

Inspection of Orchard Manor School

John Nash Drive, Dawlish, Devon EX7 9SF

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Nicola Jones. This school is part of the Special Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Guy Chappell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alison Cook.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and carers, staff and those responsible for leadership and governance all agree that Orchard Manor is a school where pupils flourish and thrive. This is despite a significant period of change since the school's last inspection. The school's values sit at the centre of what is now a school where pupils learn and develop towards successful and aspirational futures.

The expectations that the school has of its pupils stem from the staff's dedication of wanting the very best for the pupils socially and emotionally, as well as academically. Pupils respond well because they trust in the staff and feel safe. This is as a result of the care and nurture provided through the strong relationships between staff and pupils. The impact is a calm and motivating school where pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other and the diverse needs they each have.

Pupils are encouraged to form and express their own views and opinions. They do this with great success. They are well equipped with the strategies they need, such as a range of communication approaches and confidence.

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

The school has maximised on a period of stability, following significant turbulence in many aspects of its organisation and make-up. These include staffing, leadership and changing cohorts. The school has overhauled its culture and values. It is now better placed to meet the diverse range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of pupils on its roll. The school has prioritised getting pupils ready to learn. This ultimately supports the work towards a successful and fulfilling adulthood for pupils.

Pupils' wider development is a strength of the school. The school has established a rich set of opportunities and experiences for pupils. These are crucial in their social and emotional development. They include a vast array of leadership roles and life skills, and fostering talents and interests. The school is working to ensure that there is a clear strategy and overview of this area. Pupils gain a sense of character and increased resilience as they encounter demands and difficulties and overcome them. However, there is a need to refine the approach to increasing pupils' independence in their learning and development, enabling greater autonomy without defaulting to adult support such as physical or verbal prompts. This applies to pupils across the school and with varying needs, from the more complex to the more cognitively able.

The school has an ambitious and well-considered curriculum in the majority of the subjects it offers. It includes an early years-based provision for those pupils at that stage of learning and development. Pupils learn to read at the earliest opportunity. Staff have the expertise required to teach the pre-requisites for communication and engagement with language at its earliest stages. Pupils are quickly ready to engage with sounds and text in their environment. There is a well-considered reading progression curriculum. It supports pupils to move from a focus on reading with

accuracy to reading with fluency and comprehension. This is further enhanced to develop a love of reading. Pupils experience increasingly more complex stories and texts as they move through the lower campus and on to the upper campus and a qualification pathway.

In mathematics, physical education (PE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE) pupils replicate the successful learning of the English curriculum. Pupils learn how to lead safe, healthy lives. As well as learning the requirements of the national curriculum, these subjects include elements that are pertinent to pupils' own well-being and interests. The school is aware of the need to develop other areas in the wider curriculum. This is so that they align more closely with subjects where pupils learn well and enjoy their learning experience.

The post-16 provision, 'The College', provides students with a bespoke vocational and life skills-based curriculum that is informed by education, health and care (EHC) plan outcomes. The school works to break these down so that they support the achievement of future aspirations. Examples include working towards improved GCSE grades, support with driving theory tests and achieving basic food hygiene or a Construction Skills Certification Scheme card. Students complete regular work experience or experience of work opportunities to enhance the learning that takes place on site.

The school has a well-embedded, rigorous approach to support the behaviour and attitudes of pupils. The collaborative work across the areas of attendance, safeguarding and behaviour means that information is used exceptionally well to adapt and respond, as necessary, to pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils are ready and able to learn. The impact of this has been fundamental in pupils wanting to be in school and meet staff's high expectations of them. There has been a significant and sustained reduction in the need to manage and respond to behaviour incidents.

The support and challenge from the trust has been used well by the school to guide, advise and strengthen the vast improvements the school has undertaken. The trust and governors have a secure knowledge of the school. As a result, they have provided the appropriate balance of support and challenge so that the school has retained its own unique identity within a period of considerable change.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects in the wider curriculum are not as well developed as others. Where this is the case, pupils do not learn as successfully or with as much enjoyment as they do in other areas. The trust should work to fully develop the curriculum and

subsequent assessment for all subjects in the wider curriculum, so that pupils experience a broad education and learn as well as they do in the subjects where these are fully established.

- The approach to increasing pupils' autonomy in their learning and attitudes to learning needs refining. At times, there can be an overreliance on adult support. Consequently, pupils become dependent on adults being present to prompt, scaffold and extend learning or transitions. The trust should make sure that there is a clear progression in increasing pupils' independence that is commonly used and understood. This should include alternatives to adult verbal and physical prompts and support.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148476
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10298102
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
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	201
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	14
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alison Cook
CEO of the trust	Guy Chappell
Headteacher	Nicola Jones
Website	www.orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Special Partnership Trust in April 2021.
- The school has pupils with a wide range of SEND, including autism, and severe and complex learning needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school makes use of three unregistered alternative providers. Inspectors made the necessary checks on safeguarding and suitability of provision.
- The school does not currently have any children under three years old on roll.
- Orchard Manor School converted to become an academy in April 2021. When its predecessor school, Orchard Manor School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point in time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the assistant headteachers and the designated safeguarding lead. In addition, an inspector met with a representative from the trust, the trust CEO and the chair of the local governing body. An inspector spoke with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English with early reading and communication, mathematics, PSHE and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke to teachers and pupils. In addition, inspectors sampled individual pupils' work to gather evidence about the quality of education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. Inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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