

Small Haven School

146 Newington Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6PT

Inspection dates

7–9 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

- Pupils often join the school with low academic starting points. Most have social and emotional difficulties and exhibit challenging behaviours. They make good progress in both their personal and academic development and are well prepared for their future lives.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. She uses her skills as a psychotherapist to help pupils review their attitudes to learning. Staff use a variety of successful strategies to develop pupils' self-confidence and behaviour. Pupils typically re-engage quickly in their learning.
- The proprietors are fully committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve. Together with leaders, they regularly review the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. They have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- Teachers plan interesting activities which motivate pupils to do well. Staff help pupils to work hard and achieve success. Most pupils leave school with accreditations in English and mathematics as well as a range of other subjects.
- The curriculum is flexible; it adapts to the needs of each pupil. Work-experience opportunities and careers education are effective.
- Pupils' safety is a priority. Staff are well trained to ensure that they know how to protect pupils from a range of possible threats. For example, they help pupils to understand about staying safe on the internet.
- School leaders have not yet fully implemented the new system of assessment for primary-aged pupils. Therefore, they are not as precise in their understanding of the progress of these pupils when compared to others in the school.
- Most-able pupils do not always have work that allows them to make good progress.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work.

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 by:
 - fully implementing the new system of assessment for primary-aged pupils so that teachers can evaluate even more precisely the progress that pupils are making.

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils make good progress by providing work that meets their needs
 - developing pupils' skills and resilience to write in greater length.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school succeeds in helping pupils to re-engage in their learning. All staff are committed to helping pupils to develop a self-belief in their abilities.
- The headteacher has made many improvements since coming to the school three years ago. She has ensured that staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. There are now many opportunities for pupils to develop their life skills. The headteacher's extensive expertise in psychotherapy ensures that she has a clear understanding of the emotional and social needs of each pupil. She tailors an individual programme designed to develop confidence and social skills. Staff are very supportive of the ethos of the school. Strong teamwork ensures that no opportunity is lost to encourage and praise pupils' good work and behaviour.
- Parents and carers are positive about the school and say that staff take the time to understand their children. All who spoke to the inspector, or who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. A typical comment was, 'at other schools my child was unhappy. Now, because this school understands my child's emotional needs, they are much happier'.
- Older pupils follow an effective programme of careers education and work-related learning. Pupils receive useful advice and carefully research the skills and qualities needed for the careers that interest them. In 2017, the majority of Year 11 pupils continued their studies at college. A few went directly into employment.
- The curriculum includes core subjects such as English and mathematics, as well as subjects designed to re-engage pupils. For example, in key stage 1 pupils study carnivorous dinosaurs. Across the school, pupils make good progress in science because they learn to think scientifically. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- In physical education, pupils take part in sports such as swimming and netball. Pupils are successful in competitions, for example they came second in a special-school cross-country event. Most-able pupils often take on the role of sports champions and help the younger pupils in their lessons.
- Leaders ensure that pupils make good progress in developing their life skills. For example, all pupils learn basic food preparation. Older pupils help to prepare and serve the tea and toast at morning break. Development of skills such as budgeting and planning a trip helps to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their future lives.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular trips and activities which have a positive impact on pupils' personal development and progress. Clubs such as bingo and board games help to develop pupils' turn-taking skills.
- The premises are well maintained and there are plans to extend them in the future to provide a sixth form.

Governance

- The two proprietors of the school are committed to ensuring that the school makes a positive impact on pupils' future life chances. The proprietors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They are effective in holding leaders and staff to account.
- The proprietors encourage good communication through regular drop-in sessions. Both proprietors are involved in the day-to-day running of the school and understand the different needs of each pupil. They know about the quality of teaching. Proprietors have been well trained in many aspects related to safeguarding and health and safety. They ensure that the school is a safe and secure environment.
- The proprietors have ensured that the independent school standards have been met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The priority of all staff is to ensure pupils' well-being. Training in all aspects of safeguarding is thorough and ensures that pupils are safe from a range of potential threats. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that pupils are not at risk. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Parents, staff and pupils say that the school is a safe place to be.
- The safeguarding policy is fully compliant with statutory requirements and is published on the school's website. Senior leaders ensure that pre-employment checks on new staff are thorough and are recorded carefully on the school's single central record.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Due to a disrupted education or a negative attitude to learning, some pupils find starting to learn again a challenge. Staff understand this and help pupils settle quickly into school routines. Trusting and positive relationships between pupils and staff contribute strongly to pupils' effective learning. Pupils say that staff listen to them at this school. A typical comment was, 'You can work at this school because you don't have to pretend who you are, you can simply be yourself.'
- Reliable information about pupils' starting points from previous schools is often not available due to periods of absence or exclusions. On arrival at this school, staff conduct a careful assessment of each pupil's academic and social skills. They use the results of these checks to plan challenging targets.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to develop pupils' phonics understanding. They help pupils make good progress in their reading and comprehension skills.
- Staff have high expectations regarding pupils' behaviour and how they present their work. Pupils respond well and concentrate hard in lessons. Parents are very complimentary about the quality of teaching. They say that staff 'go over and above' what is expected of them.

