

The Grange Therapeutic School

15–17 Somerby Road, Knossington, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 8LY

Inspection dates

14–16 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not addressed all the key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection effectively. The school policy for the use of homework to support learning is still unclear.
- Leaders have not implemented an effective system for checking how well staff are completing their work.
- Staff responsible for subject areas across the school are not clear about what is expected of them.
- Apart from English and mathematics, good-quality systems for checking how well pupils are learning across all subjects are not in place.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school and across subject areas is inconsistent.
- The proprietorial body delegates the oversight of the school to the governing body. The governing body is too reliant on the Chair of Governors to support the improvement of the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The leadership of safeguarding pupils is highly effective.
- The lower school provides a good-quality education for pupils.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have created an effective outreach provision. This provides good opportunities for some older pupils, who access a programme of learning designed to meet their needs.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are positive.
- Pupils' behaviour improves over the length of time they are at the school.
- The school promotes British values well. The provision to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.
- The use of therapies to support pupils' personal and academic development is a strong aspect of the school's work.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all staff involved in teaching or supporting the work of teachers receive regular feedback about their work
 - the strongest teaching practice is shared with all staff
 - a clear plan for how homework is to be used is implemented
 - subject leaders are clear about their role and responsibilities.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders make regular checks on the progress made by all pupils and then act upon this information
 - leaders provide regular feedback to staff about their work
 - the governing body has enough capacity to drive forward improvement quickly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Considerable change of senior leaders and governors over the past two academic years has led to a lack of clarity about priorities and systems across the school. There have been three Principals since May 2015 and the current Principal is doing this job in an interim capacity. Uncertainty about leadership roles and responsibilities is inhibiting the improvement of the school.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have not addressed all of the suggested improvements highlighted in the report. The provision of homework for pupils remains inconsistent. Parents and pupils are unsure about what the school's policy on homework is and how it might support learning.
- The provision made by leaders for all staff to have their work formally checked is weak. A minority of staff have participated in recent meetings with leaders about their work. Several members of staff reported to inspectors that they would like more feedback about their work. There is currently no rigorous link between staff pay, level of responsibility and individual performance.
- Leaders have devised a programme of activities designed to monitor the quality of teaching. However, they have not stuck to the agreed timescales and much of this work has not been completed.
- Leaders have not ensured that information about the progress and attainment of pupils is informing the next steps in school improvement. Leaders do not check teachers' judgements about the progress pupils make well enough. There are some emerging links between this school and other schools within the Acorn Care and Education group focused on comparing the progress of pupils, but this work has yet to have a significant impact on pupils' learning.
- Members of staff who have a responsibility for subjects across the school are unsure of what is expected of them in this role. The lead teacher for mathematics is also the interim Principal; due to the workload of this senior role, he is unable to fulfil this whole-school subject responsibility effectively.
- The interim Principal has been successful in creating a positive culture throughout the school. He is highly committed to the school and is well respected by his colleagues and pupils alike.
- The systems in place to check the suitability of prospective staff are highly effective. The member of staff responsible for this area of work is tenacious in her work.
- Leaders have ensured that the provision for developing the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. During the inspection, inspectors observed two awards assemblies, during which pupils showed an excellent level of respect and support for each other.
- School leaders and governors have ensured the school complies with the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have not ensured that all staff receive effective feedback about their work.
 - The governing body is too reliant on the Chair of Governors to provide an objective view about the quality of the school's work.
 - The governing body receives a useful breadth of information from the interim Principal on a termly basis. This information supports the planning for improvement.
 - Since starting to support the school in summer 2015, the Chair of Governors has worked hard to promote the improvement of the school. He is a regular visitor to the school site and has frequent telephone conversations with the interim Principal. During the inspection, the Chair of Governors developed a rapid improvement plan to quickly address areas of weakness within a very short timescale.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's lead member of staff for safeguarding pupils fulfils her role very effectively. Staff have full confidence in this leader to follow up any concerns that are raised with her. The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance and is available in full on the school's website.
- The school's records demonstrate that staff work well with outside agencies to support pupils and their families through any challenging times.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Staff demonstrate a passion to support pupils to achieve their personal best. Despite the significant changes at senior leadership level over the past two academic years, staff have endeavoured to maintain standards in their own classrooms and learning spaces. This attitude to their work has been effective and there is evidence that pupils are learning well.
- Staff give thought to how pupil groupings will work and this enables most lessons to flow well. The timetable is well thought through to maximise learning time and to support pupils to improve their behaviour over time. Small class groups mean that there are regular opportunities to use questioning to enhance pupils' learning. Inspectors observed physical education staff using effective questioning techniques to prepare older pupils for their GCSE examinations. The school uses outdoor education well to promote learning. Pupils are enthused by educational visits to places like Snowdonia and Northumberland.
- Lessons are typically well organised because teachers plan interesting activities. Pupils and staff spoke enthusiastically about the use of film technology to produce model animations in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons.
- Teachers ensure that the most-able pupils are generally well catered for by learning activities which improve their knowledge, skills and understanding. In art, the staff identify talented pupils and provide them with opportunities to achieve challenging external accreditations and qualifications at an appropriate point in their school career. This raises pupils' self-esteem.
- Staff make the most of opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding in class. For example, younger pupils were observed being supported to learn how to give and receive compliments using a board game in class. Staff ensured this opportunity for learning was well used.
- Staff do not benefit from regular feedback about their work and, as a result, there is some variability in the quality of lessons provided across the school. Some teaching areas are in need of refurbishment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The staff team take the health and safety of pupils seriously. Regular audits and checks are undertaken by the site manager to ensure the building is safe. Due to the construction of the main building, pupils wisely take part in regular fire drills to ensure they can evacuate via the staircases and narrow corridors.
- The school provides pupils with the opportunity to make good decisions about their future education, employment or training. The school works well with local authorities, careers advisers and colleges to plan these moves.
- Pupils feel well cared for by the staff team. The relationships between pupils and staff are a strength. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors that they liked the staff and that they appreciated the support they received.
- Pupils are generally proud to be part of the school. Most pupils spoken to by inspectors stated that there was nothing they would change about the school. Lower school pupils demonstrate good attitudes to their learning. The nurture provision provides a supportive environment where pupils start to develop a better understanding of their needs and the needs of others.
- Pupils respect each other's views. During a lower school lesson, pupils debated the answers to Christmas quiz questions in a very mature way for their age. They listened to each other speaking and responded politely, even if they did not agree with the suggestions offered by their classmates.
- There is a culture of openness at the school regarding the safety of pupils. Staff and pupils keep themselves safe by being vigilant and reporting any concerns. There are daily meetings where staff share information that helps to keep everyone safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school achieves its aim of improving pupils' behaviour over the period of time they are at the school. Most pupils have been permanently excluded from other schools and arrive at The Grange Therapeutic School with poor attitudes to learning and negative behaviours. Inspectors observed a marked difference in the behaviour of those pupils who had been at the school over an extended period of time compared with those who had recently joined.

