

Turnstone House School

Birtwick Park, Old Bungay Road, Kirby Cane, Bungay NR35 2HP

Inspection dates

16–18 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Adequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Turnstone House transforms pupils who have become disillusioned with learning into pupils who value their education highly and are immensely proud of their achievements.
- Pupils and family members describe the school's excellent provision as 'phenomenal' and 'unreal'.
- Leaders, governors and staff inspire, motivate and challenge pupils to aim high in their personal development and in their academic performance.
- High-quality teaching, care, guidance and support ensure that pupils make remarkable progress from their individual starting points, including learners in the sixth form.
- Outstanding teaching, the enriched curriculum and pupils' individualised learning programmes promote British values excellently.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development rapidly improves over time. They understand the impact that their actions have on others.
- Leaders and governors have successfully addressed areas for improvement since the school's previous inspection. They have continued to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- All staff share responsibility for safeguarding pupils. Pupils are safe. They are confident to speak up and seek help if they are anxious or upset.
- Since the previous inspection, the school's leadership structure has been strengthened so that lines of accountability are clear and effective.
- Leaders have recently introduced systems for regular appraisal of staff's performance. These are new and not yet embedded.
- Staff and governors regularly discuss provision and the difference it makes to pupils' learning. However, in their current form, written records of decisions taken in meetings are difficult to retrieve and refer to at a later date.

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?

- Continue to refine and embed systems for staff appraisal.
- Sharpen management decision-making by implementing a useful and manageable system for recording decisions made at governor and staff meetings.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Collectively, the directors, the executive principal and the principal make a visionary and inspiring team of leaders. Their passion for pupils to excel personally and academically is tangible. They provide clear direction and ambition to continuously improve provision and outcomes for pupils. They ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The leadership structure works extremely effectively. Each leader knows to whom and for what they are accountable.
- Leaders set high expectations for the conduct of pupils and staff. Recruiting the right staff is given careful thought and consideration. As a consequence, teamwork within the school is excellent.
- Each member of staff understands the value of their contribution to each pupil's learning. Returns from the staff questionnaire endorsed their confidence in the school's leadership and management.
- Monitoring of teaching, with developmental feedback, is rigorous and highly effective across the school. Leaders give staff the confidence to adjust learning and to trial new ideas and approaches in the best interests of the pupils. They ensure that pupils' progress is measured continuously through rigorous and accurate assessment.
- Leaders meet regularly with staff in the nearby 'sister' school, Avocet House, and with leaders in other independent schools to share good practice.
- All of the pupils are disadvantaged pupils. The local authorities placing pupils at Turnstone House speak highly of the school. They confirmed that the school's exceptional ethos and approach tap into pupils' strengths and motivate them to aim high. Without exception, they confirmed pupils' excellent re-engagement with learning after significant periods of absence from education.
- The curriculum inspires pupils to learn. Pupils have access to a range of extensive courses. Leaders employ temporary specialist teachers to deliver subjects if permanent staff cannot provide the necessary subject knowledge. Pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in an extensive range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Extra-curricular provision is extensive. Pupils participate in a wide range of clubs outside of school including swimming, rugby and drama. They socialise with others outside of school.
- Diversity and equality of opportunity are ingrained in leaders' determination to provide pupils with high-quality education. Pupils' individual, wide-ranging and complex needs are central to the curriculum design. Provision is exceptional because it is responsive to their ever-changing needs and interests. Pupils' outstanding achievements are testament to the success of this approach.
- The learning centre is an attractive, purpose-built building. Leaders and managers ensure that it is well kept and that resources and other equipment for teaching and learning are of high quality.
- Leaders and governors have a deep and accurate understanding of what is working well in the school. They take everyone's views into account, especially the pupils'. They

consider evidence gathered about pupils' learning, behaviour and well-being to make judgements about the school's performance and to set future goals.

- Progress towards achieving the goals is monitored rigorously and continuously. Contemporaneous notes are made of discussions at staff and governor meetings. However, the school has not devised a sustainable system for keeping written records that can be easily accessed by others.
- The principal has recently introduced a system for evaluating the performance of staff members and identifying their training needs. This is work in progress and it has not yet run a full cycle to assure its effectiveness.

