

# Chances Educational Support Services

The Junction, Wain Lane, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 2SH

## Inspection dates

12–14 June 2018

### Overall effectiveness

Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' academic outcomes are not consistently good as a result of inconsistent teaching, learning and assessment. The quality of teaching is not checked well enough by leaders. It is weakest in mathematics at the Dawlish site, particularly for the most able.
- Pupils at the Dawlish site do not have the same good attitudes to learning as seen at the Newton Abbot site. This hinders their progress.
- Some staff do not have high enough aspirations for what pupils should achieve.
- Some pupils' poor behaviour has become too established before they arrive at Chances to change quickly enough.
- A few pupils, with very poor attendance records, who are placed with the school never attend and some do not attend as often as they can.
- Some of the placing schools provide very little information about their pupils, including what they should learn academically during their placement with Chances. As a result, teachers do not have a good understanding of what pupils already know, understand and can do.

### The school has the following strengths

- The mixture of youth workers and teachers enables the school to support pupils so that generally they can stay in mainstream education.
- Most pupils who have had poor attendance at their mainstream school attend Chances more frequently.
- Pupils are kept safe. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders, governors and trustees know what the school needs to do to improve. They have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards.
- Leadership of English has enabled pupils' progress and achievement to be better in this subject than for other subjects.
- Parents and carers appreciate the difference that attending Chances has made to increase the future life-chances for their children.

### 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?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
  - ensuring that effective quality assurance systems are in place to enable leaders to hold staff firmly to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
  - improving the leadership of other subjects to match that seen in English.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
  - obtaining more detailed information about what pupils know, understand, and can do before they are placed at the school
  - ensuring that staff use the information they receive to plan work which is at the right level of difficulty to support pupils to learn effectively.
- Continue to improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
  - working even more closely with mainstream schools to ensure that pupils attend Chances as often as they can
  - improving pupils' attitudes to learning at the Dawlish site.
- Improve outcomes for pupils, by:
  - making sure that all those teaching pupils consistently challenge the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics at the Dawlish site, so that they achieve well
  - insisting that pupils are appropriately placed at the school, particularly in the Dawlish site.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The proprietors have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards.
- Leaders and managers are hindered by the sometimes poor quality and/or lack of information from the placing schools. Leaders do not always have sufficient information to provide the quality of service which they are capable of delivering. When they do have appropriate information pupils make good progress. They are successfully sustained in mainstream education and are successful in their external examinations. This is not consistent enough across the school to provide a good quality of education for all pupils.
- Chances aims to provide a 'pause button' for pupils through early intervention and crisis support. Staff are successful when schools use Chances support early enough to be able to change learning behaviours and attitudes to learning before they are too engrained.
- Some schools seek the support needed for pupils too late, for example as a last resort to avoid permanent exclusions. When this happens, successes are more variable as pupils' behaviour has spiralled out of control for too long. These deep-seated poor attitudes to learning are hard to change in the short space of time available.
- In the recent past, some of the placing schools have been reluctant to be fully involved with the work that Chances is doing with their pupils. The school has developed its own curriculum. Consequently, if schools do not provide work for pupils, then staff still ensure that pupils can make progress in their studies. However, leaders appreciate that they need to work collaboratively with placing schools to ensure that pupils make good progress in the required areas of learning. This is particularly important for pupils who need to stay full-time at Chances, longer than the normal six-weeks.
- Leaders do not systematically check the quality of academic education provided by the school. As a result, there is too much variation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Where it is best, for example in English, staff are well informed and use their significant subject knowledge to provide appropriate, relevant and challenging learning experiences for all pupils.
- Leaders have an increasingly accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have developed a comprehensive online system to record information about each pupil. As a result, the centre's monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress and the standards that they reach have significantly improved. However, closer attention needs to be given to ensure that information is recorded with accuracy and consistency.
- In partnership with placing schools, staff at Chances ensure that pupils have good quality information about potential courses and careers that are available. This supports pupils effectively to make positive and appropriate career choices.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively and encouraged throughout the school's curriculum. Because of the role modelling by staff to develop tolerance and harmony, pupils believe it is alright to be different at this school. The smaller learning environment and one-to-one meetings with a dedicated 'key worker' are highly effective at supporting pupils' personal development.

## Governance

- The recently formed local governing body contains a good mix of professionals and expertise. Their terms of reference and responsibilities to the trustees are clear. The changes to the governance have made sure that the focus is now more centred on being a school, rather than a youth work organisation. They are well aware that more support and challenge is needed to enable the headteacher and site leaders to further develop and sustain the changes already made.
- The trustees, local governing body and leaders are committed to getting the best for the pupils in their care. They resolved a number of issues willingly during the inspection. They are rightly undertaking a review of the centre's policies and procedures to ensure that they are kept up to date and truly reflect the day-to-day work of the school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The online recording system enables staff to have an instant awareness of any actual or potential concerns about pupils' safety, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The school has a safeguarding policy published on its website. It also provides copies of this policy to parents, and carers, on request. The policy takes into account the current government requirements. It is known, understood and followed by staff.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of local safeguarding concerns. They are aware of their duties under the 'Prevent' duty, and how to support and protect children and young people from exploitation.
- All staff have a high level of safeguarding training. They have regular refresher courses and have a comprehensive understanding about how to keep pupils safe. They also use their knowledge to help pupils be safe when the pupils are not in school.
- Risk assessments are up to date, including for individual pupils. They are clear about the actions that need to be taken to reduce risks.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The lack of good-quality, detailed information provided by the dual placement mainstream schools hinders the ability of teachers to ensure that they can plan work at the appropriate level for each pupil. In addition, some teachers do not have high enough expectations about what pupils should and could achieve. As a result, some pupils do not achieve their full potential.
- The school tests pupils' basic literacy and numeracy when they join a typical Chances programme. However, the tests cannot compensate sufficiently for the lack of information provided by the placing school. For example, pupils' knowledge of algebra and their achievements in other curriculum subjects. As a result, it is hard for staff to make sure that pupils make consistently good progress in all of the required areas of learning.
- The teaching, learning and assessment of English is better than that of other subjects. The subject specialists work closely together across the two sites. They also work closely with the English specialists of the placing schools. Consequently, they have a much better understanding about the pupils they are teaching, which in turn leads to more rapid,

better and sustained progress. However, pupils do not make consistently good progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum.

