

On Track Education Centre Northants

Unit 6, Quarry Park Close, Moulton Park, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 6QB

Inspection dates

14–16 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
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils who have experienced difficulties in their earlier education are supported well to make good progress with their learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Teachers assess pupils' work effectively to plan for their individual next steps in learning.
- Senior leaders provide inspirational leadership, which demonstrates the conviction that all pupils can make continuous progress emotionally, socially and in their learning.
- Arrangements for pupils' safety and well-being are excellent. The safeguarding of pupils, on site and in the local community, is given the highest priority.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They make strong progress with the development of their social skills and positive responses to adults.
- Post-16 students improve their examination grades and are prepared well for future opportunities in education and employment.
- Senior leaders work tirelessly and with boundless energy to motivate, support and encourage staff. Together, leaders and staff have developed a balanced and stimulating curriculum.
- Proprietors and senior leaders work effectively to ensure that all the independent school standards are met and continuously improve the quality of the curriculum, teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The proprietors, through their governance arrangements, make sure leaders evaluate continuously and identify suitable areas for further improvement. They have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Senior leaders have recently improved arrangements for monitoring and recording pupils' progress, academically and socially. To date, they have not made sufficient use of this information to compare progress against national averages or to address relatively high levels of authorised absence.
- The school's marking policy is not implemented consistently, for example to improve handwriting.

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?

- Further develop teachers' understanding of the extent of pupils' progress, over time and across all subjects and year groups, to help ensure that pupils' progress is consistently at least close to the national average.
- Evaluate the impact of authorised absence on pupils' progress and develop strategies to reduce unauthorised absence.
- Provide more opportunities for all staff to share the school's best practice in teaching, learning and assessment, including the consistent application of the school's marking and feedback policy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders demonstrate high expectations and well-directed energy to ensure that the school aims for continuous improvement. There is exemplary teamwork between leaders and staff to motivate pupils and raise their aspirations. Staff, in their responses to the inspection questionnaire, state that the school is well led and managed and they are proud to work there.
- There is a culture of respect and cooperation throughout the school. Pupils appreciate the personal care and encouragement they receive daily. Despite the difficulties they have experienced in previous educational settings, they value the opportunity to work towards examinations. Staff encourage and support them to address issues of anger and disaffection with, mostly, good success.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths. They are reflective about the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the outcomes achieved by pupils. They continuously strive to identify and address areas for improvement.
- The breadth and variety of courses meet well the needs of pupils. Pupils are able to gain useful academic qualifications and to enjoy vocational courses that, together, give them a strong foundation to move on to higher levels of study and employment.
- The school makes effective use of independent careers advice to provide information about a range of further education courses and jobs, which take good account of pupils' interests and ambitions. During the inspection, a number of pupils attended the national skills show in Birmingham, where they were provided with extensive information about future pathways available to them.
- The school has recently introduced effective new arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress. Senior leaders have begun to evaluate the information gained to improve their understanding of how pupils' progress compares with national averages. To date, staff do not have a consistent understanding of the extent of pupils' progress.
- Staff commitment to raise the personal expectations of disadvantaged pupils is a major strength of the school. The centre manager leads a dedicated staff team who continuously monitor the safety and well-being of vulnerable pupils. They achieve considerable success in working with parents and other agencies to help pupils understand the risks they meet and sometimes struggle to overcome.
- Parents, and external agencies working with the school, are extremely positive about the impact of the school's work with their children. One parent stated, 'Staff deserve respect; the school deserves it in bucket loads.' External agencies express agreement that pupils are safe and happy at the school. They recognise that staff manage challenging behaviour very well. They also agree that communication with senior leaders is good and they are responsive to any concerns.
- The school's commitment to fundamental British values is evident in high-quality displays around the school and work in pupils' books. Pupils talk confidently about visits to places of worship, visitors to the school representing a variety of community services, and their understanding of potential threats to their well-being in the wider community.

- Staff make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, both through being excellent role models and through many themes studied in the curriculum.
- The proprietor, senior leaders and governors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They demonstrate good capacity for the continuous improvement of all aspects of the school's work.

