

Eton - Dorney School

Eton Dorney Centre, Lake End Road, Dorney SL4 6QS

Inspection dates

6–8 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- In a short time, the headteacher has created an environment where pupils feel comfortable, well cared for and increasingly ready to learn.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils make great improvements in their behaviour and attendance. This is because they have established a dedicated team of staff who put pupils' welfare and personal development first and help them to succeed.
- Teaching is good. It is tailored to the needs and abilities of pupils and helps them make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils make good progress, especially in developing their self-confidence, communication skills and attitudes to learning.
- The school is a calm and caring place. Behaviour is good, and pupils respect each other's differences.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the care and quality of teaching the school provides for their children.
- The current curriculum is appropriate and relevant and meets the requirements of the independent school standards. It builds effectively on pupils' interests and experiences. However, leaders' ambitious plans to further enhance the curriculum have not yet been fully implemented. For example, they would like to offer more physical education and enhance the careers guidance offered.
- Those responsible for governance do not have a strong enough understanding of education. Therefore, they are unable to hold leaders fully and accurately to account.
- Pupils make stronger progress in English than they do in other academic subjects because English staff provide more challenging tasks.

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?

- Strengthen the work of those responsible for governance by ensuring that:
 - they have relevant educational experience
 - they challenge and support leaders robustly so that the school continues to improve
 - the independent school standards continue to be fully met.
- Implement plans to further develop the curriculum, especially in terms of providing pupils with more opportunities for physical education and enhanced independent careers guidance.
- Ensure that all teaching is as good as the best so that all pupils make strong progress in all areas of the academic curriculum by:
 - checking that tasks are challenging enough
 - using assessment information to adapt tasks to pupils' needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has gained the trust of staff, pupils, parents and those responsible for governance very quickly. She has a clear vision of what the pupils will be able to achieve as the school grows and matures. She has the highest aspirations for the pupils who attend the school.
- When the school first opened in March 2018, some placements were unsuitable, and this was detrimental to the welfare of staff and other pupils. When she was appointed in May 2018, the headteacher recognised that the school needed to think very carefully about the pupils for whom it can successfully provide. Since then the school has grown slowly but improved rapidly. As a result, the school now provides a good quality of education.
- Staff feel extremely well supported by the headteacher and this allows them to have the confidence to do a good job. New staff explained that their induction helped them to feel confident in their roles quickly. They appreciate the continuing professional development that they receive.
- The school works very well with parents and carers. Parents who completed the online Parent View questionnaire or who spoke to the inspector were highly positive about the school and the difference it has made to their child and family. One parent said, 'It is like we have won the lottery,' while another said, 'My child is growing as the school grows.'
- Leaders' intentions for the curriculum are well thought out. The curriculum is currently broad and balanced and allows pupils to develop key skills in English and mathematics. There is a well-thought-out programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Good use is made of significant events in the annual calendar and newsworthy world events to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils are taught to be responsible citizens and to understand British values in an appropriate way.
- Pupils benefit from the growing number of extra-curricular activities. Visits and trips are used well to support learning and also to improve pupils' social skills.
- Too many of the leaders' curriculum plans have not yet come to fruition. For example, plans to introduce the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and a 'forest schools' programme have not yet been implemented. Leaders know that they need to further enhance the provision that is in place for physical education and independent careers information and guidance.
- Through their diligent work during the inspection, leaders were able to evidence that all of the independent school standards were met.

Governance

- The proprietor's ambition and dedication to set up a school to support pupils involved in the organisation was laudable and highly appropriate. The proprietor has invested in providing high-quality accommodation and safe, attractive outdoor facilities to support pupils' learning and well-being.
- Those responsible for governance visit the school regularly to check on progress and offer support and guidance. However, governors lack specific expertise around education. This

means that they cannot always hold leaders accurately to account. As a result, some administrative work had to be completed during the inspection to evidence that the independent school standards were fully met.