- Most pupils want to attend the school regularly and do so. There is a minority of pupils whose attendance is below that expected by the school. Leaders work closely with local authorities and parents to try to ensure the attendance of all pupils is as good as it could be.
- The behaviour of pupils who access the outreach provision is usually good. The individualised programmes of work mean that pupils are engaged in activities that promote their attendance and stimulate their interest. Staff from the school support the learning of these pupils at various points throughout the week. Any poor behaviour or lack of progress are quickly identified by teachers and pupils are supported to improve these aspects.
- The conduct of pupils around the school is generally good. Pupils are polite to visitors and move around the building sensibly. Inspectors observed older pupils all leaving the assemblies at the same time and doing so efficiently and without fuss.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- The information presented to inspectors about the progress pupils make in English and mathematics demonstrates that most pupils make the progress expected of them each year.
- A middle leader has started to look at different groups of pupils comparing their progress against other groups. The information held by the school shows that there is no discernible difference between any groups of pupils. Those looked after by the local authority make similar progress to other pupils.
- By the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils have made good progress in English and mathematics, which results in them attaining an appropriate qualification. This helps the pupils to choose an appropriate course at college.
- Pupils who are not making the progress expected of them in English and mathematics benefit from one-to-one intervention work from specialist staff. These regular sessions are enjoyed by pupils and help them to focus on improving particular areas of their learning that may be hindering their progress in other subjects. This personalised support works because of the attention each pupil receives.
- The development of pupils' reading skills is a strength of the school. Teachers promote reading effectively. The checks the school does on the improvement of reading ages demonstrate that this work is having a positive impact on all pupils' learning.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training. All pupils go on to further opportunities at colleges or in the world of work. The school actively engages with careers advisers, parents and local authorities so that the pupils are helped to make considered decisions about their future placements.
- The staff team works closely with on-site therapists to design work which will benefit the pupils. This level of collaboration works well and pupils are appreciative of the therapeutic support they receive. The therapeutic aspects of the pupils' curriculum have the desired impact and help pupils to develop their character and academic skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The outreach programme is successful. The personalised curriculum keeps disaffected pupils in education. The outreach team work closely with pupils and their families to develop a set of weekly learning activities which have a clear purpose to them. School staff and those provided by alternative providers provide effective support to pupils throughout the week. Where there are concerns about a pupil's progress during any part of the week, the outreach team are quick to act to rectify the situation so that the pupil can succeed.

School details

Unique reference number	120330
Inspection number	10007699
DfE registration number	855/6010

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Residential special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8–16 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	13
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Group
Chair	Graeme McEwan
Interim Principal	Bob Batten
Annual fees (day pupils)	£61,180
Telephone number	01664 454264
Website	www.acorncare.co.uk/provisions/thegrange/us/
Email address	office@knossington.rutland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 July 2012

Information about this school

- The Grange Therapeutic School is an independent residential school for boys aged eight to 16 years of age.
- The school is owned by Acorn Care and Education and was last inspected by Ofsted in July 2012.
- The school has two sites. The lower school is a few hundred metres away from the main site and uses a converted house and purpose-built classrooms.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Pupils typically have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The school uses the following alternative providers for its outreach provision: Axlr8, Braunstone Grove Youth Centre, Community Giants Centre, Future Cycles, Gaz Autos, Loughborough College, Pedestrian, Waterfront Sports and Education Academy, William Knibb Centre.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education and was announced one working day before the inspection started.
- The inspection took place during the last week of term before the Christmas holidays.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. This included a tour of the school site and accommodation with school leaders.
- Inspectors visited assemblies, lessons and Christmas activities. School leaders accompanied inspectors during most of the observations.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of Governors, interim Principal, Vice-Principal, head of lower school, middle leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, therapists and members of office staff.
- Inspectors looked at the quality of work in pupils' books and work files.
- Responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were taken into account alongside 44 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including: the Principal's report to governors; the records of visits to the school made by the Chair of Governors; the school improvement plan; safeguarding records; the single central record; health and safety information and pupil progress information.

Inspection team

Phil Harrison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

James Waite

Ofsted Inspector

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