

# Teaseldown School

Teaseldown, Mill Road, Ridgewell, CO9 4SG

**Inspection dates** 5–7 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- Students' achievement is good because the school's leadership places a high priority on students gaining qualifications and they all go on to college or an apprenticeship.
- Teaching is good and all staff who teach expect a great deal of students. From the moment a student becomes a member of the school, their knowledge and skills are checked up on carefully and an interesting individual programme of work is created in key areas of learning.
- Parents say they are very pleased with their child's progress and personal development. Many remark on what a huge difference the school has made to their child.
- Students' spiritual, social and moral development is good and they behave well. They concentrate productively and become thoughtful young people. This is because their welfare and care are successfully promoted by staff. Every morning and afternoon staff meet to discuss how well students are working in lessons and consider their personal and medical needs effectively.
- Good leadership and management ensure staff receive valuable training and so teaching is improving. A significant improvement since the last inspection is that the students' progress is checked on a regular basis by senior staff.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Not many students gain qualification in information and communication technology.
- Leaders for different areas of learning do not clearly record or share with others the strategies to support those making slower progress.
- Staff do not always check in sufficient depth what students have and have not learnt successfully or give them detailed enough feedback about what they have done well and could do to improve.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day’s notice.
- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or part lessons taught by 11 tutors. Eight were joint observations with the proprietor or the headteacher.
- Policies and other documents were examined, as was students’ work and other evidence about their progress, records of training and observations of teaching and learning. Inspectors observed students’ behaviour and examined the school’s safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, students, contacted three local authority representatives and considered 14 questionnaires from members of staff. Inspectors spoke to four parents by telephone and received one letter from another.

## Inspection team

Jackie Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheelagh Barnes

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Teaseldown is an independent day special school in Ridgewell for up to eight students which opened in 2009. This year it opened another school site called Primrose Hill, in Chelmsford, for up to five students. There are currently 11 students on roll.
- The school combines therapeutic and educational provision which meets individual needs of boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years.
- Most have complex requirements including communication, behavioural, emotional and social needs. All students have statements of special educational needs and are referred and funded by their local authority. Students have had previously disrupted education and have attended poorly at their previous schools.
- All teaching is carried out by a team of 14 tutors under the leadership of the headteacher, who is a qualified and experienced teacher.
- All students are from White British backgrounds. No students are in the care of the local authority.
- This is the school's second inspection and it was last inspected in 2010.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the range of information and communication technology qualifications offered to students so that more can demonstrate their skills and knowledge to employers in ways which they recognise.
- Develop the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that all staff:
  - use specific feedback which explains what students have done well and can do to reach even higher levels of skill
  - utilize activities towards the end of lessons which allow them to check what students have and have not learnt effectively.
- Improve the ways leaders for all areas of learning record and share strategies to support students making slower progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Many students start at the school with lower than expected levels of skill. All groups of students make good progress and achieve well because of good teaching. This means that they all gain a good range of Entry Level and GCSE qualifications. In recent years, some more able students have gained GCSE qualifications at grade C in English, mathematics and science. Representatives from the authority who place students agreed that they were making good progress at the school. Students' statements of special educational needs are regularly reviewed and effective individual plans put in place so that their needs are met successfully.

Students are well prepared for the next stage of education or the world of work because of a good curriculum. In the last few years, all students went on to college or began apprenticeships. In discussion, some students talked enthusiastically about what career they would like to follow because staff guide them effectively. In school they learn to think carefully about the effect of their actions because staff expect a great deal of them and encourage them to be thoughtful. This develops their personal skills well. Students develop their basic skills successfully because a broad range of subjects are taught. When they join the school their levels of knowledge are accurately assessed. Individual programmes of study are created and displayed effectively on the wall so everyone is clear about what each student is learning. Each student's progress is recorded every eight weeks in key areas of learning.

Students make good progress in learning to communicate, read and write, and use mathematics, science, history, design and technology and artistic skills. For instance, in a history lesson observed one student used his literacy skills successfully as he recorded the different ways in which the Ancient Romans and Egyptians used medicines. Students learn to use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively but they do not gain many of the qualifications in this subject that would be easily recognised by an employer.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Students behave well and get on well with each other. They make good gains in their behaviour from when they join the school and successfully develop positive attitudes to learning. Staff manage students calmly and thoughtfully, and provide good role models for them to follow. All staff agree that behaviour is good. In recent years there have been no exclusions. Students handle equipment safely and share apparatus fairly as a result of staff support. The students say in the past they found it hard to get on with others but in this small school they have made friends successfully.

The students successfully develop their self-confidence and some are keen to explain what they have done in various projects. This is because staff plan imaginative topics for them which capture their interest. For example, a student talked enthusiastically about how he could research themes in an art project about toys and games and fantasy because teaching encouraged him to consider a wide variety of themes. Their cultural awareness develops productively when, for instance, in geography and religious studies they learn about other countries and other peoples' beliefs. Students have a good understanding of public services and institutions in modern Britain.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their tolerance of all types of people is well promoted, and they demonstrate respect for different views and opinions. The school ensures that staff present a balanced view when political and other issues are discussed with students. Bullying is rare and name calling is dealt with effectively. Students conduct themselves well. They say they feel safe and that staff manage them respectfully.

Students attend regularly and staff watch over this carefully. Regular contact with parents means that absence is rare. When this occurs, telephone calls are used successfully to make sure that students are safe.