Governance

- The proprietors' arrangements for governance are very effective. The governors visit the school regularly and have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and of pupils' behaviour. They understand the daily challenges facing staff and can identify the strengths in staff performance and school outcomes.
- The governors oversee effective arrangements for managing the performance of senior leaders and staff. All staff agree individual performance targets, and are held to account effectively for the quality of their work. Although staff recruitment is not always easy, the governors support senior leaders in securing staff with suitable qualifications and experience.
- The governors ensure that there is sufficient funding available to support additional training for staff at all levels within the school. A number of staff have improved their personal qualifications and advanced in their careers through the effective leadership of governors and senior staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The oversight of safeguarding by senior leaders and the implementation of arrangements to keep pupils safe are excellent.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. The policy and procedures have regard to the latest government guidance.
- Senior leaders ensure that all staff are trained, and updated regularly, to recognise signs of abuse and potential risks to pupils' safety, including sexual exploitation, e-safety and radicalisation. All staff are vigilant in their support for vulnerable pupils.
- Senior leaders work extremely effectively with parents and external bodies to identify and manage risks to pupils' well-being. The school's record-keeping and evaluation of individual cases equip senior leaders to respond effectively to the needs of any pupils in crisis.
- Pupils speak very highly of the way in which the school helps them, sometimes despite their resistance, to stay safe and to manage risks in their individual lives.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers across the full age range of the school, and in all subject areas, plan suitable tasks and activities to enable pupils to learn and make progress. Teachers' planning is based on the effective assessment of pupils' starting points and continuous checking of pupils' recent learning.

- Teachers have a good understanding of the next learning steps required to make sure that individual pupils make consistent progress. Time in lessons is almost always used well and pupils engage positively in the tasks set for them, for example when working with decimals or solving simple equations in mathematics.
- Staff have clear and agreed expectations of the behaviour of pupils and support each other well to manage any occasional interruptions or distracting behaviour. Teachers and learning assistants use regular positive encouragement and praise to motivate pupils and to make sure that they sustain their concentration.
- Teaching staff have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They provide extensive one-to-one teaching and small-group activities. The work set is challenging and pupils are provided with good opportunities to reinforce their learning and develop confidence in their achievements.
- Many teachers use their questioning skills effectively, probing pupils' understanding and challenging them to think deeply and develop their spoken and written responses. Teachers, in science, for example, continuously question pupils' observations as they view samples through a microscope. They encourage pupils to make predictions and to test these through practical experiments, such as comparing physical and chemical reactions.
- Teachers of English demonstrate particularly strong skills in helping pupils to develop, extend and improve their written work. They do this through effective questioning, for example when developing figurative writing and thorough marking in line with the expectations set out in the school's marking policy. The quality and effectiveness of marking and feedback to pupils are not consistent across all subjects.
- Many pupils demonstrate the ability to work independently and to apply their subject skills. They particularly enjoy, and achieve success, in practical and vocational subjects. They enjoy, for example, responding to inspirational ideas in craft lessons. A number of pupils have made clay poppies, which are now being assembled into a collage of the Tower of London, produced by diligent concentration and application of artistic skills.
- Staff communicate high expectations for what they believe pupils can achieve. Pupils are mostly motivated to achieve well in accredited courses. Often from relatively low starting points, they are determined to succeed with their studies in GCSE courses. They sustain their concentration and respond well to teachers' encouragement.
- Staff, across all subjects, provide informative termly reports on pupils' progress in subjects studied. Reports focus effectively on pupils' progress towards agreed individual targets. This helpful information is extended appropriately by looking ahead to new targets and areas of study for the next term.
- While teachers have a good understanding of pupils' current achievements, the results of assessment are not analysed sufficiently to help staff understand how pupils' rates of progress compare with the national averages.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- The school's 'Thrive' approach is making an increasingly strong contribution to staff awareness of pupils' social and emotional needs and development. This includes a rapidly developing understanding of how pupils may be supported to manage stress and personal trauma. The school's work with individual vulnerable and anxious pupils is excellent.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have and the individual support that they receive from staff and school leaders. Pupils state, for example, that 'this school is incredible, it has done a lot for me... staff are amazing to talk to... they give good help with problems at home'. The quality of relationships has a strong positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- Pupils can identify improvements in their attitudes to school and to others. This results from effective work by staff to develop pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. School records demonstrate extensive and persistent work to support pupils and their families through testing and troubling experiences. The staff never give up in their determination to make sure that pupils are safe and self-confident.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe as a result of extensive work in registration periods and the personal and social development programme, including effective work on responding to bullying. Pupils recognise the expectations of staff that they will develop mature and responsible judgement. They are provided with extensive opportunities to reflect on and learn from their mistakes.
- The culture and ethos of the school strongly promote pupils' safety, well-being and safe lifestyles. The curriculum includes a wide range of opportunities for pupils to consider how to maintain healthy lifestyles. Parents state that pupils are safe in school and pupils agree.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils understand the school's high expectations of them and they make a concerted effort to meet these expectations. Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils are mostly respectful to adults and respond appropriately to instructions.
- Pupils respect the staff and, over time, they develop respect for the views of others. School records demonstrate that pupils' behaviour improves over time. Pupils who have been unable to cooperate with the requirements of previous schools are determined to be successful.
- Staff have a thorough understanding of the factors that influence the behaviour of individual pupils. Incidents do occur but they are managed effectively through agreed procedures across the school.
- The attendance of many pupils shows strong improvements compared with their previous placements. There is very little unauthorised absence, although there are a small number of persistent absentees. However, authorised absence, often associated with pupils attending external appointments and meetings, is above average and negatively affects the school's overall attendance figure.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across all subjects and year groups, pupils make good progress from a variety of starting points. Pupils who have missed significant periods of previous education close gaps in their learning and make good progress towards suitable standards to take up further education or employment on leaving school.
- Pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills which prepare them appropriately to complete external examinations.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make at least similar rates of progress to their peers.
- Pupils develop their reading skills effectively as they progress through the school. Pupils mostly read fluently and with increasing understanding. The quality of their handwriting and presentation of work does not generally reflect the same consistent standard.
- The great majority of pupils make good progress over time, including in English and mathematics. Pupils who entered the school with little motivation or hope of completing examination courses are rightly proud of their achievements.
- Many pupils exceed the realistic targets set for them over their time in the school. They achieve success at a variety of levels, including entry level and level 1 qualifications, BTEC awards, and GCSE examinations. They benefit from work experience where appropriate, and from practical vocational courses which are well matched to their individual aspirations.
- GCSE results in 2017 were a little below the expectations of the school, due in part to difficulties with staff recruitment. However, the results provided the basis for the great majority of pupils to achieve places in further education courses of their choice, or in employment with training.