Governance

- The directors are the proprietors. They were the original founders of the school and they are responsible for governance. Their dream to re-engage pupils who have failed to thrive personally and academically in other educational settings has been realised. Their innovative vision to provide pupils with continuous opportunities to learn at school is the key to the school's success.
- In their role as governors, the directors keep a watchful eye on the school's development, ensuring the right balance of support and challenge for leaders.
- The directors' wisdom, skills and experience have been central to the school's rapid improvement since the previous inspection, moving from an adequate school to one that is outstanding.
- The directors keep themselves abreast of new ideas, innovative practice and changes in statute through their regular attendance at national conferences.
- Directors are mindful not to interfere in the day-to-day running of the school, leaving this responsibility to school leaders. Their role is strategic. In partnership with school leaders, they shape the school's future direction with flair.
- The directors ensure that they fulfil all of their statutory duties to meet the independent school standards fully and to keep pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's safeguarding policy is available on the website. It is comprehensive and reflects the latest guidance.
- Leaders, including governors, give safeguarding a high priority. Everyone is alert to their responsibility to safeguard pupils. Through excellent teamwork, leaders have developed robust procedures to keep pupils safe. They share information and are acutely aware of the significant vulnerability of individual pupils.
- The school carries out a full and thorough assessment of risk for each pupil before they join the school to ensure their safety once they arrive and are going forward.
- Regular and thorough safeguarding training means staff are vigilant, know what to look for, and fully understand their responsibilities to protect pupils. Clear lines of communication, fully understood by all staff, ensure that concerns, however small, are passed on and acted upon quickly.

- The designated lead professional is suitably trained to fulfil the role and is up to date with the Department for Education's most recent guidance.
- Record-keeping is of consistently high quality, enabling leaders to retain an overview of child protection cases and to supervise the actions being taken to support pupils and keep them safe.
- The single central record of statutory pre-employment checks on all staff and adults working with pupils is completed properly to ensure their suitability to work with children. Requirements for recruiting staff are followed carefully and documents to evidence this are held securely in staff files.
- The school works closely with other services such as the police, social services, health professionals and family members to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe.
- Leaders make referrals to other agencies quickly, when appropriate, and/or seek advice from the local authority designated officer for safeguarding, to inform their decisions.
- The curriculum covers all aspects of safeguarding and ensures that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, especially online.
- Supervision is continuous in the learning centre. Pupils always have an adult with them or supervising them from a suitable distance.
- Leaders are vigilant in checking that alternative provisions accessed by pupils are regularly checked to ensure high standards in safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Strong, trusting and respectful relationships between staff and pupils lend confidence to pupils in their learning. Adults' management of pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They encourage, praise and acknowledge good learning routinely while regularly, yet subtly, reminding pupils of their high expectations for productivity and completion of work.
- Teachers and support staff skilfully draw upon their in-depth knowledge of each pupil's interests and preferred ways of learning to plan their inspiring, bespoke learning programmes.
- They carefully consider which subjects are best taught to pupils in groups or individually to maximise the progress that they make. This leads to pupils' high engagement in learning so that, over time, they make substantial and sustained progress across the curriculum, including in English and mathematics.
- Teachers are completely focused on learning outcomes. They capitalise on the unexpected. When they discover an opportunity for learning that they had not planned for, they seize it and adjust the original plan accordingly.
- No limits are set for what pupils are capable of achieving. This message is clearly conveyed to pupils and pupils refer to it regularly in conversations. If pupils show an interest in a subject or say they want to learn about something, staff make this happen wherever possible, by adapting their programmes.
- All staff contribute to planning for individual pupils' learning. They place no ceiling on what is possible for pupils to achieve academically and in their personal development.

Pupils make remarkable progress in learning about themselves, other people, relationships and academic subjects in the national curriculum.