- Leaders recently introduced a system across the school that provides greater clarity about the amount of progress pupils are making. For primary-aged pupils, the system has not yet been fully implemented. Therefore, leaders are not as precise in identifying where progress is strongest and weakest for primary pupils when compared to others in the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders, staff and therapists work hard to re-establish pupils' confidence in their own abilities. Effective strategies are put in place to help those pupils who may be feeling vulnerable or anxious.
- Social skills are well developed. For example, those who are school councillors learn to listen to the views and opinions of others. The five-day residential trip helps to develop pupils' skills of independence.
- Pupils' physical well-being is well promoted. They learn about the importance of eating healthily and having an active lifestyle. Pupils know how to stay safe, for example they know the potential risks they may encounter when travelling on their own.
- Pupils are proud of their school. When asked by the inspector what they would do to improve the school, they said it was 'perfect the way it is'. Pupils are rightly proud of the work that they produce. For example, they delighted in exhibiting their art at a gallery.
- All staff help to ensure that the transition between school and college is as smooth as possible.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- When pupils first join the school, they do not always behave well. This usually improves rapidly because staff constantly reinforce good behaviour. Pupils who have been at the school for a longer time are good role-models, they gently remind new pupils of the standard of behaviour expected at the school.
- Behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. In class pupils listen carefully to the teacher and work hard to complete their tasks. At break and lunchtimes, pupils play amicably together.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying at the school. They know that they could talk to staff if they ever had any concerns.
- The attendance of pupils, many of whom have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence, is similar to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils often arrive in school with levels of attainment that are below those expected for their age. Many have significant gaps in their understanding in subjects such as mathematics. Once they develop a more positive approach to learning, pupils start to catch up. They make good progress in all subjects.
- Many pupils have limited vocabularies when they arrive at the school. Their knowledge of words increases rapidly because they feel confident to ask staff about the definition of words they do not understand.
- Pupils make rapid gains in developing their reading skills. Staff ensure that reading books meet pupils' interests and needs. Older pupils write interesting book reviews and comment on whether they would recommend a book they have read. Most pupils develop the skills to read with confidence, expression and fluency.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their grammatical, punctuation and spelling skills. This is because staff often check their learning. Many pupils are proud of the progress they have made in spelling difficult words. Skills in writing longer pieces of work are not so well developed. This is because pupils are rarely given the opportunity to practise these skills.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, particularly in real life problem-solving. For example, they employ good budgeting skills when using a set sum of money to buy items at the local supermarket.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the issues affecting the environment and how they can help to make a difference. For example, after conducting a survey of the local habitat, they found that litter was a problem and so pupils organised a litter pick.
- In some subjects such as mathematics, most-able pupils usually have work that matches their needs. However, this is not the case in other subjects, and work provided is not closely aligned to pupils' skills and abilities. As a result, most-able pupils do not always make the best progress they are capable of.
- Last year in Years 10 and 11, most pupils achieved success in level 1 qualifications in personal and social development and vocational studies. Many pupils gained level 1 qualifications in functional-skills subjects such as English and mathematics.
- This year, as well as accreditation in English and mathematics, pupils have additional options. They are studying for qualifications in sports and leisure, skills for independence and work, applied science and arts qualifications. Books and assessment portfolios show that pupils are making good progress in their studies.

School details

Unique reference number	135018
DfE registration number	886/6103
Inspection number	10008607

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	6 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Proprietor	Marissa & Michael Morgan
Chair	Marissa Morgan
Headteacher	Stacey White
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34226–£47840
Telephone number	01843 597 088
Website	www.smallhavenschool.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@smallhavenschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 July 2012

Information about this school

- Small Haven School is an independent special school which caters for the needs of pupils between the ages of six and 17. The school is registered for 30 pupils; currently there are 27 on roll. Pupils are taught in six classes; each class has a maximum of six pupils.
- At the last standard inspection in July 2012, the school was judged to be good. Since that time there have been several changes. A new headteacher was appointed in 2014. Half of the teachers have recently started at the school.
- Most pupils have had gaps in their education or have been excluded from their previous schools. All pupils have an education, health and care plan which is often associated with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have additional needs such as

autistic spectrum disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders and speech and language difficulties.

- The school offers a range of therapies. These include speech and language therapy, Lego therapy, and drawing and talking therapy. The headteacher is a qualified psychotherapist. Another member of staff is an occupational therapist.
- The school aims to provide pupils with the 'opportunity to re-engage in education, thrive and be well prepared for their future lives'.
- The school uses no alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons in all key stages. Most observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector held a meeting with pupils to ascertain their views about the school. She also listened to them read and looked at their work in books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff. There was also a meeting with the two proprietors. There were informal discussions with parents at the end of the school day. The inspector also took into account the 14 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online survey).
- A range of school documentation was reviewed relating to safeguarding, assessment, target setting, pupil progress, individual education plans and the performance management of staff. The inspector also looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The views of 17 members of staff who responded to the Ofsted's survey were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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