

# Coxlease School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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, 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

The school is owned and managed by a national organisation. The school is currently registered as a residential special school, for students aged nine to nineteen years. In July 2011 the school moved into purpose built classrooms, that provides day education only for up to 55 students, aged 9 to 17 years, with severe emotional, behavioural and educational difficulties. The proprietor is in the process of making a request to the Department for Education for a material change to provide day education for students of compulsory school age only.

There are currently 37 students on roll, aged 9 to 17 years, and 3 are above compulsory school age. All students are funded by their local authorities. There are 20 who are looked after and 32 reside in children's homes in the vicinity owned and managed by the proprietors. All students have experienced disruption to their previous schooling and 36 have a statement of special educational needs. The school aims through an integrated approach to education, care and therapy to give students the opportunity to make positive changes to their lives and achieve their full potential.

The last education inspection was in January 2009. Since then there has been substantial staff re-structuring. The Principal, and the Vice Principal, who is head of education, have recently been appointed. The school is recruiting for the posts of lead teacher for English and for special educational needs.

## Evaluation of the school

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The curriculum, teaching and assessment, and the provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Provision ensures students making satisfactory academic progress but good progress in improving their behaviour and attendance. Good attention is paid to the welfare, health and safety of students and safeguarding arrangements are robust. The school is improving rapidly in all areas but it is not as good as at the time of the last inspection. All of the regulatory requirements for independent schools continue to be met.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

## Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are some good elements that help to reduce students' anxiety and their ability to manage their own complex behaviours. There is a good curriculum policy together with suitable schemes of work, which detail the subjects taught at Key Stage 3 and the courses that are available at Key Stage 4, along with descriptions of how various subjects will be taught and assessed. Most courses lead to accreditation at Entry Level and GCSE certification is offered at higher levels in English, mathematics, science, art, design and food technology, film studies and physical education. All students are taught functional literacy and numeracy skills and life skills. All of the required areas of learning are covered. Provision provides appropriate opportunities for careers education, including work experience, and vocational skills are suitably developed in hospitality, horticulture, animal welfare, building and construction courses. Daily exercise and class based provision for the development of information technology skills ensure that the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Well-established sporting links with local schools and outdoor learning centres make a strong contribution to furthering students' personal and physical development. For post-16 students, vocational and work-based programmes prepare them well for the next stage beyond school.

The Vice Principal has worked rapidly to secure continuity in the medium- and short-term planning by detailing weekly attainment targets for each subject or course studied. The planning effectively incorporates the academic and personal development targets of the students, including the objectives specified in students' statements to ensure that they are met. Class tutors are clear about their responsibilities to follow up and evaluate the implementation of these and their impact on each student's progress. There are satisfactory opportunities to enable students to acquire the necessary basic skills in reading and writing within the English curriculum. While these are signalled in the planning for some other subjects, they are not always consistently and effectively taught. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for personal, social and health education which fulfils the school's aims and ethos, but extra-curricular activities are too few and there are insufficient opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning or take on leadership roles. There is a good programme of educational visits and events to enrich learning and broaden students' horizons.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Provision is not good because teaching and the curriculum provided does not ensure students make consistently good progress over time. The Vice Principal has secured some good improvements, particularly in the quality of assessment information that helps teachers to better match work to students' particular needs. Relationships are particularly strong between teachers and students, ensuring that learning is conducted in a positive climate and lessons proceed at an appropriate pace. The teaching assistants provide good behavioural support by encouraging good behaviour and participation in activities so objectives are met. Regular praise of students' efforts helps to boost their self-confidence and motivation to learn. Teachers were successful in keeping students involved in learning by varying the challenges and the timings between activities. For example, in a successful mathematics lesson on probability, the

teacher was able to turn around one student's initial refusal to engage by using a mix of practical and theoretical challenges. Lesson objectives are shared and are regularly referred to during the lesson so that students know what must be achieved. However, the quality of question and answer sessions do not always delve deeply enough to consolidate students' understanding and extend their thinking or ensure that individual academic and personal targets are revisited. Whilst teachers draw attention to technical subject vocabulary they do not check that it can be read or is fully understood. In general, teachers' strategies for engaging students in reading or good quality writing are a weaker element of their teaching and this is limiting progress. In part this is due to the lack of guidance from subject coordinators and staff not understanding how they can adapt the students' preferred ways of working to advance their literacy skills.

The school is not doing enough to encourage students to undertake homework and course work. For example, there is no use of modern technologies to ensure students can access their studies when at home. This gives students the idea that learning only happens when in school, and is therefore a barrier to them increasing their independence as learners and accelerating their progress.

Work completed in the last academic year, and so far this year, shows that all students have made satisfactory progress towards their targets, with some making good or better progress. There is variability between subjects and not all targets are sufficiently demanding to ensure that the students close the gap in relation to national expectations. Where, for example, students have made good strides in addressing their behavioural issues, and have an improved attitude to learning, this is not always reflected in more challenging subject targets.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral and social development is promoted well through the strong relationships forged between staff and students and provision is underpinned by a well-planned personal and social skills programme. As a consequence, students are keen to be at school, attendance is good and very few lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. Students generally treat others with respect and show a good level of tolerance for each others' needs. They have a secure understanding of right and wrong. Bad language is minimal and damage to property is almost completely eradicated. The school is dealing well with complex behavioural needs, primarily because of the improved coherence between individual education plans and the provision. As a consequence, students' behaviour is good as a result of the school's successful behaviour management strategies.

