

On Track Education Centre Barnstaple

16a Castle Park Road, Whiddon Valley, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 8PA

Inspection dates

10–12 July 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
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and the directors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They are highly effective in making sure that all areas of the school's work continue to improve.
- Safeguarding is effective. Promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils is the number one priority of all staff.
- Teaching is good and improving. They successfully complete accredited courses that meet their needs, ability and aspirations.
- Pupils feel safe and are kept safe because they are very well cared for. There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Staff help pupils to be successful and enable them to believe in their own abilities.
- Pupils' attendance improves at this school. Pupils and their families benefit from the local authority and the school's flexible approach to meeting pupils' needs.
- The new assessment system ensures that pupils' progress is carefully measured and that gaps in pupils' learning are spotted and filled.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. It covers all the required areas of learning. Each pupil and student has an individually designed curriculum that meets their individual needs successfully.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are effectively promoted and supported by staff. Pupils begin to enjoy learning, often for the first time in their life. As a result, pupils' achievement is good and improving.
- The provision for students of sixth-form age is good and matches that provided for younger pupils. Students generally move on to sustained education, employment, training or an apprenticeship.
- The school actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Some staff do not have the confidence and experience to support pupils to achieve their mathematics, English and science targets.
- Pupils do not learn to apply their literacy and numeracy skills as effectively as they could in some areas of the curriculum.
- Middle leadership requires further development.

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?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - continuing to develop the skills and knowledge of middle leaders so that they can hold others to account for the achievements pupils make in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the outcomes for pupils by:
 - continuing to increase staff's self-confidence and expertise to ensure that they support pupils to achieve their individual weekly targets in mathematics, English and science
 - ensuring that evidence of pupils' achievements in subjects and activities, such as cooking, is used to support their accreditations in mathematics, English and science.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and the directors ensure that the school is effective in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements. They are ambitious and determined to provide the best educational experience for the pupils in their care.
- The school's work to promote equality and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils benefit from the good curriculum provided.
- Staff are recruited carefully to ensure that they can support and motivate the pupils effectively. The relationships that staff establish with pupils, especially the pupils' 'key workers', are fundamental to getting the pupils to re-engage with education. Pupils rely heavily on the adults in the school to provide them with consistent care within given boundaries. Staff are highly successful at gaining pupils' trust, helping pupils to learn and keeping them safe.
- Pupils are assessed appropriately when they join the school. The measurement of pupils' ability to learn ensures that staff have a rounded picture of each pupil's specific emotional needs. The initial academic assessment of pupils is carried out in line with the Functional Skills Standards and the core curriculum for English and mathematics. It provides valuable tracking and reports for staff, senior leaders and the directors. This assessment provides staff with a clear indication of pupils' current level in English and mathematics from Pre-Entry to Level 2. The information is then used to provide a bespoke curriculum for each pupil. In addition, it assists staff to plan lessons to be suitably challenging.
- Leaders use information from other agencies, together with the pupils' education, health and care plans, to generate risk assessments and behaviour support plans. These plans identify positive ways to support and celebrate the achievements that pupils make.
- The curriculum covers all the requirements of the independent school standards. It is carefully designed to ensure that pupils develop their social skills successfully to be able to learn. The school's agreed approach is based on current accredited neuroscience, attachment theory and child development research.
- The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the views of key stakeholders, and listens to their views. He takes appropriate actions to address any concerns that are raised by them. The external professionals spoken with during the inspection were appreciative of the provision's flexible approach to schooling, along with the caring and patient staff.
- Leaders are aware that more could be done to improve pupils' mathematical and literacy skills outside of formal mathematics and English lessons. They know that some staff need more guidance and need to gain greater confidence in how best to do this. For example, some need help in reinforcing academic targets without making pupils anxious that they are being 'taught'. Leaders also appreciate that middle leadership needs further development so that staff can be made more accountable for the areas for which they have responsibility.

The school's application to make a material change to its registration

- This inspection was combined with a material change inspection.
- The proprietors have made an application to the Department for Education (DfE) to use a further building, Narita House, in Barnstaple, to increase the number of pupils on roll from 24 to 36. Inspection evidence suggests that the school would continue to meet the independent school standards if the registration authority approves this material change.
- Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. The welfare, health and safety of pupils are the first priorities of the school. The proprietors ensure that adults in the school are appropriately vetted before they are appointed.
- The building is spacious and can comfortably accommodate the increase in numbers. Staff are well qualified and the ratio of adults to pupils is intended to be maintained.
- Teaching is good and effectively promotes pupils' learning and development in all areas of the required curriculum.
- The proprietors provide all of the required information on the school's website.