- Teachers and support staff are extremely adept at drawing pupils into learning by capturing their interest. They choose to use a variety of different methods and practical approaches to do this such as carefully selected games, quizzes, puzzles, opportunities for drama, experiments, film clips, visits, natural and manufactured objects and images. They ensure the right balance between practical and written work.
- Assessment of pupils' learning and their personal development is regular and extensive. This includes teachers' regular spot checks in lessons to ensure that pupils have understood, evaluation of the pupils' written work and use of formal tests. The information is used effectively to identify what pupils know, understand and can do and to plan in detail for what they need to learn next.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are fully aware of how well they are achieving and encourage them to consistently aim high. Each pupil has an aspirational long-term goal to aim for, broken down into short- and medium-term targets. Intended outcomes are personalised to each pupil and their progress towards achieving them is measured carefully.
- In particular, reading, writing, speaking and listening are taught effectively. Application of punctuation, grammar and spelling is reinforced across all subjects. Pupils are encouraged and persuaded to read widely and often. Teachers engage pupils in reading activities whether using electronic devices on their own or reading a book with an adult. They cleverly ensure that pupils read instructions and information themselves so that they practise and develop their reading skills continuously.
- They keep authorities that place pupils at the school regularly updated on pupils' achievement and, if appropriate, they keep family members informed by phone, email or face-to-face meetings.
- Staff use questioning assiduously to draw pupils into deeper levels of thinking. They ask questions such as 'why do you think that?', 'can you explain?' and 'what if?'
- Health professionals contribute appropriately to assessments of pupils' mental health and well-being.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils join the school with extremely low opinions of their self-worth. Many have failed to thrive in traditional school settings and have been moved from school to school without success. The school's excellent restorative approach enables pupils to gain confidence and believe in themselves. They thrive socially, emotionally, physically and mentally.
- Without exception, pupils commented that staff will always keep them safe and look after them. They know about e-safety, bullying, including cyber bullying, and other situations that could present potential risks.
- Pupils' safety, well-being and nurture lie at the heart of the school's ethos. In their first term, personal, social, health and relationships education has the highest priority in their

individual learning programmes. They make rapid progress in their physical and emotional well-being.

- Pupils are immensely proud of their achievements. They visibly glow with pride when showing their work and talking about what they have learned. They feel that they have made a fresh start and, as one pupil commented 'My hopes, dreams and aspirations are catered for here. Everything I want to do happens.'
- Pupils learn about emotions and appreciate poetry and lyrics in songs. They learn about justice, fairness, tolerance, respect and diversity. Opportunities to promote fundamental British values are threaded through the curriculum. These make an immense contribution to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils mature as thoughtful, community-spirited individuals with a sense of belonging. They are prepared excellently for future adult life in British society.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding in lessons and around the school generally.
- Pupils have a great rapport with teachers and support staff. They recover quickly from momentary lapses in positive behaviours. If they need 'time out' to calm themselves they take it and return soon after.
- The behaviour of individuals does not affect the progress of others. Staff are expert in sensing anxiety or stress levels and de-escalate the situation quickly so that learning proceeds uninterrupted.
- Staff expectations for pupils to behave appropriately are exceedingly high and reinforced consistently. Pupils follow adults' guidance and instructions quickly and positively.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and interested learners. They are incredibly proud of their work and keen to showcase it and talk about it.
- Supervision levels are excellent. Pupils are never left unsupervised during school hours in the learning centre. They look after equipment and resources.
- Pupils say that they usually get on well with one another. They are tolerant of each other's differences and life experiences. If someone is giving them a hard time, they show that they know the best path to take such as 'walking away'.
- Pupils make remarkable progress in improving their attendance and punctuality. From long periods of complete absence from school or attendance as low as 35%, they rarely miss a day at school. They arrive on time each day, well-presented in the uniform and ready for a day's learning.
- Pupils are very happy in school. Family members confirmed this. They smile and show good humour most of the time. All pupils have complications and challenges to cope with in their lives. Pupils who have attended the school for the longest periods of time show that they increasingly develop the capacity to come to terms with difficulties and make every effort to overcome them.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Prior to starting school at Turnstone House, a history of missed schooling, combined with pupils' extensive and complex needs, usually results in their below-average attainment on entry.
- Pupils' progress, from their individual starting points, is exceptional across all subjects, including English and mathematics. They are currently forging ahead with their learning and catching up rapidly. Some pupils have made up so much ground that their attainment now matches expectations for their ages.
- Discussion and debate are aspects of learning in which pupils now shine, when they were previously reluctant to talk or take part. They have ideas, views and feelings that they are able to explain coherently.
- The work seen in pupils' books shows that they are developing resilience in writing longer, more complicated pieces with increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and appropriate use of English spelling, punctuation and grammar. Their handwriting and presentation are also markedly improved.
- Pupils read accurately and fluently. They prefer to use e-readers but also show interest in books.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their personal and social skills. During the inspection, they showed their capacity to be polite and well-mannered. They make outstanding progress in building their self-esteem and confidence.
- Outstanding teaching of drama ensures that all pupils excel. They improvise, take on imaginary roles, and work in cooperation with each other and participating adults. They take on roles confidently centre stage, with nowhere to hide. This is testament to the massive progress they have made in gaining self-esteem and self-worth.
- Pupils gain accredited academic and vocational qualifications, and this is outstanding progress from their individual starting points.
- Current pupils have achieved a range of qualifications including functional skills, entry Level 1 and 2 in English, mathematics, information technology and personal and social education, nutrition and health awards, arts awards, and Royal Yachting Association sailing awards. They are entered for GCSE qualifications in whatever subjects they show potential, as soon as they are ready. One pupil, for example, is working towards eight GCSE subjects.
- Some pupils develop excellent commercial and business skills. They learn about advertising, selling, catering and setting up small businesses such as a fully equipped and functional nail bar, within the learning centre.
- Ex-pupils have successfully moved on to further education, employment or training including entry to university courses. This is an impressive track record.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- All of the independent school standards are met in relation to the sixth-form provision. Safeguarding is effective.
- Leaders ensure that the high-quality provision that pupils receive in key stages 2, 3 and 4 extends to the sixth form.

