

Oaklands Park School

John Nash Drive, Dawlish, Devon EX7 9SF

Inspection dates

31 January – 1 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the residential provision	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, leaders and managers, including governors, have not had sufficient impact on raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders, including governors, have an ambitious vision for the future and an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses.
- The school's leadership is currently going through a period of restructure. Subject leaders do not drive improvements to ensure that pupils make good progress in a range of subjects.
- The quality of teaching and assessment is not consistently good. Teachers do not consistently match activities to the needs of pupils.
- Leaders do not rigorously check the impact of interventions on pupils' achievement, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils do not practise and apply the skills they develop in reading, writing and mathematics across a range of subjects.
- The provision for 16 to 19 year olds requires improvement. Changes to staffing have led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- The recording of incidents is not always sufficiently detailed to prevent reoccurrence. There is no policy in place regarding the use of surveillance equipment.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour are good. Staff provide enriching learning experiences outside of school.
- Leadership of the residential homes is good. Children and young people are cared for well.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years class is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders, including governors, and managers should ensure that:
 - the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school continues to improve, including in the 16 to 19 provision, so that pupils make consistently good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects
 - subject leaders monitor pupils' progress and use this information to support improvements in their subjects
 - interventions provided for disadvantaged pupils have a clear impact on improving their achievements
 - the recording of incidents improves so that there is more detail about the timings and type of intervention used.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers are supported to make accurate assessments by sharing their assessments with staff from other schools
 - teachers use assessment information consistently across the school to plan activities that closely match the learning needs and interests of pupils and to identify any weaknesses in progress so that these can be rectified
 - pupils are able to practise and develop the skills they gain in reading, writing and mathematics by using these skills in other subjects.

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools

- Any use of surveillance equipment (for example closed circuit television, cameras, or in this instance, listening devices) does not intrude on children's privacy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the residential provision	Good

- There have been considerable changes to the leadership and governance of the school since the previous inspection. Over time, leaders have not ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been securely and consistently implemented across the school. The recently appointed executive principal, who leads across both schools, works with determination to ensure that the improvements needed are made and the school becomes solidly good.
- Leaders' work to rigorously check the quality of teaching and learning across the school is relatively new. Teachers are increasingly being held to account for making improvements to their practice. However, the quality of teaching and learning across the school remains variable.
- Leaders do not consistently check that pupils make consistently strong progress in a range of subjects. Roles to do this are being developed but are not yet in place. The leader for mathematics has a secure understanding of effective strategies and resources that help pupils to develop their mathematical skills. The leader uses 'spot assessments' to show what pupils can and cannot do. She then uses this information to adapt activities. This practice is now being shared across the school.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding, including the pupils premium, is used to provide additional teaching that is targeted to meet the specific needs of pupils. For example, pupils have extra interventions that include speech and language and sensory sessions. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to ensure that they check the impact of these activities on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Senior leaders across the school and residential houses work as a cohesive team and share good practice. For example, work to support pupils' mental and emotional health is secure, and as a result pupils are settled and happy in the residential houses. This practice is now being introduced into the school to help pupils to develop stronger attitudes towards their learning.
- Staff work hard to ensure that the curriculum is adapted to ensure that pupils are helped and encouraged to learn how to manage their emotions and to develop social skills. Additional experiences such as donkey therapy, forest school, cooking, sensory exploration and residential visits help pupils to grow and develop values such as tolerance and respect for one another.
- Experienced staff and consistently implemented systems mean that provision in the residential houses is good.
- The local authority provides support through a school improvement officer. Regular visits are made to support the leadership of the school. Leaders value this additional guidance. Despite this ongoing support, the school is not yet good.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to ensure that the school improves. Working in partnership with the executive principal, they share his ambition that the school continues to rapidly improve.
- Governors are wisely ensuring that they have the experiences and skills needed to both support and challenge the school's work. They use an accountability matrix to check the improvements being made to the quality of teaching, learning and assessments.
- Minutes show that governors ask suitably challenging questions about the progress that pupils are making. Information about progress is quite new and does not show how well different groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils, are achieving.
- Governors visit the school frequently. They attend school events and ensure that they gather the views of parents.