Governance

- The school does not have a formal governing body. However, the directors and school leaders are effective in ensuring that the quality of education is good, and that all the independent school standards are met. The directors provide a good balance of challenge and support for the headteacher.
- The directors have a good combination of skills and experience to ensure that the future developments planned for the school can be implemented. They have invested in high-quality resources for staff to use to enable pupils to make good progress.
- The directors ensure that external funding is spent prudently and its effectiveness reported back to the pupils' local authorities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and staff make this their daily number one priority. At the end of each day, staff share with each other what each pupil has accomplished. They also use this time to make each other aware of any concerns that have arisen. As a result, the culture to keep pupils safe is strong.
- The online recording system enables safeguarding leaders, and the directors, to have a detailed awareness of any actual, or potential, concerns about pupils' safety, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The school has a safeguarding policy published on its website. It also provides copies of it to parents, carers and others on request. The policy takes into account the current government requirements. It is known, understood and followed by staff.
- All staff, including those who have been recently appointed, undertake regular child protection and other relevant health and safety training. They are vigilant at spotting and reporting any potential signs of radicalisation or child exploitation. The high staff-to-pupil ratio and good level of supervision also help to keep pupils safe during the school day.

- Partnerships with outside agencies are very strong. Pupils who have previously been involved with the judicial system rarely re-offend during their time in this school. This is due to close working with the youth offending team, along with the high-quality support from staff.
- Staff feel that pupils are safe at the school. Other professionals who spoke to the inspector agreed with this view. Staff know how to keep pupils safe, and they do so.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils frequently need one-to-one tuition. In each activity, the assessment of pupils' attitudes to learning and personal development are carefully recorded by staff. This enables senior leaders, and the directors, to track and check the effectiveness of each pupil's curriculum.
- Leaders have implemented a new assessment system to record pupils' academic progress. Staff are using their system to help them track pupils' progress more effectively. Although relatively new, it is beginning to help staff know and understand pupils' achievements and to be able to plan the next steps of learning effectively.
- Staff review pupils' progress in all aspects of their learning at the end of each day. The outcomes are recorded and used to help plan the next day's teaching. This is helpful to staff as the pupil maybe working with a different staff member.
- Staff work persistently to keep pupils on task and to learn. Often, they do so very subtly so that pupils do not realise that they are having a 'lesson', for example when developing their mathematical skills, organising a shopping trip or using their reward money to save up for and plan an activity. However, these opportunities are not always sufficiently planned for, or designed well enough, to strongly support pupils' current learning targets in English and mathematics.
- In cooking sessions, teachers encourage pupils to develop their mathematics and literacy skills through meaningful activities. These include weighing and measuring, working to a tight budget, reviewing in writing what went well and what could be improved. However, this work is currently not used for pupils' assessment in English and mathematics or for accreditations in these subjects. Leaders are aware of this and have further cross-referencing of pupils' work noted as an area for improvement in the school's action plan.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders ensure that the programme for personal, social, health and economic education has a strong focus on keeping pupils safe and well.
- Leaders carry out risk assessments effectively to identify potential hazards in a range of situations to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Staff effectively use pupils' risk assessments to de-escalate potential emotional outbursts. As a result, it is unusual for

staff to restrain pupils. In addition, pupils generally re-engage in their learning after episodes of frustration or anxiety.

- Pupils learn about the dangers of the misuse of drugs and alcohol and understand how such misuse can increase their vulnerability to other risks, such as child exploitation. Although pupils learn about the dangers of risky behaviour, some continue to take unnecessary risks when they are not in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The longer pupils attend the school, the less the frequency and severity of episodes of behaviour which is inappropriate for learning occur. Pupils learn to trust staff because the support and guidance provided by them is unconditional.
- The bespoke curriculum and well-trained staff help to reduce pupils' levels of stress and anxiety. Pupils gradually learn to regulate their own behaviour. In lessons, adults focus on pupils' learning. However, the adults are astute at noticing the signals that pupils' emotional stability might be slipping. When this happens, staff calmly support the pupils, following their individual risk-assessed behaviour plan, until they are ready to learn again. As a result, it is unusual for staff to use restrictive physical interventions.
- Pupils' attendance generally improves on their attendance rates in previous schools. The school is working on reducing the amount of sessions missed by pupils due to periodic mental illness episodes preventing them from leaving their house.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders and the directors ensure that the school is effective in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements.
- Pupils typically join the school during a period of trauma, such as permanent exclusion, criminal justice proceedings or family crisis. They have a history of academic underachievement in a variety of often specialist provisions. As pupils' confidence and trust in the staff increase, so does their progress. At each school site, those pupils who have attended the school the longest make the best progress, re-engaging with life and learning.
- When starting at the school, pupils are assessed carefully so that staff know their starting points in English and mathematics and their ability to be ready to learn. These starting points are much lower than expected for their chronological age.
- All pupils have a specialist programme as part of their curriculum. This is designed to meet the needs of each pupil. Staff carefully record pupils' progress. School records show that these programmes help pupils to be emotionally resilient and ready to learn. Pupils make good personal progress, especially in relation to their social and emotional development.
- Staff help pupils develop basic skills for living. As a result, pupils understand the importance of eating well and engaging in physical activities of their choice to support

