

Chilworth House School

Independent Special School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	931/6125
Unique Reference Number	131064
Inspection number	330430
Inspection dates	18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Anne Duffy HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Chilworth House School opened in 2005 as a result of the Witherslack Group of Schools' decision to extend its provision to the south of England. The school admits pupils between the ages of 5 and 14 who have learning difficulties and disabilities relating to communication, challenging behaviour or complex learning needs. All have statements of special educational needs and they are usually placed by their home authority. The school's approach to meeting the needs of its pupils is underpinned by the 'Swallow Curriculum' which stands for: stimulating and innovative; welcoming and respectful; achievable, boosting self-esteem; learning in a positive and happy environment; looked-after and cared for; opportunities to develop socially, emotionally, academically; whole school, where everyone is important.

Currently the pupils are all boys, aged between 8 and 13. The school opened its Key Stage 3 provision in September 2008, but this is likely to move to new premises in the near future in line with the Witherslack Group's intention to create secondary provision nearby.

Evaluation of the school

Chilworth House School provides a good quality of education and makes outstanding provision for the personal development of its pupils. It successfully achieves its aim to provide 'a happy, welcoming and motivating learning environment where the whole school enjoy their learning experiences and are encouraged to achieve their potential'. Curricular provision is outstanding; pupils are well motivated and make good progress as a result of good teaching. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is also outstanding and promotes good behaviour. Pupils enjoy, and are proud of, their school. As one boy said, 'this school is cool'. The school's ethos is supported by excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are rigorous.

The previous inspection of the school recommended that it: continue to implement the current developments, so that they become embedded in the life of the school; develop school self-evaluation procedures so that the school can readily identify its

strengths and areas for improvement. The leadership team has addressed both these points with vigour so that the school knows itself well and its continuous drive for improvement is evident.

Quality of education

The school has developed its own unique approach to the curriculum which it rightly describes as motivating and stimulating. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is successfully built upon a series of core values which are interwoven into a structured framework. Pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills are effectively addressed through activities based upon five social and emotional aspects of learning: self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills. The curriculum successfully incorporates health education, citizenship, drugs education and sex education. Daily literacy and mathematics sessions are extremely effective, as are the weekly social skills sessions. Other subjects are appropriately delivered through a two year rolling programme of cross-curricular topics which are based upon the National Curriculum. Although limited to some extent by the need for pupils to travel home on local authority transport, a full programme of enrichment activities is in place. This includes lunch-time clubs, trips and camping in the school's grounds.

The Key Stage 3 provision is relatively new and the school is working towards the development of a similarly value-based curriculum for this age group. The existing model strongly supports the key values of the school and the programme is designed to ensure that all pupils experience a rich and varied mix of subjects. As in the earlier key stages, pupils benefit from daily literacy and mathematics sessions. All these initiatives are too new to demonstrate evident impact and the school is aware that providing secondary, as well as primary, education will bring a new set of challenges.

Teaching is good and some elements are outstanding. The school has a detailed system of monitoring teaching and learning and judges it to be outstanding overall. However, the monitoring is predominantly focused upon what teachers do rather than how well pupils are learning. As a result it is possible for a lesson to be judged outstanding even when it is noted that not all pupils have been fully engaged. Nevertheless, there are many strengths. Planning is thorough and relationships are excellent, learning objectives are shared consistently with the pupils and they contribute well to their own assessment of what they have learnt. They are actively involved in setting and monitoring their own behaviour and short-term learning targets.

