

On Track Education Centre (Silsoe)

Building 53, Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedfordshire MK45 4HS

Inspection dates

28–30 November 2017

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has high expectations and has developed an ethos of challenge and support. He has implemented systems and structures to secure good teaching quality at the school.
- Governance from the directors is rooted in high ambition and close monitoring. They know the school well and challenge senior leaders to drive standards even higher.
- Teachers monitor and record pupils' achievements across a wide range of academic and social indicators. Reporting of progress to parents and local authorities is comprehensive.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good because most teaching is linked to individual pupils' needs and helps them to make good progress.
- Information about progress in lessons is used well by adults to inform the next stage of pupils' learning.
- Teaching, learning and assessment do not always deepen pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills well enough to support pupils' rapid progress in a minority of lessons.
- Middle leaders do not consistently drive improvements in teaching, learning and assessment as well as they could do.
- Directors and leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- Current pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are the most able, make good progress from their starting points in a wide range of subjects.
- The school tracks pupils' achievements very closely and staff use this information to plan lessons that meet pupils' needs and enable them to make good progress.
- Safeguarding is effective. Good safety and welfare are at the heart of the school's work. Staff and pupils say that they feel safe.
- Behaviour and attendance are good relative to pupils' starting points. Bullying is rare. Staff give clear messages about expectations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well provided for and as a result they understand what respect is and experience how to live life in modern Britain.
- Curriculum provision is now good. Further development of careers education advice and guidance is needed to better prepare pupils for the future.

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 and further accelerate the progress pupils make by:
 - ensuring that teaching in all lessons maximises opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the accountability and responsibility of middle leaders, to ensure that they are further empowered to drive improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - improving the quality of the curriculum to ensure that pupils receive a wider range of impartial careers advice and guidance, to better prepare them for the future.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and directors have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The newly appointed headteacher has introduced a clear vision and ethos which is centred around having high expectations of pupils and teachers. He is ambitious for all pupils to achieve their potential, both academically and socially.
- Aspirations are encapsulated in clear self-evaluation and improvement plans that focus on challenging targets and timescales. The vision to provide an outstanding education for pupils at this school is at the heart of all plans.
- Leaders monitor all pupils' progress closely to ensure that appropriate interventions are applied to support rapid improvement. Teachers' and pupils' outcomes are scrutinised by leaders through regular monitoring of plans, evaluations and observations of lessons.
- Challenging targets are set for teachers and these are reflected in the school's performance management policy. Performance management objectives, although at an early stage of implementation, are now more robust and linked to pupil outcomes and the school improvement plan.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and recognised that there was a need to raise the level of challenge for pupils. Key stage 4 programmes now link to GCSE standards or equivalent. All pupils study English, mathematics and science to GCSE with opportunities to study a range of other subjects including vocational options. The qualifications suite offered now supports progression for pupils to the next stage of their education.
- Middle leaders are beginning to understand their responsibilities and accountabilities. There are currently insufficient opportunities for them to exercise these to support the wider development of the school.
- Careers education advice and guidance is already good for some pupils but all pupils do not receive impartial advice to help them in understanding the wide range of opportunities available to them.

