

Inspection of On Track Education West Yarner

West Yarner, Dun Cross, Dartington, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6DX

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 July 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that puts pupils back on the pathway to a successful education. Pupils who join the school have often had challenging experiences in other settings. The school helps to transform pupils' negative perceptions of education into positive ones through its nurturing ethos.

Staff prioritise getting to know pupils well. They build strong relationships with both pupils and their families from the very start. The school works with pupils closely to understand which strategies will help them to be successful with their behaviour. The precision of this approach helps pupils to flourish both socially and emotionally. Many pupils' behaviour improves significantly over time.

The school does not compromise on its high academic expectations for pupils. Its successful work in ensuring pupils feel happy and secure at school helps them to learn well. Pupils enjoy success in a range of qualifications. This helps them to be ready for their next stage of education and training.

The school has a strong personal development offer. For example, pupils learn to show care for their environment by looking after the school garden. They learn to consider others by raising money for a range of charities.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has expanded to include pupils from its full registered age range. The first Year 11 cohort is due to leave in July 2025. The school has ensured that these pupils receive the appropriate careers advice so that they can make informed decisions about their next steps. The school works closely with future providers to support pupils' transition to their new setting.

Pupils have significant social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. The school uses information well from pupils' previous settings, as well as its own systems, to identify pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many pupils find it challenging to learn in the classroom environment when they start. The school makes careful adaptations to the curriculum to help them access the learning. As pupils become more settled, the school gradually raises its expectations of what they should do and adjusts its support accordingly. Typically, this supports pupils to become independent, confident learners.

The school has a broad and balanced curriculum. Much of this reflects leaders' high ambition for its pupils. The curriculum identifies the precise knowledge that pupils should know. This helps teachers to know what to teach. In lessons, teachers question pupils effectively to ensure they probe pupils' thinking deeply.

However, in a small number of subjects, the order in which pupils learn new content needs further work. It does not always build on learning in the most logical way.

This makes it hard for pupils to make links to previous learning and, therefore, learn new content deeply.

Many pupils arrive at the school with a wide range of gaps in their knowledge. The school quickly ascertains what pupils can do, so that it can address these gaps. This is particularly successful in reading, which is given a high status in both the primary and secondary curriculums. Pupils who have gaps in phonics receive the necessary support to help them successfully learn to read. The school promotes a love of reading through use of the school library and by staff regularly reading aloud with pupils.

However, pupils in the early stages of writing are sometimes not supported well enough. They undertake complex tasks before having mastered the basics of letter formation and sentence construction. As a result, pupils find it hard to progress through the writing curriculum as successfully as they do through the reading curriculum.

Pupils learn about, and discuss, moral issues and current affairs as part of their morning routine. This helps pupils to become compassionate citizens. The school provides a high number of enrichment activities, including trips to venues such as museums and the theatre, and visiting speakers. These help to stimulate pupils' curiosity for learning as well as giving them new talents and interests to pursue.

Leaders, including the proprietor body, know the school well. The school's development plans show that leaders focus on improving the right areas at the right time. The school has recently strengthened its leadership team so that there is a strong presence to support staff and pupils at both sites. Leaders check the full range of the school's work regularly. As result, the school's self-evaluation is accurate.

The school continues to meet all the independent school standards in full. The proprietor works effectively to ensure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Many pupils and families live a significant distance from the school. Nevertheless, the school ensures that families do not feel detached from it. The school regularly communicates with parents and carers about their child's development, as well as on any issues, big or small. Consequently, parents and carers feel involved in the child's education. Many praise the school highly for the positive difference it has made to their child's life in and out of school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some pupils who are at the early stages of learning to write are given work that is too challenging for them. This results in pupils who have not secured the fundamentals of writing struggling with tasks that they do not have the skills and knowledge to complete. The school should ensure that early writing skills are taught effectively, so that pupils have secure knowledge and skills in transcription, before they access more complex writing tasks.
- In a few subjects, the way in which pupils learn new knowledge is not sequenced in a logical order. This makes it hard for pupils to build on their knowledge over time securely. The school should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is well sequenced, so that pupils can build on their learning gradually and securely.

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	148805
DfE registration number	878/6088
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10391814
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	On Track Education Services Limited
Chair	Jane Cox
Headteacher	Simon Wood
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,756 to £70,188
Telephone number	01803 445943
Website	ontrackeducation.com/schools/yarner
Email address	yarneroffice@ontrackeducation.com
Dates of previous inspection	14 to 16 September 2022

Information about this school

- The school provides specialist provision for pupils with SEMH needs, as well as for pupils with autism. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school is registered to admit a maximum of 40 pupils.
- The school is located over two sites:
 - West Yarner, Dun Cross, Dartington, Totnes TQ9 6DX.
 - Seale Hayne, Howton Road, Newton Abbot TQ12 6NQ.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions and two unregistered alternative provisions.

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.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the leadership team and the wider staff body.
- An inspector held discussions with the proprietor from On Track Education Services Limited.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum with leaders, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of work in some other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and by talking to parents. The inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and pupil survey.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**
- The school will use an additional, adjoining building at the Seale Hayne site to accommodate the growth in maximum numbers from 40 to 52. The lead inspector toured the site with the headteacher. The building was, until recently, used as a site for another school within On Track Education Services Limited. As a result, much of the internal building is ready for classes of pupils. The additional premises are therefore suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. The lead inspector discussed the plans for staff recruitment with the headteacher and a representative from the proprietor body.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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