

# Inspection of Overton School

Hereford Road, Ludlow SY8 4AD

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Inspection dates: 15–17 October 2019

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils who attend this school have usually had a poor experience of education in the past. Starting at Overton is like beginning a new chapter in their lives. Nurturing staff, who understand each pupil's specific needs, ensure that pupils have a positive experience of school. Teachers are determined that pupils will get back on track with their education. They continually look for ways to help pupils overcome their difficulties, so that they can achieve well. And they do. This is because of the high-quality care and support pupils receive.

Pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers find out what grabs pupils' attention then use this as the hook into learning. Pupils gain confidence and show more willingness to extend their learning and try harder things. This is all supported by strong, positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils feel cared for and safe. Classrooms are calm environments where pupils usually behave well. For some pupils, their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) mean that they struggle with controlling their behaviour. Despite this, staff manage pupils' challenging behaviour well. Leaders have detailed guidance to address any bullying issues effectively, should they arise.

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

The headteacher leads the school well. She is highly driven and wants and gets the best for the pupils. She makes her high expectations clear to others and leads by example. Staff work well together and feel that their workload is manageable. The headteacher's clear vision means that leaders' actions result in further improvement. The school has not been open for long, and a few aspects of leadership are still evolving. This means that the headteacher takes the lead on several key areas of the school's work. Most staff lead their subject areas well, although in a few cases their impact on their subjects is less obvious. Training for staff usually provides them with the knowledge they need to do their jobs well. Staff feel motivated. They share the same high ambitions for pupils as the headteacher. Parents speak positively about the school. They value the teachers' efforts to make learning enticing for their children.

Leaders have adopted a thoughtful approach to the design of the school's curriculum. It is broad and offers pupils rich learning experiences to prepare them well for the future. Teachers match learning to pupils' individual needs and interests. Teachers find out as much as possible about pupils' prior learning when they first join the school. They use this information well to design a bespoke learning programme for each pupil. This takes into account the objectives in each pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan. The activities teachers plan and deliver help pupils to build their knowledge over time. Teachers place emphasis on supporting pupils to develop their communication and social skills. This helps pupils to cope well in different situations.

Staff are successful in getting reluctant pupils to attend school. Many pupils have been out of full-time education for a considerable period of time. Teachers build pupils' self-

confidence and show them that they can achieve. Most pupils show positive behaviour and attitudes to school the longer they stay at the school. The order in which things are learned is usually well planned. Teachers use assessment to determine pupils' starting points. They encourage pupils to try new tasks while trying to keep anxiety levels low. Through everyday interactions, staff find ways to build pupils' resilience and self-esteem. This, combined with effective teaching, enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers place importance on developing pupils' interest in reading for pleasure. However, the teaching of specific reading skills is not always well planned. This means that a few pupils do not develop their understanding of what they are reading as quickly as they could.

Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. They use quality resources to help pupils learn. In science, pupils created 3D models to help them remember different cell structures. Some resources are more limited, such as the availability of suitable reading books for pupils with different reading abilities. Teachers encourage pupils to use imagination and creativity in their learning. For example, in art pupils express themselves using watercolours to show texture.

The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is extensive. It is designed to help pupils to prepare well for adulthood. Topics include managing money, friendships and relationships. Teachers promote fundamental British values. For example, pupils experience democratic decisions at first hand through the school council's work. The wider curriculum also supports pupils' personal development. Staff encourage pupils to become responsible citizens who care for their world. Extra-curricular activities, like healthy eating week, encourage pupils to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Careers education supports pupils to make decisions about their futures. Teachers organise suitable work experience placements.

The proprietor ensures that the school meets all the independent school standards. The proprietor has a clear oversight of the school's work. They commit to providing leaders with the resources to offer a good-quality education. The proprietor contributes well to the school's strategic direction.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It has a suitable accessibility plan. The school has a suitable safeguarding policy that takes account of the Department for Education's latest guidance. It is published on the school's website for parents and others.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff prioritise keeping pupils safe. They know the signs to look for that a child may be at risk of harm and how to report concerns. Staff keep careful records of any incidents. The PSHE curriculum sets out to equip pupils with important life skills to keep themselves safe. For example, they explore what they understand by risk-taking and how this relates to their online activity. Leaders take all necessary steps to appoint staff who are suitable to work with children. Staff are mindful of the extra

safeguarding risks to pupils with SEND.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Some middle leaders are quite new to leadership. A few do not focus enough on ensuring the curriculum is as well sequenced as it could be. This means that teaching does not always help pupils build on previous knowledge. Senior leaders need to provide further training for a few middle leaders. This should help them have more impact on improving the design and delivery of the curriculum.
- In a few instances, pupils do not receive enough guidance about how to improve their reading. An emphasis on developing pupils' interest in reading is at the expense of teaching specific reading skills. This means that a few pupils do not gain fluency and comprehension skills as quickly as they might. Teachers need to be clear about the precise reading skills they are teaching. They should understand how these will develop pupils' fluency and understanding. Teachers should also ensure that books are carefully matched to the pupil's reading ability.

## **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 Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education (DfE) has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146340
<b>DfE registration number</b>	893/6036
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10100047
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	6
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	0
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Bryn Melyn Care Ltd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Farah Quinn
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£33,150
<b>Telephone number</b>	01584 707 091
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.overtonschool.org.uk">www.overtonschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:overton@brynmelyncare.com">overton@brynmelyncare.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school was registered by the DfE on 30 January 2019. This is the school's first standard independent school inspection since it opened. The school admitted its first pupil in April 2019.
- The school is situated in a rural setting a few miles from Ludlow in Shropshire.
- The school caters primarily for pupils with an autism spectrum disorder, many of whom have experienced significant trauma. The school is part of Bryn Melyn Care Limited. All pupils have SEND. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school uses one alternative provider, Crowsmill Craft Centre near Bridgnorth, Shropshire.
- The school does not have a religious character or ethos.

## Information about this inspection

- We 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
- Inspectors met with the headteacher of the school and the chief executive officer of Bryn Melyn Ltd.
- Subjects considered as part of this inspection were English, mathematics, PSHE education and history. Inspectors carried out lesson visits to see some of these subjects being taught and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning. They spoke to teachers who taught these subjects and held discussions with subject leaders. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took into account seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire to consider parents' views.
- Inspectors talked to pupils to gather their views about school, behaviour, their safety and learning.
- Inspectors explored safeguarding arrangements by reviewing safeguarding records, checking the safety of the school site, talking to staff and pupils about how they keep safe, and checking the school's single central record. They met with the school's designated safeguarding lead.

## Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graham Tyrer

Ofsted Inspector

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