

On Track Education Centre (Mildenhall)

82E & F Fred Dannatt Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 7RD

Inspection dates

22–24 January 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership has strengthened since the previous inspection. The proprietors and leaders have a clearer picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They understand the learning and emotional needs of individual pupils, and plan activities which meet these needs well.
- Teachers use a range of suitable strategies to assess pupils' progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are typically positive. Pupils' attendance improves the longer they are in the school.
- Pupils make good progress from their often very low starting points. Pupils for whom the school receives additional pupil premium funding achieve as well as others in the school.
- Outcomes in both vocational and academic qualifications are good.
- Pupils do not read widely enough and for pleasure.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well, and according to the school's policy. Positive behaviour is acknowledged and rewarded. Pupils are well cared for in the school.
- Pupils are offered a wide-ranging curriculum which enables them to study a range of appropriate qualifications. This prepares pupils very well for the next stages of their education.
- Until recently, science has not been taught by a specialist teacher. There is further potential to develop the teaching space and improve the resources.
- The proprietors and leaders regularly check the school's compliance with the independent school standards to ensure that they are met.
- The school's information management system is relatively new and requires further time to be used to best effect.
- Systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching. The school's approaches are not as helpful as they could be in improving learning for pupils.

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 leadership and management further by:
 - ensuring that the school’s information management system is used consistently and in a smart way to sharpen practice
 - review the processes for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Strengthen pupils’ outcomes by:
 - ensuring that the teaching area for science is properly equipped and resourced
 - encouraging more pupils to read widely and for pleasure.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and the proprietors have improved the quality of leadership and management since the previous inspection. Having carefully considered weaker aspects of leadership, a restructuring process was undertaken. This restructure has enabled more members of staff to have ownership of the school's vision.
- The school's self-evaluation summary ties in closely with its improvement and action planning processes. Leaders monitor progress towards achieving the targets identified in the improvement plan. They are realistic about what has been achieved and what still needs to be done.
- Leaders and proprietors routinely monitor the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These standards continue to be met.
- The recent acquisition of an online school management and information system has helped leaders to gain a more accurate picture of the school's performance. However, not all staff have been using this consistently, which means that its potential has not yet been maximised.
- Leaders have consciously chosen to improve the school environment so that it is more welcoming. Classrooms and corridors are adorned with displays and posters which promote learning. The front of the school has now been screened off with trees so that there are fewer distractions from the main road.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector expressed great satisfaction with the school. One parent said about the staff, 'They really care and want to do their best for them.' Another added about their child's progress, 'They have turned his education around.'
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a range of experiences to prepare pupils for the world of work. Pupils can study towards a range of qualifications which offer both an academic or a vocational approach. The sessions in the workshops enable pupils to adopt a hands-on approach to their learning and are particularly liked by pupils of all ages.
- The management of teaching is effective. Staff receive training which enables them to meet the needs of the pupils and to keep up to date with the latest developments. Teachers' performance is managed well through an established performance management system, which involves observations of learning and a variety of challenging targets.
- To ensure that teaching consistently meets pupils' needs, the lead member of staff for teaching chooses to scrutinise a sample of teachers' planning. However, this system does not identify weaknesses in a timely way to improve teaching and learning.
- Additional funding received for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for those who are disadvantaged is spent effectively to ensure that pupils make good progress over time. The quality of pupils' education, health and care plans and personal education plans is good. The pupil premium funding is routinely monitored for its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The school actively promotes pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils learn about peoples' differences through the curriculum. They understand the importance of democracy and are keen to express their views through the school council.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum. Pupils work well in groups as well as individually.
- Communication with parents and carers is effective. Very regular telephone calls home are not uncommon to discuss how well a pupil is performing at school. Written reports to parents and carers are detailed and comment on pupils' attendance, behaviour, effort and academic progress.

Governance

- The proprietors have adopted a more challenging approach when meeting with the school's leaders. One member of staff said, 'They used to be quite laid back. They're not any longer.'
- The proprietors expect regular reports from the headteacher on all aspects of the provision. They also test out what they are told by senior leaders. The inspector's scrutiny of minutes of meetings shows that the proprietors make clear the actions they wish to be taken and that they check that these have been completed.
- All statutory policies are in place and are regularly reviewed by the proprietors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy published on its website.
- Staff who are appointed to the school undergo appropriate checks prior to employment to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The school's recording of these checks on its single central record is meticulous.
- Staff have received up-to-date training on all matters relating to the safeguarding of children. They are particularly aware of the vulnerabilities of the pupils who attend this school and know how to refer concerns about any aspect of a pupil's well-being.
- Child protection records are well maintained with details of referrals to external agencies and resolutions.
- Named officers for child protection, first aid and fire evacuation are in place and they fulfil their duties responsibly.
- Pupils are supervised very well during lessons and during their lunch and breaktimes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and display their enthusiasm for their subjects. This does not go unnoticed by the pupils and makes them more willing learners.
- Teachers make effective use of the information they hold on individual pupils to plan learning which meets their needs.
- Teachers typically identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and then set tasks of varying degrees of challenge to ensure that pupils make good progress over time.