Safeguarding

- Records of incidents do not always record the duration and type of intervention used. Therefore, leaders do not have a clear picture of the details of the incidents that took place and thus are not able to work to reduce such incidents in the future.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are assessed and appropriate steps are taken. Leaders take advice from a range of external agencies to ensure that help is provided to pupils and families.
- From the start of each day, as pupils are welcomed into school by staff, pupils are encouraged, respected and listened to. This helps pupils to feel confident to express any concerns they may have.
- Staff receive a wide range of safeguarding training. As a result, they are vigilant and able to spot any concerns regarding pupils' welfare. Staff also receive training on how to manage more challenging behaviour. Recruitment procedures are robust and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies from one key stage to another. Some pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are not consistently challenged to move forward in their learning.
- Leaders have developed their own detailed system aimed at supporting teachers to assess the progress that pupils make. Where the system is used well, teachers gather and use detailed information about what pupils know and can do to plan the next learning activities. However, this is not consistently applied across the different key stages to ensure that pupils regularly receive work and experiences that closely match their learning needs.
- Some teaching assistants provide extra guidance to help pupils to move forward in their learning. For example, activities and questions are adapted by some staff to ensure that pupils can be successful in a range of games that support their

understanding of number and calculations. This practice is not consistent across the school.

- Teachers have recently started to compare pupils' workbooks and folders, which helps expectations to become more consistent. The school improvement plan includes a focus on ensuring that staff are able to share pupils' work with colleagues from other schools in the trust to support even higher expectations. This work has not yet started.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff know pupils very well and strong relationships exist across the school.
- Pupils show a willingness to learn, they are inquisitive and keen. In key stage 3, for example, pupils responded very well to a range of questions from the teachers about the book they are reading together. In mathematics, in key stage 4, pupils are developing skills to use their knowledge of money to solve real-life situations involving money. Students also show enthusiasm and sensible attitudes when attending work-based activities at other sites.
- Leaders recognise the successful work that takes place in the residential houses to promote pupils' self-esteem and social skills. A similar programme is now in place in the school. Teachers give specific time each day to explore with pupils how to develop positive attitudes towards their learning. It also allows pupils to develop their own strategies to cope with their emotions when faced with challenges during the school day. For example, pupils could describe different ways they use to calm down so that they can continue with their learning.
- The curriculum includes guidance for pupils on keeping safe, including how to stay safe while online. Displays around the school also guide pupils about being healthy and what to do if they are worried about bullying.
- Pupils' confidence and social skills are supported through a range of enrichment activities, including residential visits where pupils are challenged to try exciting new physical activities such as using a zip wire and kayaking.
- Daily staff briefings take place, where the day is carefully planned. These help to ensure that staff are well prepared and can provide the right care for pupils. This helps pupils to feel secure. Parents appreciate this nurturing environment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff receive training and updates to help them to have a range of strategies that support the positive management of behaviour, and most staff manage behaviour very well. Quiet spaces to be calm and think quietly support pupils who need some additional time and space. Physical activities outside are encouraged throughout the day to help pupils to 'let off steam'.
- Pupils move around the school site calmly, and conversations between pupils and staff are respectful and polite.

- Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Communication with parents and carers ensures that support is given to families from a range of external services if needed.
- Pupils are involved in decisions that affect them. The school council is currently helping with decisions around a new outside play area. In a well-structured meeting, they considered three sets of plans from different contractors.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Due to the inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment, pupils do not make consistently good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects and across the school.
- While there is evidence that pupils are making some progress in their skills in English and mathematics, pupils are not consistently expected to use these skills in other subjects. Therefore, they do not develop their basic skills as they should.
- Pupils' work shows that while pupils have wide learning experiences, they are not yet developing their skills or making consistently good progress across a range of subjects. For example, pupils' learning journey folders do not demonstrate the progress pupils make in science, information technology, humanities or art. Examples of work in these subjects are limited.
- Until very recently, teachers have not set challenging targets for pupils. Leaders are working to ensure that there is 'no lid' on what pupils can achieve. Staff are being supported to plan 'flightpaths' for pupils, mapping out aspirational achievements over time. This work is new, and therefore it is not possible to see the impact of this on pupils' progress.
- Teachers assess new pupils in their first half term and use this information to plan and set targets. Progress is tracked daily using notes of progress that are attached to pupils' learning journals; this helps pupils to see their progress over time.

Early years provision

Good

- In the early years class, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Children who have complex needs join the school with skills that are significantly below those typical for their age. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to develop a sense of security and safety. They use a range of communication strategies to ensure that children develop strong trusting relationships with staff and, sometimes, with each other.
- The early years leader uses detailed information based on observations of what children can do and understand during their learning activities. These observations are recorded carefully and shared with parents. Parents contribute – many of them on a daily basis – by providing information about their child's achievements at home. Additional support, for example from speech therapists, is brought in as needed.
- Staff use information well to plan personalised learning programmes for children. As a result, children make good progress through the year and this prepares them well for their next steps in learning as they move further up the school.