Students are developing a positive attitude to their work in school and are keen to do well most of the time. The curriculum helps students gain a satisfactory understanding of their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony. A good variety of trips, visits and visitors ensure students develop a sound understanding of public institutions and services in England and cultural diversity. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider community. The

school council, have been instrumental in designing lunchtime menus so as to provide healthier options. Students participate in fundraising and are encouraged to take a wider interest in the community, for example through participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and Forest School initiative. However, there are very few daily opportunities for students to be actively involved in developing their leadership skills.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Provision for welfare, health and safety is good. The school has a wide range of good quality health and safety policies that are consistently implemented. The management of behaviour is good and provision is supported by a well understood system of rewards that culminates in a weekly achievement assembly. The recording of incidents of poor behaviour is carefully monitored and all incidents are followed up. Teaching assistants are very effective in ensuring regular information about students' behaviour is fed back to the tutors. Therapeutic services work well with staff to ensure that behaviour plans and risk assessments are well matched to students' specific needs. This has contributed effectively to improving individuals' ability to manage their behaviours and keep themselves and others safe.

Supervision is good. Adults are calm and respectful when dealing with difficult behaviour, thus ensuring the safety and well-being of students in school. All staff, including the designated person for child protection, have undertaken child protection training at the required level to ensure students are properly safeguarded. Appropriate safer recruitment procedures are in place as are the policies for fire, first aid, health and safety, behaviour and anti-bullying. Students say that they are free from harassment and are well cared for at all times.

The school has a suitable procedure for monitoring internet use. It places good emphasis on students adopting a healthy lifestyle. Access to a smoking cessation programme is welcomed by students. Regular exercise is provided at intervals throughout the day and there are regular opportunities for study walks in the adjacent countryside. Such activity increases the level of exercise and helps keep students fit and reduces obesity. Attendance and admission registers are kept in accordance with requirements. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school carries out appropriate checks on all staff and others prior to their appointment. There is a suitable policy in place to guide the practice of safe recruitment. The results of all of the required checks are appropriately recorded in a single central register.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The redevelopment of the school site has significantly improved the quality of the accommodation since the last inspection. The new building is spacious, light and is suitably ventilated. It provides students with easy access to teaching and specialist

rooms. There is sufficient teaching and outdoor space for the number on roll. There are suitable facilities for those who are ill. The school is well equipped and is free from graffiti and damage. The premises ensure students are kept safe and secure and learn satisfactorily. A well-equipped purpose-built sports hall is also part of the campus and adds considerably to daily opportunities for students to maintain healthy lifestyles.

### **Provision of information**

The school provides, or makes available, all of the required information for parents, carers, local authorities and others. An accessible website and a hard copy of the prospectus and the parental pack provide a clear picture of the school's work. Very few parents or carers, or local authorities, returned the pre-inspection questionnaire.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

### **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- Develop students' literacy skills further by increasing strategies for teaching reading and writing and improving cross-curricular approaches to applying these skills.
- Provide more opportunities for students to develop their independence and leadership skills.
- Strengthen the use of assessment information in lessons through questioning and dialogue that extends thinking and deepens understanding.

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	School for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1996		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–19 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 36	Girls: 1	Total: 37
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 35	Girls: 1	Total: 36
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 20	Girls: 0	Total: 20
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£80,000		
<b>Address of school</b>	Coxlease Clay Hill Lyndhurst Hampshire SO43 7DE		
<b>Telephone number</b>	023 80283633		
<b>Email address</b>	coxleaseschool@prioritygroup.com		
<b>Principal</b>	Rick Tracey		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Priority Education Services		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



3 May 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Coxlease School, Lyndhurst SO43 7DE**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I appreciated that you were prepared to talk with me and to tell me what you thought about school life.

Your school provides a satisfactory quality of education and all government requirements are met. There is no shortage of ambition to make it even better and you can help by sharing your ideas on where things can be improved further.

You are making good progress in managing your behaviour because there are good systems in place to help you do so and these are applied consistently. You have formed good relationships with the staff and this means that there is a positive climate for learning. Your attendance is good and, in the main, you enjoy your lessons. The curriculum is adequately matched to your needs. There are some good opportunities in lessons and outdoor learning for you to develop your physical and social skills. To help these further I have asked the school to look at ways they can provide more opportunities for you to take on responsibility and widen your experiences.

Teaching is satisfactory and there are good systems to ensure your needs are understood. I judged that some of the teachers are good at making the learning interesting, but I have asked that they do more to encourage you to improve your reading and writing. Your headteacher agrees that teachers could help you focus on your academic targets more during question and answer sessions. This will help you make even better progress.

I wish you all the best in your futures.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk  
Her Majesty's Inspector