- Positive relationships between teachers and pupils are a common feature of this school. Pupils like the way that classes are organised and they feel that this enables them to get to know their teachers better.
- Teachers regularly assess pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding using a range of strategies. This may include regular written assessments and the targeted use of questioning.
- Teachers ensure that subject-specific vocabulary is covered in their subjects. This means that pupils can write about themes and topics covered with greater confidence. In a cookery lesson, a pupil was able to explain the purpose of a 'bain-marie' when melting chocolate to make good-quality and tasty molten chocolate cakes.
- Teachers ensure that learning builds on pupils' prior knowledge. This helps pupils to place their learning into context and to see where the learning is taking them. It also gives their learning greater purpose.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective across a range of subjects to help pupils develop these essential skills. Although pupils are expected to read their set texts for English literature, they do not read enough beyond these texts for pleasure in their own time.
- Pupils particularly appreciate the vocational learning sessions. The workshops provide a safe learning environment in which pupils can practise their motor vehicle or woodwork skills. The inspector observed pupils enthusiastically working on salvaged cars and producing carefully crafted furniture, such as a guitar stand.
- Additional adults in the classroom play a key role in helping individual pupils to make good progress. These adults work well alongside pupils in helping them to understand better what they are learning and to rectify any misconceptions. They help to maintain a calm and purposeful atmosphere when pupils are learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Arrangements to ensure that the health and safety of pupils and their well-being are made through detailed risk assessments for the day-to-day running of the school as well as for educational activities pupils take part in outside school.
- The organisation of teaching groups helps to put pupils at ease and creates a feeling of belonging to a smaller community within the school. It also generates a feeling of well-being.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school. They are taught how to stay safe and how to lead healthy lifestyles. E-safety is taught well so that pupils do not place themselves at risk when making use of social media sites.
- Pupils' emotional well-being and their academic progress are discussed daily after school by all teaching staff during the 'chronology' meetings. This ensures that pupils are known as individuals and that staff are better able to meet their individual needs.
- The school regularly evaluates pupils' emotional needs through a targeted programme.

This results in an action plan for every pupil. This makes a difference to how the school approaches pupils' individual learning needs.

- Pupils appreciate the presence of Izzy, the school dog. Izzy has a calming influence over pupils when they become anxious or feel the need to let off steam.
- Careers education is a strength of the school. Pupils receive good-quality guidance on their next steps. The school arranges visits to colleges, careers conventions and prepares pupils well for interviews. Last year, every pupil in Year 11 moved on to college or gained employment. Previous pupils have returned to the school to talk to current pupils about their successes.
- Pupils gain in confidence and self-esteem during their time at the school. Independence is a trait which the school strives to develop so that pupils can stand on their own two feet once they have left the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school encourages and actively acknowledges positive behaviour, which is rewarded through a range of incentives. These include vouchers which pupils can exchange for treats.
- Pupils work well in lessons when the teaching meets their needs. They work well in groups or individually and typically follow their teachers' requests.
- Teachers implement the school's behaviour policy consistently and pupils are clear about what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. They are provided with appropriate times to calm down should their behaviour overstep the mark. Staff are suitably trained to deal with challenging behaviour with a view to getting pupils to continue with their learning as smoothly and as quickly as possible.
- Teachers model the positive behaviour they expect pupils to display. They show respect towards their pupils and expect pupils to do the same towards them and their classmates.
- Pupils understand that bullying is not acceptable in this school. They understand the different forms of bullying and know that they should speak to a member of staff should it ever occur.
- Pupils who attend this school have typically had a history of poor attendance at their previous provider. Leaders encourage regular attendance. The attendance of some pupils has dramatically improved over time since being at the school.
- The school maintains up-to-date attendance and admission registers. Leaders can account for the destinations of pupils when they eventually leave the school.
- The school uses fixed-term exclusions as and when necessary when measures taken to promote acceptable behaviour have been unsuccessful. No pupil has been permanently excluded from the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. As well as enabling pupils to secure good academic outcomes through a range of suitable qualifications, it also develops their confidence and their positive attitudes. They attend school more regularly and their previously poor behaviour improves.

- Pupils typically have very low starting points when they join the school. They make good progress across a range of subjects, beyond English and mathematics. They secure gains in their personal skills to equip them well for adult life.
- Pupils have access to a range of external accreditations including Entry Level Certificates, Diplomas, BTECs and GCSEs.
- Provision for science has not consistently matched that of other subjects because of a lack of teacher expertise and suitable resources. The school has identified science as a priority area for improvement.
- A range of Assessment and Qualification Alliance (AQA) module units are completed by all pupils, appropriate to their ability.
- There is little difference between the progress made by different groups of pupils in the school. This includes pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium.
- Current pupils are making good progress from their starting points and their achievements are moderated. Work in books and folders supports the school's view that outcomes continue to be good.
- Transition to further education or employment is smooth because pupils are well prepared for this next step in their lives. It is rare for any pupil not to enter education, employment or training.

School details

Unique reference number	127003
DfE registration number	935/6083
Inspection number	10056558

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	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	On Track Education Services Limited
Chairs	Jane Cox & Penny Harris
Headteacher	David Younger
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,000 to £37,772
Telephone number	01638 715555
Website	www.ontrackeducationservices.co.uk
Email address	dyounger@ontrackeducation.com
Date of previous inspection	7–9 March 2017

Information about this school

- On Track Education Centre is an independent day special school which opened in April 2005.
- On Track Education Services Limited runs the school. The proprietors provide the governance of the school.
- The school is registered for up to 32 pupils, aged between 11 and 18 years, who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and autism.
- Twenty-six pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Some pupils travel a significant distance to attend the school, including return journeys of over 150 miles.
- No pupils attend any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was a standard inspection commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE). The school's previous inspection was in March 2017 when it was judged to require improvement.
- The inspector observed learning across all year groups, accompanied by the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work across a wide range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with one of the proprietors, the headteacher, other senior leaders and groups of members of staff.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's self-evaluation summary document; school improvement planning documentation; policies; information on pupils' outcomes; records of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and information on pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- The inspector spoke with pupils in lessons and also met with a group of five pupils.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector spoke to three parents on the telephone. The inspector took account of 15 responses from staff to the online survey. There were insufficient responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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