- Teaching, learning and assessment support and challenge learners to build on their prior learning and develop clear, challenging, yet achievable goals for the future.
- Learners have access to high-quality impartial careers guidance coupled with helpful advice from school staff. Learners understand all of the options available to them.
- Learners have access to work experience and college courses. All former leavers have taken up education, employment, training or apprenticeship. Staff assist learners in applying for work and interview techniques.
- Sixth-form learners show maturity and they are well-mannered. They develop excellent personal and social skills and in-depth understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They take their learning seriously and value it highly. They have high aspirations for the future and they make outstanding progress personally and academically.
- The school ensures that the capacity to successfully live independently is the long-term goal for every learner. Learners gain further accredited academic and vocational qualifications in a range of subjects relevant to their career aims. This constitutes outstanding achievement, given their late start in regular, consistent learning.
- A learner commented that following a long period of no education, staff had enabled him to make progress and to learn. 'I'm not going to lie. The things that staff make happen here are phenomenal.' He confirmed that none of his previous provisions had 'worked for him' until he came to Turnstone House.

School details

Unique reference number	138880
DfE registration number	926/6009
Inspection number	10020822

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 special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Specialist Education Services Ltd
Chair	Jon Lees
Principal	Georgia Loughton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£252,000
Telephone number	01508 517000
Website	www.specialisteducation.co.uk
Email address	office@specialisteducation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2013

Information about this school

- Turnstone House is a small independent special school in Norfolk. It provides education for up to eight girls and boys up to the age of 19. It opened in October 2012 and is situated in the grounds of a large house.
- The school was last inspected in September 2013, when the overall quality of provision was found to be adequate and all regulations were met.

- In February 2016, following a request to the Department for Education for a material change, the school extended its age range from 8–16 years to 8–19 years. There are currently eight pupils on roll aged 10 to 17 years.
- Specialist Education Services Ltd owns the school. The proprietors, known as directors, provide the governance of the school. The school aims to create a synergy of health, care and education with a positive personalised learning culture, and a philosophy that imposes 'no limits' on aspirations for children and their potential for positive change and development.
- Seven pupils have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. All pupils have identified social, emotional and mental health needs. Some have additional learning needs and/or autism spectrum disorders.
- All of the pupils are looked after by their respective local authorities.
- The school uses Eastern and Otley College, and Norwich and Great Yarmouth College in Norfolk for alternative provision. No pupils are currently following college courses.

Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) toured the school site accompanied by the principal.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the executive principal, the lead teacher for special educational needs and a proprietor.
- The HMI observed all eight pupils engaged in learning during the school day jointly with the principal. They observed teaching of English, mathematics, science, personal, social, health and relationships education and drama.
- Three pupils had one-to-one discussions with the HMI about their learning and showed her their written work in a range of subjects. One pupil completed the pupil survey and the responses were taken into account.
- The school's website and documentation were examined to confirm compliance with the independent school standards.
- The HMI looked at policies and record-keeping for safeguarding. The single central record of statutory suitability vetting, carried out on all staff, volunteers and governors, was checked.
- The HMI looked at the school's self-evaluation of its work and plans for future improvements. The school provided information about current pupils' attendance, behaviour and learning that were taken into account.
- The admissions and attendance registers were seen, and the annual account of income received and expenditure incurred.
- The HMI made phone calls to four people in placing authorities and spoke to family members of four pupils. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The views of 11 staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were taken into account.

Inspection team

Linda Killman, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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