of pupils. Leaders can already demonstrate the positive impact of the alternative approach to learning that they offer. For example, in considering their plans for the proposed material change, they have rightly developed learning spaces where the early years curriculum can be delivered effectively. This includes well-designed indoor and outdoor learning spaces.
- Governance arrangements are established. The chair of the governing body has useful and relevant experience. She is an experienced trainer and adviser to governing boards in a local authority. She is a former teacher and leader. Governors discuss strategic decisions and provide robust challenge. This includes the decision to make the application for a material change. Governors ensured leaders' business model is robust and that the application fits into the aims and values of the school.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## School details

Unique reference number	148342
DfE registration number	908/6011
Inspection number	10251984

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	South West Complex Care Services Ltd
Chair	Kerry Turner
Headteacher	Tyler Collins
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000 to £95,000
Telephone number	01822851761
Website	<a href="https://thelowenschool.org">https://thelowenschool.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:tyler.collins@southwestcomplexcare.com">tyler.collins@southwestcomplexcare.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	1 to 3 February 2022

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	7	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	7	7
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	7	7
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	7	7
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	7	7

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	14	14
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	1	1

## Information about this school

- The Lowen School is an independent special school. It is located in Gunnislake, Cornwall.
- The school caters for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many have a diagnosis of 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 is 15 years old.
- This school was last inspected in February 2022, when it was judged to provide a good standard of education for its pupils. 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

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to consider the school's request for a material change.
- The purpose of the inspection was to consider whether leaders' proposal to extend the school's age range would be likely to meet the independent school standards. This was the school's first material change inspection.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, the chair of the governing body and the engagement and quality lead.
- The inspector scrutinised curriculum planning and reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including policies and procedures and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspector also reviewed documentation and information available on the school's website.

## Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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