

Inspection of On Track Education Totnes

Parragon Building, Ford Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5LQ

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 June 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Many pupils have been out of education for long periods of time before coming to this school. Most arrive with negative views of education. However, through well-considered, bespoke approaches to the curriculum, pupils learn to re-engage with school and thrive.

The strong, caring relationships between staff and pupils are central to the ways in which the school transforms pupils' aspirations for their next steps. Through sensitive and personalised support, pupils rebuild their self-esteem. They are happy and feel safe.

The school sets high standards for pupils' behaviour. Staff model these expectations effectively. Through supportive conversations and well-informed strategies, staff help pupils to regulate their emotions and behave well.

The school's personal development programme supports and shapes pupils' character development well. It is a core part of the curriculum. The school prioritises pupils' physical health. For example, they learn to swim, play football and exercise in the gym.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' academic success. Pupils' interests and intellectual curiosity inform the curriculum. For instance, pupils learn a tailored music curriculum that enables them to excel in playing the guitar and piano. Pupils achieve well. They are well prepared for further education, apprenticeships and work.

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

The school's vision for pupils to thrive socially, emotionally, physically and academically in the world beyond school is shared by staff. It has designed a well-structured curriculum in many subjects. The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has successfully revised the curriculum in some subjects to ensure a better focus on pupils applying the knowledge they have gained. However, in a minority of subjects, the school has not considered clearly enough the sequence in which pupils should learn key knowledge. This means that in some subjects, pupils do not build on their prior knowledge and learn as well as they could.

The school prioritises reading in all areas of the curriculum. When pupils first arrive at the school, staff check their reading knowledge and fluency. They use this information to make sure that pupils receive the most appropriate support to enable them to read well. Staff have strong phonics knowledge and deliver the school's phonics programme effectively. They promote pupils' enjoyment of reading across the curriculum through a range of genres.

Through highly personalised strategies, staff support pupils to manage their social and emotional mental health (SEMH) needs successfully. Trust, nurture and mutual

respect underpin the relationships between staff and pupils. For example, pupils are encouraged to bring their small dogs to school to help them settle in lessons. The learning environment in classrooms and around the school is calm and purposeful. Many pupils have a history of poor attendance. The school strives to remove any barrier to attendance. Staff work tirelessly with pupils, families and carers to improve pupils' attendance so that they can catch up quickly.

Pupils' personal development lies at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils have a breadth of sporting and cultural opportunities that prepare them well for citizenship of modern Britain. Pupils benefit from carefully planned opportunities to interact with the local community. This helps pupils to develop their social skills well. Pupils learn about the importance of democracy, individual liberty and freedom of speech. They also learn about healthy relationships and consent. However, pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to discuss these important topics in depth. Consequently, they do not deepen their knowledge in preparation for adulthood as well as they could.

The careers programme is well designed. It enables pupils to develop informed knowledge about employment opportunities both locally and nationally. Work experience opportunities are carefully tailored to pupils' SEND and personal interests.

The school is led well. Staff value the opportunities for continuous professional development. They also value the support for their workload and well-being. The proprietor and school leaders ensure that the school securely meets the independent school standards, including the requirements under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. The school checks rigorously that adults employed at the school are eligible to work with children. Staff are vigilant. They prioritise pupils' physical and emotional safety. The school works effectively with external agencies to keep pupils safe. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they felt safe and protected. However, the school's system for recording safeguarding concerns is not robust enough.

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

- In a few subjects, the school has not considered with clarity the order in which pupils should learn key knowledge. This means that pupils do not always build sequentially on their prior knowledge. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that all subject curriculums are well-sequenced so that staff help pupils learn the important knowledge they need to build more complex understanding.

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school which ensures the physical safety and emotional well-being of pupils. However, the system for recording concerns about pupils is not robust enough. The school must ensure that the recording of safeguarding concerns, however small, is consistent and thorough.
- The personal development programme does not ensure that pupils get sufficient opportunity to discuss complex concepts such as consent and healthy relationships. As a result, pupils do not deepen their understanding. The school should ensure that pupils have planned opportunities to discuss their knowledge and understanding about issues that impact on their personal development so that they are well-prepared for adulthood.

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	131715
DfE registration number	878/6060
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10391728
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Number of part-time pupils	10
Proprietor	On Track Education Services Limited
Chair	Jane Cox
Headteacher	Debbie Gill
Annual fees (day pupils)	£43,320 to £67,190
Telephone number	01803 866462
Website	www.ontrackededucationservices.com
Email address	totnes@ontrackededucation.com
Dates of previous inspection	8 to 10 November 2022

Information about this school

- The school provides specialist provision for pupils with SEMH needs, as well as for pupils with autism. All pupils have education, health and care plans. Their placements are funded by Devon, Plymouth and Torbay local authorities.
- The school operates on two sites. One site is On Track Education Totnes at Paragon Building, Ford Road, Totnes TQ9 5LQ. The second site is at The Hex, Park Road, Dartington Hall, Totnes TQ9 9EQ.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provisions.

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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with the proprietor and an education officer from On Track Education Limited.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with a social worker from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors discussed the curriculum in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils.

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration to increase pupil numbers from 48 to 60. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school meets the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- **The outcome of this part of the inspection is: the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sandy Hayes

Ofsted Inspector

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