their health and mental well-being. They learn how to budget for activities that they want to take part in, such as going to theme parks, the cinema and the zoo.

- Pupils' success in cooking is a strength of the school. Pupils learn how to make delicious, cheap, healthy meals from fresh ingredients. They learn to share their cooking with others to show their friendship. They learn to accept, and to even take pleasure from, the positive responses by adults and peers to what they have created with great care. In addition, they gain accredited qualifications.
- An increasing proportion of pupils undertake accredited courses, including English, mathematics and science. The most able pupils successfully take GCSE examinations, with a view to continue their studies at A level.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Due to the small number of students, there is no separate leadership or management of the sixth form. As with the rest of the school, students follow an individual, carefully targeted, curriculum.
- Students are helped to overcome their frustrations and anxieties. They learn to be able to mix with young people of the same age from different backgrounds.
- Students receive good-quality, impartial careers advice. They follow courses that are agreed between them, their parents or carers, and other agencies. As a result, they achieve qualifications relevant to their ability, needs and desires.
- Students, along with older pupils, are accompanied to successfully undertake courses in the local college. They have valuable work experiences, and other opportunities, to extend their understanding of the opportunities that are available to them when they leave school.
- The students who stay on at the school are well supported to make the transition to adulthood. When they leave school, students move on to sustained education, employment, training or an apprenticeship.

School details

Unique reference number	145181
DfE registration number	878/6071
Inspection number	10047190

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 school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	9
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	On Track Education Services Ltd
Chair	Jane Cox
Headteacher	Jon Lisle
Annual fees (day pupils)	£36,708–£78,356
Telephone number	01271 378 997
Website	www.ontrackededucation.com
Email address	jlisle@ontrackededucation.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- On Track Education Centre, Barnstaple is owned by On Track Education Services. It provides education on three sites in Barnstaple. It has expanded in response to requests from Devon local authority to provide placements for pupils in North Devon.

- The school buildings were opened following a material change inspection of 5 September 2015, as a satellite of the On Track Totnes Centre. On 18 September 2017, it was opened as a discrete school as On Track Barnstaple.
- The school was last inspected in May 2016 as part of the On Track Totnes Centre, which was judged to require improvement.
- The school is an independent day school registered for up to 24 girls and boys aged from 7 to 19. Currently there are 25 pupils on roll, aged from 12 to 19.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Most pupils have histories of severely disrupted schooling. Many have not attended education for long periods of time prior to joining the school. In their previous schools, most have exhibited highly challenging behaviour that manifests itself in highly abusive, threatening, unsafe, destructive and violent ways.
- All pupils are placed at the school through their local authority. The vast majority of pupils come from Devon. The vast majority attend full-time provision either at one of the sites or through activities provided by staff at locations away from the school.
- The school does not have a governing body. The directors act in roles of governance.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all three school sites. The inspectors worked with the school leaders and other members of staff throughout the inspection. The inspectors conducted observations of pupils learning jointly with staff. They reviewed pupils' work and the records of pupils' achievements. They met with one of the proprietors, the school leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector had telephone conversations with the lead officer of a placing authority and a member of the Devon youth offending team. The lead inspector observed a meeting between the headteacher and a member of a placing authority.
- The inspectors scrutinised the quality of pupils' work. They talked with pupils about their work and life in school.
- The inspectors took account of the single response from a parent to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The 21 paper responses submitted by staff were also considered. They also considered the stakeholder views previously gathered by school.
- The inspectors considered a wide range of documentary evidence in the school, including records relating to safeguarding, the curriculum, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation and development plans. They checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspection was combined with a material change inspection. The school wishes to increase the number of pupils from 24 to 36 and to use a new building, Narita House, in Barnstaple. At the request of the local authority the school currently has 25 pupils on roll. In addition, some pupils are already having lessons at Narita House.

Inspection team

Steffi Penny, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Carol Hannaford

Ofsted Inspector

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