**Quality of teaching****Good**

Teaching is good because staff use individual programmes of study to ensure that students' develop their key skills and achieve well. Students' misunderstandings are tackled productively and so gaps in their learning are filled. The internet is used wisely to enhance students' knowledge. In a good session observed, a student learnt about the key features of a castle because he searched the internet to find out about a place he will be visiting. The best teaching uses practical activities to make learning memorable. This was seen when a student planned an investigation and then carried out an experiment to see what happens when certain materials are combined. Staff use questions effectively and so students' understanding develops successfully. For instance, in a lesson observed the student learnt to use fractions and probability because the member of staff discussed ways to analyse a mathematical problem.

Assessment is used well and staff regularly record on students' individual learning programmes when objectives are met. Comments written in students' books explain what has been achieved. Staff give students positive oral feedback which raises their self-esteem. Occasionally, staff do not explain in detail what students have done successfully and could do to improve, and this means that they are not totally clear about how to make their work better. Although students' attitudes to learning are positive, occasionally students sit back and do not apply themselves fully to the task in lessons. Towards the end of lessons imaginative activities are not always used to assess in depth what students have and have not understood. This means that assessment is not used to best effect to establish what the student needs to work on in the next session.

**Quality of curriculum****Good**

The curriculum is good and enables students to progress well in key areas of learning. Displays around the school celebrate students' achievements successfully in many areas of learning. All displays contain considerable amounts of students' work. These displays show that students work on projects which cover all the required areas of learning. Many topics develop skills in more than one area of learning at the same time. For example, one display showed how ICT was used to create spreadsheets which utilized complicated formula effectively. However, the students do not have enough opportunities to work towards ICT qualifications which would assist them in their working lives. The school has expanded its ICT equipment since the last inspection but leaders recognise that further investment is required to increase the range of apparatus to meet new course requirements.

Planning for each subject ensures that students build up their basic skills carefully. For example, a history topic developed the student's reading skills and knowledge of the past when he found out about the sinking of the Titanic. Projects promote students' understanding of how we are governed, for example when they visited the Houses of Parliament. Students explore moral dilemmas and so, for example, they thoughtfully wrote about whether animals should be used to test the safety of products for humans. Students have an effective range of opportunities to take part in sports and become fit. Some have developed their skills in gymnastics, ice skating and swimming because local leisure facilities are used productively. Extra music tuition is provided by specialists who creatively involve students in interesting projects.

**Pupils' welfare, health and safety****Good**

Students' welfare, health and safety are good and are well supported by staff and senior leaders. All the requirements for this standard are met. The school's policies for promoting good behaviour,

preventing bullying, health and safety both in school and on outside visits, and safeguarding reflect the Secretary of State's guidance and are well implemented. All the necessary checks are made on the premises and fire prevention equipment. Parents receive daily reports about their child's behaviour and personal development when they first join the school. Once the student has settled in, parents are contacted regularly to discuss any concerns or successes. Written reports are sent to parents every three months which explain how much progress a student has made in key areas of learning, including their social skills. Staff supervise students effectively and they involve them in sociable games and activities at break time.

Staff keep students safe and healthy. Bullying incidents are handled thoughtfully by staff and effective procedures are in use to deal with the occasional incident. Records show successfully how any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are handled and acted on. An appropriate number of staff have completed training in first aid and food hygiene. Health and safety issues are dealt with efficiently. Fire drills are carried out regularly and suitable records maintained.

Safeguarding arrangements are effective and systems to recruit staff are rigorous. All the necessary checks are made on staff and a central record of these is suitably maintained. All staff receive regular basic child protection training and three members of staff are trained at a higher level. Detailed risk assessments are made for various activities. Students learn about how to keep themselves safe when they use the internet but this training course is not carried out when they start at the school. This means that one or two are not totally clear about what information they should not access on the internet. Registers of attendance and the admission of students are kept efficiently. Senior leaders watch over these carefully and study them for any patterns which need to be followed up on. Parents who communicated with inspectors agree that students are safe in school and say they are cared for well.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

## Leadership and management

**Good**

Leadership and management are good and all the independent school standards are met. The school places a high priority on students developing the skills which prepare them for their future lives. This means that students are encouraged successfully to study for qualifications to become valuable members of society. The school's development plan sets challenging targets which include students gaining GCSE qualification at grade D and for more able students at grade C or higher. All staff are proud to work at the school and say the school meets the different needs of all students. Staff support senior leaders and the proprietors well, and are keen to continue to improve the education that the school offers.

A significant improvement since the last inspection is in the tracking of students' progress. Careful assessments take place when each student joins the school so that they staff are clear about each student's level of skill and knowledge. Every eight weeks students' attainment is evaluated. Leaders for each area of learning do not always record in detail strategies which could be used to support those progressing at a slower rate. This means that staff are not totally clear how to help students make faster progress.

Staff have many valuable opportunities to develop their skills through regular training. For instance, one member of staff found a course to develop her use of assessment criteria very useful in increasing the accuracy with which she evaluates students' GCSE coursework. Another member

of staff explained how a course on autism had helped her to understand how these students feel in certain situations. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance and the quality of teaching. Monitoring of teaching takes place regularly. Feedback given by senior leaders after teaching observations methodically develops each member of staff's skills. This is because specific strengths and ways to improve teaching are discussed.

Parents engage well with the school. All parents who contacted the inspectors value what the school does for their child and say they are making good progress at the school. The information provided for parents, carers and others, together with the procedures for handling complaints, meet requirements. The premises and accommodation meet requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135837
<b>Inspection number</b>	422798
<b>DfE registration number</b>	881/6060

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social needs
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	11
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Brett Runchman and Hazel Bunting
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hazel Bunting
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 May 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£49,380
<b>Telephone number</b>	01440 785566
<b>Fax number</b>	N/a
<b>Email address</b>	admin@exceptional-ideas.co.uk

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