- The chair of governors recognises that the board must appoint additional members with relevant skills and experience. She is committed to this as well as strengthening the strategic oversight of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff get to know pupils very well while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. This allows them to be aware of the risks that pupils face and spot any differences in behaviour or well-being quickly.
- There are strong recruitment procedures and extensive training to ensure that all members of staff fully understand their responsibility to safeguard pupils.
- There are strong links with parents, carers and other professionals to help keep pupils, including those looked after by local authorities, safe.
- The current safeguarding policy is fit for purpose, takes account of the latest guidance and is published on the school website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and other adults have extremely positive relationships with pupils. This forms a bond of trust that ensures that pupils mainly behave well in lessons.
- Learning is made highly relevant for the pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' interests are combined to make teaching effective, purposeful and engaging.
- Teaching is engaging and helps pupils to make good progress. Resources, including technology, are used well. Guidance from learning support assistants and learning advocates is very effective in ensuring that pupils stay focused, good humoured and make progress.
- Adults model their learning well and ask pupils pertinent questions to make them think. In turn, pupils are keen to ask their own questions to check and extend their own knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils have the opportunity to apply their speaking, reading and writing skills in a range of cross-curricular ways. For example, pupils have recently learned about Black History Month.
- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and this slows progress for some pupils in some areas. This includes where subjects are not yet taught as regularly, and expectations are not high enough, or where the school's assessment and feedback policy is not implemented consistently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The welfare of pupils is of the highest priority for school leaders and staff. They have an excellent knowledge of each individual pupil.
- Pupils develop confidence and trust quickly when they join the school because of the great support that they receive from the whole staff team.
- There are highly effective links with parents and carers. There are daily and constant checks of pupils' mental health and well-being.
- Pupils take on responsibilities, such as looking after the chickens and being a pupil ambassador, when they have settled in to school life.
- The curriculum enables pupils to learn how to stay safe and live a healthy lifestyle, for example through planning healthy menus. Leaders are constantly looking for new and innovative ways to keep pupils physically fit and active.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm, positive place. Lessons progress purposefully without major disruption. Behaviour around the school is good, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Most pupils take pride in their work and present it neatly.
- Serious behaviour incidents are reducing quickly. The use of physical intervention reduces quickly as pupils who require this strategy get used to their new environment. Exclusion is used sparingly but appropriately.
- Minor behavioural incidents are not recorded systematically. As a result, leaders cannot accurately evidence their success at improving behaviour for all pupils.
- Attendance is above average when compared with other pupils nationally. It is much improved for nearly all pupils compared to when they were in other settings. A number of pupils were previously school refusers and now attend very well.
- Some pupils occasionally arrive at school late due to problems with transportation.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have high expectations about what all pupils can achieve. They want pupils to attain qualifications in line with those that are usual for their age but are accessible given their needs.
- Careful assessment before admission and during induction now means that leaders and teachers are aware of what pupils can already do and what they need to learn.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points because of the effective teaching and support that they receive. However, rates of progress are stronger in English than in

mathematics. Pupils have not been attending the school for long enough yet to achieve recognised academic qualifications.

- Pupils' make the most significant progress in developing their self-confidence, self-awareness, social communication, well-being and behaviour from when they start at the school. For some individual pupils, the pace of improvement is highly impressive.
- Adults help pupils to build their knowledge and skills well so that they work towards being well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, pupils' preparation for employment or further education and training is not well developed as leaders' plans have not yet been fully implemented.

School details

Unique reference number	145298
DfE registration number	825/6048
Inspection number	10054086

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Calcot Services for Children
Chair	Rachel Redgwell
Headteacher	Ludivine Parmentier
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,050 to £87,282
Telephone number	01628 667475
Website	www.etondorneyschool.co.uk
Email address	etondorneyschool@csfc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first standard inspection of the school since the school was registered by the Department for Education in December 2017.
- The school is set in a sixteenth-century grade 2 listed building. It is situated on the edge of the village of Dorney, close to Windsor in Berkshire.
- The school accepted its first pupils in March 2018. The current headteacher was appointed in May 2018.

- Pupils at the school all have social, emotional and mental health special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some of the pupils also have autism spectrum disorder. Nearly all of the pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- About half of the pupils are looked after by a local authority.
- There are currently no pupils using the post-16 provision.
- The school does not use any alternative provision. A small number of pupils are educated part-time off-site by school staff as part of their induction or individual learning programmes.
- The proprietor is Calcot Services for Children which also runs six children's homes across Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and Hampshire. Eton - Dorney is the only school belonging to the organisation.
- The managing director is the chair of the governing body. The governing body also includes the owners of Calcot Services for Children, and governors responsible for safeguarding, finance and education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in teaching sessions for all groups of pupils. Some of these observations took place with the headteacher or lead teacher.
- Pupils shared their views of the school in a variety of ways. The inspector spoke to them about their work in lessons and looked at examples of their previous work in books. The inspector also spoke to pupils at lunchtime and when they were moving around the school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher throughout the inspection. Further meetings were held with the lead teacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector also met with a group of staff.
- The inspector met with the managing director of Calcot Services for Children (who is also the chair of governors) and the governor responsible for safeguarding.
- To gain their views of the school, the inspector held individual meetings with two parents and considered five responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation. This included documents relating to safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour, attendance, self-evaluation, the quality of teaching, and governance.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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