

Inspection of Chances Educational Support Services

Red Rock, Sandy Lane, Dawlish, Devon EX7 0AF

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Chances Educational has a successful approach to working with pupils who have struggled in their previous schools. Many pupils arrive reluctant to learn. Staff get to know pupils on an individual level. They find out about their likes and dislikes and what they are good at. As a result, pupils feel understood, settle in quickly and re-engage positively with learning.

Staff get the best from pupils. Well-established routines give pupils predictability. For example, morning 'check ins' help staff reduce pupils' anxieties. Staff make breaktimes friendly and sociable occasions. Pupils and staff eat together and enjoy playing games such as pool and football. These times provide a safe space for pupils to talk to and share any worries with staff.

Pupils rise to the school's high expectations of how to learn and behave. Staff carefully guide pupils to understand their behaviours and self-regulate their feelings. This work is particularly effective. Pupils' behaviour improves significantly during their time at the school.

Pupils study a broad and ambitious curriculum. They appreciate the high level of individual support they receive. This allows pupils, at their own pace, to catch up on missed learning, ask questions and gain qualifications without the fear of failure.

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

At Chances Educational Support Services, many pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). When a pupil joins the school, staff assess their needs straight away. This includes assessments of pupils' academic and social needs. Staff use this information to develop personalised targets for the short period of time pupils attend the school. These targets are appropriate and gradually build pupils' confidence, self-belief and resilience. Pupils' attitudes to learning improve quickly. As a result, a significant majority of pupils reintegrate successfully back into mainstream education.

The school has designed a relevant curriculum. In core and vocational subjects, staff demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They take every opportunity to weave basic skills into lessons. For example, pupils use their mathematical knowledge to measure ingredients when cooking. Staff break down learning into small, manageable steps. This helps pupils learn new concepts and build their knowledge systematically. However, in a minority of subjects, pupils do not build up a rich body of knowledge. This is because the school has not identified the most essential knowledge that pupils need to learn in a coherent way.

The school is determined to raise the profile of reading across the school. Staff select reading materials and vocabulary that interest and engage pupils. In some subjects, pupils read often and widely, such as when following recipes in cooking or completing science quizzes. However, this approach is not fully embedded. Pupils

have too few chances to read across the whole curriculum. This prevents them from building a love of reading and improving their confidence and fluency.

The school fosters pupils' personal and social skills well. Character development runs through all aspects of school life. This helps pupils make educated choices about how to behave and treat others. As a result, pupils display the qualities they need to flourish in school and wider society. They cooperate exceptionally well with each other and adults. Pupils have many opportunities to get out into the community and be active. For example, they develop social skills in meaningful contexts, such as working with the local town council and contributing to community arts projects.

Pupils show demonstrable improvement in their attendance after joining the school. This is because the school works closely with pupils, parents and carers to remove any barriers to pupils attending regularly.

Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They are regularly encouraged to debate topics such as racism and stereotypes. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and consent. They are taught to understand risky behaviours and how to stay safe and be healthy. Pupils benefit from the rich experiences offered to them. These range from trips to places of interest to chess and sports clubs. Visits to colleges, careers fairs and careers guidance help pupils make informed choices about the future pathways beyond their current setting.

The proprietor's governance structure is effective. Governors understand the school's priorities and what needs to improve. They have the expertise to support and challenge school leaders. The proprietor ensures that it fulfils all statutory responsibilities, including vetting checks on staff working with pupils. The school uses risk assessments well to safeguard pupils during off-site activities. Appropriate mitigations are put in place where risks are identified. Minor inconsistencies in how the school checks on the compliance of the independent school standards were rectified at the point of inspection. The school fully meets the independent school standards and the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff work as a united team. They want the best for every pupil. All staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire said they were well supported by leaders and proud to work at the school.

Parents and feeder schools are effusive in their praise of the school. Many gave glowing accounts of how the school has transformed children's educational experience and put them on a better pathway to success.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The culture of reading is not fully embedded. The school does not provide enough opportunities to develop pupils' reading across the curriculum. This prevents pupils from building a love of reading and improving their confidence and fluency. The school should seek to provide increased opportunities to broaden pupils' reading experiences across all subjects.
- In a few subjects, the school has not identified or mapped out the most important knowledge it wants pupils to learn. Some sequences of learning make it difficult for pupils to build up a rich body of knowledge. The school should identify precisely what it wants pupils to learn and remember in all subjects as they progress through the curriculum.

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	143407
DfE registration number	878/6066
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10322164
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	16
Proprietor	Space DYS
Chair	Kate Few-Singh
Headteacher	Gary Hayes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,173 to £20,865
Telephone number	01626 864412
Website	www.chanceschool.com
Email address	chances@spacepsm.org
Date of previous inspection	11 to 13 February 2020

Information about this school

- Chances Educational offers a short-term alternative education provision for pupils who are at risk of exclusion or struggling in their mainstream schools.
- Pupils typically attend on a part-time basis for a six- to 12-week period. The school supports pupils to reintegrate back into mainstream education.
- A large proportion of pupils attending the school have SEND.
- Pupils are dual registered with mainstream schools throughout their time at Chances Educational.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a range of staff to discuss aspects of the school's work. The lead inspector held a telephone call with the independent school improvement consultant and met with a representative of the proprietor body and local governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English (including reading), mathematics, science and personal, social, emotional and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including cooking.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 how well safeguarding leaders act on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to staff about the school's safeguarding practice.
- Inspectors conducted a range of activities to confirm whether the independent school standards were met in full. This included health and safety checks of the premises, risk assessments, record-keeping for behaviour management and supervision during social times.

- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and responses to the staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors spoke to a sample of parents on the telephone.

Inspection team

Lydia Pride	His Majesty's Inspector
Dale Burr, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Liz Geller	His Majesty's Inspector

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