

Inspection of OEA Education

1 Faulkner Lane, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9AZ

Inspection dates: 27 to 29 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive and flourish at this school. Staff take time to understand each pupil's individual needs and how to best support them. As a result, there is a fully inclusive environment which pupils are at the heart of. This vision is driven by the proprietor body and lived out by all staff. The school's 'TREES' values of teamwork, resilience, enjoyment, engagement and self-confidence are understood by everyone. These underpin all that the school does and pupils are reminded of these during every session. Pupils reflect on how they have demonstrated these values.

Some pupils have not been in a classroom for a long time prior to joining OEA. Here, they enjoy coming to school and are supported very well by staff, who encourage them to build relationships with their peers. Parents report that, for some pupils this is the first time they have felt a sense of belonging at a school.

Staff help pupils to meet the high expectations for their behaviour. They do this by giving clear boundaries and explaining why these are important. During social times, staff engage in games and conversations with pupils, which help develop their confidence. Pupils benefit from extensive enrichment opportunities which encourage them to step out of their comfort zones and to learn from mistakes. During the inspection, a visit to Carisbrooke Castle helped pupils to develop their conversational and teamwork skills in a less familiar setting.

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

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. There is a shared ethos from the proprietor, governors, leaders and staff which focuses on giving each pupil the best possible chance to fulfil their potential. Curriculum design prioritises what each pupil needs to do to meet their individual targets. There is a strong focus on the social and emotional curriculum alongside academic areas. Staff combine these expertly within lessons.

Staff know pupils extremely well. They understand each pupil's unique special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Daily briefing sessions give all staff the opportunity to discuss how to meet pupils' needs, as well as share practical information. Staff shape lessons successfully according to pupils' needs and create a curriculum that gives every pupil the chance to succeed. Sometimes, however, the content of sessions is not as precisely identified as it needs to be for pupils to meet the school's highly aspirational aims.

There is a strong focus on helping pupils to build positive attitudes towards learning. The impact of this is apparent through the determined way that pupils tackle their work. Staff support pupils to ask for help when they are unsure. As a result, pupils become increasingly resilient and independent during activities. Staff are alert to the fact that pupils find formal assessment tasks challenging. To combat this, they check pupils' understanding through informal conversations and questioning as well as

exposing pupils to quizzes and tests. This enables staff to adapt and plan future learning carefully in response to the gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school seizes every opportunity to develop pupils' social and emotional awareness. The personal development curriculum is woven through all that the school does. This is an intrinsic part of the school's ethos to broaden pupils' horizons as well as equip them for future life. The school has carefully considered what knowledge and skills pupils will need in the future, such as being able to complete an application form and cook a healthy meal. They plan activities to help pupils build towards these. Visits to the local wildlife sanctuary, ordering a drink in a café, taking the bus together and going swimming all help pupils to develop relevant practical life skills.

Pupils' views and opinions are valued. These help to shape how the school develops. For example, through the school's work on laws, pupils learned about legislative changes. Pupils then lobbied for their own change in school and requested a hot meal after swimming sessions. This was then incorporated into the weekly lunch arrangement.

The determination to develop each pupil holistically is at the centre of what the school does. Participation in activities that are carried out beyond the school building mean that pupils have the chance to build a sense of community as well as purpose. Through these activities, pupils are taught how to take pride in themselves and their achievements. During social times, pupils learn the shared routines and importance of rules. Games are played fairly and pupils are supported to navigate the emotions of losing and the importance of following the rules - even if that means picking up 30 cards during a game.

Meaningful relationships between staff and pupils are built on mutual respect. These high-quality relationships mean that pupils feel supported and trusted. High expectations for behaviour are embedded. Reminders of these are provided subtly and staff help pupils to reach the expectations. The curriculum also teaches pupils how to identify and manage their own emotions. As a result of this, a calm environment is evident through the school.

The proprietor and governing body have a robust understanding of the school. They drive the strategic vision of the school and are highly effective in fulfilling their roles. Regular visits and rigorous monitoring mean they support the school well in ensuring that the independent school standards are met consistently well. Staff development is given a high priority. Training is linked to the school priorities as well as individual staff needs. There has been a period of rapid change since the school opened. This has been managed well to ensure it is not burdensome for staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- A few aspects of the curriculum are not planned as precisely as they could be. This means that the steps pupils need to take towards the school's ambitious endpoints are not always considered carefully enough and pupils do not learn as deeply as they could academically. The school should continue to refine the curriculum so that the pathway for each pupil towards these end points is planned with absolute precision, maximising the impact of their school experience.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	149563
DfE registration number	921/6005
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10299278
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	11 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Proprietor	New Forest Care Ltd
Chair	Mark Fry
Headteacher	Nicola Peace
Annual fees (day pupils)	£67,500
Telephone number	01983 640630
Website	www.oeaeducation.co.uk
Email address	admin@nfce-oea.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Since opening, the proprietor of the school has changed.
- The school provides full-time education for pupils aged 11 to 14 years. Pupils are referred to the school by their local authority. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school currently uses two unregistered providers of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the chief executive officer and other leaders and staff. The lead inspector held meetings with the chair of the proprietor body and a member of the governing body. She held telephone calls with two alternative providers.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in English, science and enrichment. To do this, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders and staff; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- The lead inspector toured the school site to gather evidence about compliance with the standards. Inspectors also reviewed a range of other documents and policies, including on the school's website.

Inspection team

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ian Howie

Ofsted Inspector

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