

Oak Tree School

Somar House, Threemilestone, Truro, TR4 9NH

Inspection dates 17–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school.

- The headteacher is supported well by the company's leadership team and governing body. Together they have ensured that the school has continued to improve since its pre-registration visit.
- Students make good progress in their academic, work-related, personal and behavioural development. They also make good progress in their reading, writing and numeracy skills.
- Students rapidly become highly motivated and re-engaged in their education. As a result, their attendance improves rapidly on joining the school.
- Although the school has only been open for a relatively short time, it has made a positive start to the students' education.
- Teaching is consistently good and leads to good achievement. All staff know students well and ensure work is set at the right level.
- Effective appraisal arrangements ensure teachers are held to account for students' progress.
- Relationships between the staff and students are excellent. This leads to students rapidly settling into the school in a positive manner.
- All safeguarding and child protection arrangements are excellent and ensure that all students and staff are very safe.
- Leaders have ensured that all the requirements for the independent schools standards are met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' progress is not analysed by groups of students and, as a result, comparisons between these students and others in the school and nationally are not possible.
- The changes to the new science and technology rooms have not fully taken into consideration the Key Stage 4 curriculum, as the school has not yet purchased enough resources to present the full Key Stage 4 curriculum.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a number of lessons, including outdoor pursuits, English, mathematics and science lessons. The headteacher observed some of these lessons with the inspector.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, a senior leader representing the company and members of staff, and discussions took place with a number of students.
- There were not enough responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to complete a meaningful analysis. The views of parents and carers were, therefore, taken from comments presented to the school previously.
- The views of staff were analysed from the 11 replies to the staff questionnaire and from discussions held during the course of the inspection.
- The inspector looked at students' work during lessons and scrutinised a sample of students' work over time. A number of case studies relating to students who are in most need were reviewed.
- At the request of the Department for Education (DfE) a material change request was asked to be considered to increase the age range from the current eight to 14 years to eight to 16 years and increase the number of students on roll to 32.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including information on the progress made by students, teachers' planning and assessment. The inspector also scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oak Tree School is a day school for boys and girls aged between eight and 14 years of age. There are currently eight students attending aged between nine and 14 years of age, all are boys and all attend full time. The school caters for students who are in the care of a local authority. Most of the students have been in the school for less than a term.
- The school does not currently use any external providers.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some also have additional, complex difficulties that include autistic spectrum conditions and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD). All students are placed by local authorities.
- The school is located in a new building within an industrial and commercial park.
- The school was first registered in September 2014.
- There is currently a relatively small staff team, with no middle leadership group, but all teachers take responsibility for various subjects.
- The school uses a range of local sports and outdoor pursuit centres to provide physical education opportunities.
- Students are not entered early for GCSE examinations.
- The school is not in receipt of pupil premium funding for those disadvantaged students who attend, the Year 7 catch-up funding or the primary physical education funding.
- At the time of the inspection the school did not have a website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by analysing the performance of different student groups to see how they compare with other students in the school and nationally.
- Improve the quality of the already good curriculum by ensuring that the new science and technology rooms take more account of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, including the proprietor, have created a culture of improvement that has resulted in students, who were once negative about school, having a positive attitude towards their learning. They carefully monitor all aspects of the school's work and use the information gained to drive further improvements.
- All staff feel part of the improvement process and so feel valued. They have high aspirations for the students which enable them to make good progress and achieve well.
- Due to small staffing numbers, there is no middle leadership team. However, all staff take responsibility for various aspects of the school. They monitor their areas carefully through work scrutiny, observing teaching and analysing information on students' progress. As a result, all staff have an accurate view of the school and each student's needs and abilities.
- As the current numbers in the school are small, the senior leadership team monitors each individual student's progress in reading, writing, literacy and numeracy. This ensures that they can plan for each student, ensure each makes good progress and any underachievement is halted. However, leaders do not, as yet, routinely monitor the progress of the various groups within the school. This means they are not able to compare students' progress with that of their peers in school and nationally.
- There is an appropriate and fully individualised focus on key literacy and numeracy skills that prepare students well for their future lives. The school provides a wide range of learning opportunities for the students to understand life in modern Britain. There is good provision for physical education using a range of off-site facilities. The subjects taught in the school provide a solid foundation for the students' learning, and the new classrooms will provide even further opportunities. However, the senior leadership team is aware that the new science and technology rooms need minor further adaptation to make it easier to meet the needs of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.
- Self-evaluation is accurate due to the senior leadership's careful and thorough monitoring of the school. The company senior leaders fully support and challenge the senior leadership team effectively, through monthly and termly reviews. Further support is given through regular visits to the school, which ensure they have an accurate view of the school's performance.
- Staff provide a range of opportunities to develop the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students have studied a wide selection of cultures and religions to understand how people of different cultures and backgrounds contribute to life in modern Britain. Visits to places of worship, together with visiting speakers from the community, make a strong contribution to the school's programme of cultural and society studies.
- All staff use a range of resources to deepen students' understanding of democracy, the understanding and tolerance of the views of others, and so have a good awareness of British values. As part of this, the staff ensure that the school's policy on equal opportunities and discrimination is applied consistently.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures fully meet current requirements and the training of all staff goes beyond that required. This means that all students and staff feel very safe in school. Parental letters to the school indicate that parents rightly feel their children are safe and the school is a secure place. Recent local authority checks on the school also confirm that the school is a highly safe place in which to learn and work.
- Procedures for monitoring and improving the attendance of students, including good communication with parents and the local authority, are good.
- Work-related and careers guidance is expertly provided by the local authority careers advisory service, which attends the school regularly.
- The headteacher and proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The company senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They hold school leaders and staff to account for all aspects of the quality of teaching and the progress of students, and ensure any underperformance is rapidly improved.
 - The proprietor and senior leaders have a good understanding about the information on how well the students are doing.
 - Arrangements for the management of staff performance, including rewarding good teaching and tackling underperformance, are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Those students who have been with the school since it opened have made considerable progress in their behaviour. These students were very happy to tell the inspector how much better their behaviour was. Students who have recently joined the school have quickly settled in and their behaviour is consistently good.
- Students attend lessons on time and behaviour around the school is good. They have a positive attitude to learning, and in lessons generally concentrate throughout. However, in a very small number of lessons, students do become distracted and so their rates of progress slow. Positive relationships between the staff and students help resolve these issues quickly and effectively.
- Attendance in the school is a little below the national average, but is rising rapidly, demonstrating strong improvement on students' attendance at their previous schools. Parents, carers and the placing authority express positive views about the impact of the school on students' attitudes to learning.
- School records demonstrate a decrease in the number of disruptive incidents over time as students learn to respect themselves and understand the expectations and values of the school.
- Staff successfully ensure the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. The confidence and self-esteem of students rise as they begin to value their achievements and experiences, increasing success through positive feedback on their assessed work.
- The school has a range of policies in place to ensure that the promotion of extremism and political views is prohibited, so that all the independent school standards for this aspect are met.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. All staff are highly trained and this ensures that not only do all policies and procedures fully meet all independent school regulations but are consistently applied.
- All staff appointments are made following rigorous checks to ensure the suitability of all staff. All staff are fully trained in first aid and fire safety.
- All staff ensure that students have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Students were very articulate at explaining how and why they need to be safe on the internet, for example. They have a very clear understanding of the various types of bullying they might experience and are confident they can deal with this effectively.
- Risk assessments for all activities, both in school and externally, are robustly constructed. The senior leadership team and management group check them fully. This results in the students being safe in any environment.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching. Teachers plan activities that are set at the right level. This re-engages students in education and gives them a desire to improve and do well.
- Teachers have high expectations of students' work and behaviour. Students quickly rise to this challenge, which is clearly shown in their neat and well-presented work. Marking is regular and helpful, which enables students to know how to improve their work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and use this to ensure that students fully understand their work during lessons. For example, during an English lesson, the teaching assistant and teacher worked very effectively to fully engage students, keep them on track and enable them to make excellent progress.
- The curriculum is very broad and provides a wide range of skills and knowledge for the students, which provides a positive foundation for their future lives. The outdoor pursuit programme further enhances learning and provides a range of qualifications that will provide opportunities for future learning.
- Teachers' questioning and discussion skills provide effective challenge during all lessons and help to deepen the students' understanding. During a science lesson, students were constantly challenged through in-depth questioning by the teacher. This led to students gaining greater understanding of peoples' lung capacity and air pressure and clearly enjoying their learning.
- Teaching in reading, writing, literacy and numeracy skills is consistently good.
- Teachers provide very positive opportunities for students to study a range of cultures and religions in order to give them a good understanding of the diverse British society in which they live.
- The senior leadership team and company leaders have ensured all the independent school requirements