Sixth form provision

Good

- The school does not operate a separate sixth form. The very small number of post-16 students are integrated into appropriate courses alongside Year 11 pupils. Students are provided with additional time to consolidate and extend their previous learning.
- Students are provided with opportunities to improve on their results in previously studied courses. These include GCSE courses and BTEC vocational courses. These arrangements are appropriate for students who have missed significant areas of learning during their compulsory school years and who are not ready, emotionally or socially, to move on to alternative placements.
- Staff maintain their high expectations that students can achieve success with accredited courses. The study programmes provided are carefully monitored by senior leaders and suitable adjustments made in response to students' individual needs.
- Students are provided with opportunities to take part in work placements where these are available and appropriate to the individual's programme. They continue to receive individual, high-quality careers advice and guidance.

- Students have good attendance and demonstrate a commitment to continuing with their learning. They continue to develop their social skills, in school and by taking part in activities in the community designed to improve their independence.
- On leaving school, the small number of students who have followed this route have achieved constructive destinations at further education colleges or in employment.

School details

Unique reference number	136227
DfE registration number	928/6073
Inspection number	10039190

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	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	On Track Education Services Ltd
Chair	Penny Harris and Jane Cox
Headteacher	Pete Davies
Centre manager	Sally O'Connor
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,068–£59,000
Telephone number	01604 645934
Website	http://www.ontrackededucationservices.com
Email address	pdavies@ontrackededucation.com soconnor@ontrackededucation.com
Date of previous inspection	25–27 November 2014

Information about this school

- On Track Northampton is situated in converted industrial premises on Moulton Park trading estate in the north of Northampton. It moved to these premises in 2012 and has continued to refurbish the premises to meet the needs of the school curriculum.
- The school is registered to admit up to 32 pupils aged 11 to 19 years who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some pupils have complex needs, including autistic spectrum disorder. Pupils are placed at the school following the breakdown of their previous placements in mainstream schools. There are currently 28 pupils on the school roll.
- On Track aims to provide individualised learning programmes to develop pupils' academic, vocational and social skills. The school aims to equip pupils for positive independent adult lives.
- On Track uses the services of Moulton College to provide part-time courses for a small number of post-16 students.
- The previous inspection of the school was in November 2014.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in academic and vocational courses across the full age range of the school. He scrutinised samples of pupils' work in a variety of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and vocational courses.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietors of the school, who are also the school governors. He discussed all aspects of the school's leadership and management, and implementation of school policies with the headteacher, centre manager, middle leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector considered responses to recent questionnaires by 12 parents, 21 pupils and seven external agencies who work with the school. He also considered responses to an inspection questionnaire completed by 17 members of staff.
- The inspector held meetings with three pupils and met informally with others. He also spoke with one parent and considered five written responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of school policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017