- Children become increasingly confident to move to different areas of learning. As they move through the day, children go to look at their visual timetables as these show them what is happening and what is next. Staff ensure that there is plenty to interest them. For example, in reading the book 'Handa's Hen', the classroom included items such as musical instruments from Africa.
- The environment both inside and outside is safe and secure, and staff ensure that any identified risks are reduced.
- The day is organised to ensure that children are able to get fully involved in learning. For example, some children with more complex needs benefit from extra physical short-burst breaks. Staff ensure that children can roll and crawl and jump on a mini trampoline as they need to. Children are then able to successfully settle to their learning.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The provision for 16 to 19 year olds requires improvement. Leaders recognise that expectations have been too low for some time and that there has been a lack of rigour to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning improves. Several changes to staffing in recent months have led to further inconsistencies in the leadership of the 16 to 19 programmes.
- In 2017, all pupils gained ASDAN life skills accreditation. Progress in English and mathematics is tracked through ASDAN personal progress modules. However, very few students achieve functional skills, and this is a focus for improvement for the school.
- Students attend work experience and work-related placements, which helps them to plan for their futures and to learn work-related skills. Teaching assistants provide help and care for students, which helps them to approach these placements with confidence. For example, students learn about working with motor vehicles at Combe Pafford College, which they enjoy. Other placements include use of the Dawlish Garden Trust. Leaders are aware that planning for these placements needs more structure to ensure that they support students' interests and future destinations. Leaders have made this a key priority in the school's development plan.
- Residential trips are a focus of much interest and excitement for students. The activities help students to take new risks, to test their abilities and to try new physical activities. This contributes positively to their personal development and confidence to move forward beyond school. All leavers in 2017 remained in education, training or employment, some leaving to attend local colleges.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision

Good

- Widespread improvements have been made since the social care inspection in June 2016. Effective review, research and consultation with other providers have driven these improvements. Areas for improvement have been addressed. The experiences of residential pupils are good. Parents who express their views are generally very positive, a typical comment being 'choosing this provision for my child was the best decision I ever made.'

- The quality of planning for care and the range of activities provided support the development of pupils' emotional, social and practical skills well. In addition, these activities help to enhance pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Leaders and staff have a positive 'can do' attitude which supports inclusion and opportunity for all.
- The head of care has high aspirations for pupils and staff. Supervision, appraisal and training for staff are effective and personalised to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Arrangements for the storage and administration of medication are safe and effective. Pupils benefit from staff who understand their health needs. Staff work effectively, in consultation with parents and specialist health providers. A successful recent improvement priority has been to improve the mental health and well-being of pupils. Staff across the school are engaged in a dedicated training programme.
- Arrangements for moving into the residential care provision are carefully planned and implemented. Pupils enjoy good-quality relationships with those who care for them. The majority of staff hold a childcare qualification. In addition, they bring their own personal skills such as music, cooking and sport to engage pupils and encourage them to take up new hobbies and interests.
- Staff ensure that pupils contribute positively to aspects of school and residential life. Pupils regularly choose meals, select activities and are also involved in student councils and house meetings; several are anti-bullying ambassadors.
- A listening device found to have been used on at least one occasion was removed from a residential home during the inspection. Use of monitoring equipment is not currently supported by a written policy to be followed by all staff to protect the privacy of pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	113642
Social care unique reference number	1238045
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10042661

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	8
Number of boarders on roll	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicky Eul-Barker
Executive principal	Mark Rose
Telephone number	01626 862363
Website	www.oaklandspark.devon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@oaklandspark.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 February 2016

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties. In 2016, the school federated with Ratcliffe School, a neighbouring residential special school.

There is an executive principal who leads both schools. He took up his post in April 2016. The school is also part of the Dawlish federation of special schools.

- An aligned inspection took place in February 2016, with education and social care inspecting the children's home. A social care inspection was carried out in June 2016. This is the first integrated inspection since the school was registered as a residential special school.
- The school uses Combe Pafford College and the Dawlish Gardens Trust to provide work-based placements for students.
- There are three residential houses. Children and young people have their own bedrooms and facilities. Children and young people are of mixed gender and all have special educational needs and/or disabilities, many of whom have been identified as having autistic spectrum disorder.
- The local authority provides support for the leadership of the school.

Information about this inspection

- This was an integrated inspection. Education and social care inspectors worked together to inspect both the school and the residential houses. The school and all three residential houses were visited.
- Inspection activities included the observation of care practice and learning walks in the school with the head of school. Meetings with the executive principal, the head of care, subject leaders, the designated safeguarding lead, governors and staff took place. During the inspection, feedback was obtained from the local authority in relation to safeguarding.
- An inspector visited the Combe Pafford College to see students at their placements.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils during lessons and attended a school council meeting.
- The 11 responses on Parent View were considered, as well as a phone call that was made to Ofsted during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to several parents. The 52 responses to a staff survey were also taken into account.
- A range of pupils' workbooks and folders were scrutinised. A number of school documents were looked at, including information the school holds about the progress pupils make. Other documents related to school improvement planning, behaviour and safeguarding were also considered.
- A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Nash	Ofsted Inspector
Janice Hawtin	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
David Kidner	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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