for teaching and assessment, are met.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Due to the extensive amount of missed education, students enter the school with skills and understanding that are below that which are typical for their age. Students make good progress in their reading, writing, literacy and numeracy skills from these starting points.
- School information shows that those students who entered the school when it first opened have made rapid progress. Students who have entered the school since the beginning of the year have not made such rapid progress, but it is still good from their entry point.
- Work in students' books supports the school's information that progress to date has been good for all groups of students.
- Although information on the progress of disadvantaged students is not currently scrutinised as a group, information on individual students shows that they make good progress that is similar to both nationally and in school.
- The school has not yet been open long enough for students to gain academic qualifications. However, those students who have been in the school since it opened are well on track to gaining several qualifications in outdoor pursuits.
- Although there are small numbers of students currently attending the school, the most able students are successfully challenged by all staff. Planning ensures that work is correctly matched to the needs and abilities of each individual, helping to ensure that students make at least good progress.
- Due to the precise focus the school has on developing the students' personal, social and behavioural development, every student makes good progress. Those who have been in the school the longest have made rapid progress in these areas. They rapidly gain confidence and self-esteem, resulting in positive attitudes and a real desire to succeed.
- Students are improving and applying their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening in a wide range of situations. Their written work shows growing accuracy in spelling and grammar and they increasingly read for a wider range of reasons.
- The school leadership ensures that all independent school regulations for this area are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement
	Grade 1	Outstanding
	Grade 2	Good
	Grade 3	Requires improvement
	Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	140942
Inspection number	462740
DfE registration number	908/6003

The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, and associated requirements.

Type of school	Special – Behavioural, emotional and social disabilities
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Proprietor	Natalie Jane Macdonald
Headteacher	Mike Deacy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,950
Telephone number	01872 264221
Email address	m.deacy@acorncare.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our website for news, information and updates at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015