Pupils make good progress overall and some make outstanding progress. The school has thorough assessment processes and sets annual targets for improvement for all pupils. However, these are not individualised sufficiently to ensure that each pupil is always challenged to make as much progress as he can. At the last inspection the school was asked to consider analysing pupil assessment information to determine how pupils perform in different subjects over time. It has successfully done this and an analysis of assessment data shows that particularly good progress is made in mathematics, science, personal, social and health education, art and design and

technology. Well focused intervention in literacy has demonstrable impact across all subjects.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. This reflects the judgement made by the school. The pupils enjoy school a great deal and, for many, this is the first time of doing so. Their enjoyment is shown in their good attendance, positive attitudes, and improving behaviour. Although for some, learning to conform is not easy, behaviour is good overall because pupils are helped to understand both their own and others' feelings. Reflection time and 'Activate' sessions contribute well to class unity. There is a strong sense of community involvement. Pupils have a good understanding of the core values; they are able to help each other and respond well to the school's reward system. The rewards include cloth badges, designed by the first pupil to join the school. These are sewn on to pupils' fleece jackets and are worn with pride by those who attain them.

Pupils participate in organising activities, such as those connected with Red Nose Day and raising money to support charities both in this country and abroad. The newly formed school council is very proud of its new role and has every expectation that it will be listened to.

There is a good range of visiting speakers, such as the local police liaison officer, and visits to local establishments such as the library. Through these pupils are helped to understand the types and roles of public services and institutions in England. There is excellent provision to raise awareness of other countries and lifestyles. Pupils visit the local mosque and Hindu temple and experience many different foods from places such as Ghana and South East Asia. They are successfully encouraged to celebrate difference and diversity within the school population and in the wider community. This enhances their understanding and tolerance of different cultures and traditions, as well as respecting their own.

Schemes of work for the newly designed Key Stage 3 curriculum appropriately incorporate the development of skills that pupils will require during their adult life, especially literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Older pupils benefit from opportunities to do much of their learning in other establishments such as neighbouring schools and a local art studio. In creating Key Stage 3 provision, the school has responded to requests from local authorities for placements to continue beyond age eleven. However, pupils are not encouraged to become dependent. As one boy says, 'I don't want to leave this school but I know I will have to one day.'

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school recognises that many of its pupils are vulnerable, and the inspection team agrees that it makes outstanding provision for their welfare, health and safety.

Exemplary policies and procedures are in place to safeguard pupils and these are regularly monitored by the headteacher as well as the risk manager from the Witherslack Group of Schools. There are two designated child protection officers who have completed certificated training. All staff receive regular training to keep up to date with child protection matters. Medicines are kept safely and their use is logged correctly. Pupils' health is promoted well through healthy eating and good education about the use or misuse of drugs and alcohol. Physical activity, which includes hide and seek and football with staff at lunchtimes, is made very enjoyable. The level of supervision is good and pupils feel safe. They are regularly taught about and therefore have a sound knowledge of internet safety. The extensive grounds are used by other schools in Oxfordshire as a Forest Schools site and appropriate arrangements are made to ensure pupils' safety when this takes place. The school has a thorough and regularly reviewed access plan, in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Parents were almost completely united in their high praise for the school, which works hard to involve them. This involvement begins before their child is admitted, when a home visit is made. All aspects of school life are discussed and any necessary permissions obtained. The continuing support from staff remains an important part of school life for pupils and their families. Pupils appreciate their allocated time to talk with one of the pastoral co-ordinators and know that they can go to anyone if they have a problem or a worry. As part of its behaviour management approach the school uses the Team Teach programme and has recently gained the Team Teach Gold Standard award.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that academic target-setting and teaching challenges all pupils to make as much progress as they can
- ensure that the school builds upon its many strengths and addresses any areas of relative weakness as it develops the secondary phase of its provision

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

Name of school	Chilworth House School
DCSF number	931/6125
Unique reference number	131064
Type of school	Special for pupils with complex learning difficulties and challenging behaviour
Status	Independent
Date school opened	8 September 2005
Age range of pupils	5 -14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 28 Girls: 0 Total: 28
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 28 Girls: 0 Total: 28
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5 Girls: 0 Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 47,673
Address of school	Thame Road Wheatley Oxford Oxfordshire OX33 1JP
Telephone number	01844 339077
Fax number	01844 039088
Email address	admin@chilworthhouseschool.com
Headteacher	Mr B Marchbank
Proprietor	Mr J Bowers, Witherslack Group of Schools
Reporting inspector	Anne Duffy HMI
Dates of inspection	18 March 2009