Governance

- The directors are passionate about creating outstanding educational provision for those pupils who find mainstream education has not suited their needs. They provide a good level of challenge for leaders.
- The directors understand how well the school is doing and have detailed plans for improving provision even further. They have been involved in evaluating outcomes and strengthening performance management systems with the headteacher.
- The directors make regular visits to the school and know the school well. They are involved in checking that the school is continuing to meet the independent school standards.
- Directors are aware of their duties for safeguarding and check records and systems regularly and carefully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Strong systems ensure that safeguarding is central to the school's ethos and culture. Where there are any concerns these are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Pupils and staff know what to do if they have any concerns. Relationships with external agencies are good and referrals are made quickly and efficiently.
- Leaders are not afraid to make difficult decisions to support pupils. Safeguarding is taken very seriously at this school. Staff training is logged and leaders have attended relevant courses in relation to the leadership of safeguarding and understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the 'Prevent' duty.
- Staff say that pupils are safe. Pupils say that they feel safe. A parent whom the lead inspector spoke to agreed it was a safe environment.
- The safeguarding policy is comprehensive, suitable and reflects latest statutory guidance. It is published on the school's website along with other policies that the school is required to publish.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Short and medium-term planning is developed well and this supports pupils in making good progress. Teachers use information about pupils' starting points to develop schemes of work and lesson plans that help pupils achieve well.
- Teachers and staff are implementing the school policies for marking and feedback well and pupil exercise books, especially in English and science, reflect how this is helping pupils to identify how to move to the next stage of their learning.
- Pupils' books are neat and well presented. Typically, pupils are keen, motivated and want to improve their standards of work.
- Most pupils are confident learners who are not afraid to make mistakes. Teachers and other adults use this confidence as a strategy to challenge and consolidate pupils' understanding in lessons.
- Teachers and other adults are very good at challenging derogatory language in lessons and around the school and always use opportunities to explain and reflect on the appropriateness of language.
- Annual reports to parents, and to the local authority, for those pupils who are looked after or have an education, health and care plan, are very clear about targets, progress and conduct. They show pupils' good progress over time across a wide range of subjects and personal skills.
- Homework is not used as a regular feature of the school's work but leaders are exploring how this might be used to support the deepening of pupils' reading and spelling skills and understanding.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge often helps them to adapt lessons, when required, to meet pupils' needs. Teachers also use effective questioning, to probe and explore pupils' development, skills and understanding. While these features of teaching are typical, there is still some inconsistency in quality between different classes and subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Opportunities in lessons, break and lunchtimes are used well to support pupils to explore and develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding. Staff use this time to challenge and develop pupils' understanding of what life is like in modern Britain. Real-life contexts and problems are discussed and used to help pupils to understand how to deal with these situations at school and in wider society.
- Pupils say that they are safe at school. They are taught effectively through personal and social education how to keep themselves safe when online and in the wider world. They are clear that bullying rarely happens in school but can explain what to do should it occur. Staff and a parent also confirmed that they felt that pupils are safe at school.
- The school uses a specialist system to assess pupils' emotional and social needs. A range of targets and resources are used to allow them to explore how they might deal with issues that they face. This work helps pupils to understand how to be successful learners.
- The school charts how pupils' social and emotional development progresses well using its assessment systems. This supports teachers in identifying how to approach aspects of learning in lessons. The school recognises that many of its pupils have been disengaged with education before arriving and takes its responsibility for preparing pupils to re-engage with learning seriously.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Many pupils arrive at the school with a history of poor behaviour. The school provides a clear framework for them to improve behaviour. Many pupils now have good behaviour compared with their starting points. This is why behaviour is good. The school tracks and sets targets for pupils' behaviour and reviews how well they are doing. These targets are inextricably linked into teaching plans to take account of pupils' behaviour needs in learning.
- Adults are able to resolve conflict swiftly and expertly. They aim to stop poor behaviour disrupting others' learning. Many opportunities throughout the day are used to model, discuss and reflect on decision-making and how to behave in school and society.
- Any serious misbehaviour is dealt with efficiently. The school keeps comprehensive monitoring logs and reviews these regularly. Pupils have a clear set of expectations and are aware of what the school sees as acceptable and what is not. This helps them to understand fundamental British values and how behaviours are regarded in society.
- Attendance and punctuality is, for the most part, good. Almost all pupils attend more frequently than before they came to the school, when many had histories of very low attendance. The school monitors attendance carefully both for individuals and by groups. There are clear systems for supporting families and individuals to improve pupils' attendance, including resolving transport issues, which are often cited as a bar to attending.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017 all leavers made good progress from their starting points in English and science. Two thirds made good progress in mathematics.
- Current pupils' work and assessments show that pupils are making good progress, in a wide range of subjects, from their starting points. Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved and current learners are making good progress in developing their problem-solving and calculation skills.
- Current pupils who are the most able, and those who are disadvantaged, are making positive gains in their learning. Their outcomes are tracked closely and good progress was seen in books and assessment information.
- The progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities from their starting points is good in a wide range of subjects across the school. They are supported well in lessons and progress is monitored closely through their education, health and care plans or statement reviews.
- Curriculum changes mean that pupils are now studying a broader range of subjects and qualifications. These are more challenging and, therefore, better suited to their needs and subsequent progression to the next stage of their employment, education or training.
- The destinations pupils go onto when they leave school are monitored and nearly all pupils in the past two years have continued into education, employment or training.

School details

Unique reference number	134137
DfE registration number	823/6005
Inspection number	10026065

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 school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	On Track Education Services
Directors	Jane Cox and Penny Harris
Headteacher	Noel Hopper
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,068–35,758
Telephone number	01525 864961
Website	https://ontrackededucation.com/schools/silsoe
Email address	silsoe@ontrackededucation.com
Date of previous inspection	7 December 2010

Information about this school

- On Track Education Centre is a small independent special school in Central Bedfordshire.
- It provides an alternative provision for pupils who have been either excluded from school or are at risk from exclusion from school. The school works with several local authorities nearby.
- Most pupils experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many pupils have a history of a schooling that has been disrupted and this has had an impact on their academic attainment and progress.

- Half of the pupils on roll have education, health and care plans and some are looked after.
- Of the 14 pupils on roll, only a very small number are of key stage 3 age and most are in key stage 4. Two pupils are currently educated at home with teaching support from the school.
- The school does not use alternative education providers but does employ a specialist fitness company, Tri-line Fitness of Silsoe, who visit to provide physical education tuition.
- The school's previous full inspection was in December 2010. At this time, the school was judged to be 'good' overall.

Information about this inspection

- This was a full standard inspection with one day's notice.
- The lead inspector observed a number of subjects across both key stages as well as breaktime and lunchtime activities.
- The lead inspector talked to many of the pupils in lessons about their work and had a more detailed discussion with a small group about their learning and the school overall.
- The lead inspector scrutinised documentation provided by the school about pupils' progress and attendance.
- There were no contributions from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, the lead inspector did scrutinise the school's communications file and he talked to one parent by telephone.
- There were 12 responses to the staff questionnaire and these were scrutinised by the lead inspector. A discussion with a representative group of staff also took place during the inspection.
- The lead inspector was able to talk to a placing local authority representative about the school and its work with the children from their area.
- The lead inspector had a number of meetings with school staff, including support staff, members of the leadership team and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector had a meeting with the company's two directors.
- The lead inspector scrutinised pupils' work and talked with a middle leader about pupils' progress in books.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including policies, logs, training and performance management, safeguarding and health and safety. The lead inspector visited all rooms and classrooms and considered information presented relating to the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Russell Ayling, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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