- There is currently no designated special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) at the School. Instead the school uses the expertise of the SENCo of the dual placement school. This ensures that both schools have a good understanding of the needs and achievements of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their willingness to attend school at the Dawlish site are not good enough.
- Leaders are rightly reviewing the protocols and arrangements with dual placement schools to ensure that they can fully demonstrate the impact of their work.
- The school has constructed a 'well-being assessment' tool which pupils complete at the start, mid-way and end of their placement. The areas covered include school, mood, and sense of purpose, relationships, and family. For those who are appropriately placed and attend well, this work demonstrates improvements in their emotional well-being and self-confidence.
- Pupils who are looked after or who are otherwise vulnerable due to their circumstances are well cared for by staff.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Bullying is rare with high pupil to staff ratios.
- During their involvement with Chances, pupils develop better learning habits and many remain in mainstream education. Parents who spoke with inspectors were effusive in their praise for the work of the Chances team and the positive changes to their children's outlook on life and future prospects. Likewise, past and current pupils at the Newton Abbot site told inspectors how they now enjoyed coming to school, have gained in self-confidence and are helped to understand and control their emotions appropriately. Inspection evidence agrees with their views. Comments from pupils at the Dawlish site were less positive.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The reason for attendance at Chances is the behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour at the Dawlish site is not good.
- Staff, the local governing body and the trustees want, and expect, the very best for the young people in their care. As a result of dedicated teachers and youth workers, a large proportion of pupils attend school more frequently. Some of the placing schools do not provide enough detailed information about pupils when they start at Chances. This lack of information hinders the Chances leaders in demonstrating accurately any improvements in pupils' punctuality and attendance.

- The school works well with other agencies and parents to increase or sustain pupils' attendance. Most of those pupils who have had poor attendance at their mainstream school attend Chances more frequently. However, a few never attend and others do not attend as often as they can. This poor attendance does not enable these pupils to achieve well.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Requires improvement**

- The main focus of Chances is to help pupils in times of crisis and to support them to stay in mainstream education. The majority of placements are for six weeks. It is hard for the school's leaders to demonstrate what pupils' outcomes are because they do not get enough information from some of the placing schools about pupils' starting points. Also, the assessment systems across the schools that use Chances are not consistent.
- Talking with past and current pupils, parents, and placing school leaders, and looking at school records and pupils' work demonstrate that pupils' outcomes are inconsistent. They are best in English at both sites.
- Pupils' achievement is not good enough in mathematics at the Dawlish site. This is because work is not provided at the right level of challenge to enable pupils to make good progress. Pupils make appropriate progress in science at both sites.
- When pupils are well taught they make good progress. They are increasingly confident and show a willingness to make mistakes and to learn from them. In addition to the standard curriculum, pupils enjoy and benefit from being sports leaders, following a cooking course and planned opportunities to gain first-aid qualifications.
- Pupils who are appropriately placed, and who attend Chances as often as they can, make good progress. They successfully stay in mainstream education, continuing to blossom and thrive.
- As a result of the good quality and impartial careers advice, pupils are able to continue with their education when they leave school. They undertake courses that meet their desires and aspirations, including A levels and vocational courses.

## School details

Unique reference number	143407
DfE registration number	878/6066
Inspection number	10047186

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 school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	DYS Space, Chair Melanie Walker
Chair	Leon Winston
Headteacher	Brett Rowson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£70 to £500
Telephone number	01626 369283
Website	<a href="http://www.spacepsm.org/services/chances">www.spacepsm.org/services/chances</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:Brett.rowson@spacepsm.org">Brett.rowson@spacepsm.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school was registered on 17 July 2017. This is the first full inspection of the school.
- There is a headteacher with responsibility for the school.
- The school is governed by a local governing body which was formed in January 2018. The school's proprietor changed on 1 February 2017 to DYS Space Limited, a public-sector mutual company with charitable status, which delivers and supports youth services across Devon.
- The school operates on two sites. The initial site is at The Junction in Newton Abbot and the second site, Red Rock in Dawlish, opened in September 2017. Both sites have a

centre leader and are staffed by specialist qualified youth workers and teachers.

- The school provides education for up to 60 pupils aged 11 to 16, over both sites. All pupils are dual registered with mainstream schools throughout their time when involved with Chances.
- Chances is funded by commissioned places for pupils who are disengaged or experiencing difficulties in their mainstream school. Most are referred because they have displayed disruptive behaviour at their previous school. Most pupils attend six-week, full- and part-time placements. In addition, the school offers outreach work in schools and bespoke packages involving individual lengths of attendance and types of support.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited both sites.
- The inspectors worked with the school's leaders and other members of staff throughout the inspection. The inspectors conducted observations of pupils' learning, some jointly with staff. They met with the school's local governing body. They had discussions with the school's trustees, other schools working with Chances, and parents.
- The inspectors scrutinised the quality of pupils' work, and talked with past and current pupils about their work and life as part of this school.
- The inspectors took into account the 11 paper questionnaires from staff. There were no responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspectors considered a wide range of documentation to check compliance with independent school standards including the school's safeguarding records, policies, procedures, risk assessments and pupil-progress information.

## Inspection team

Steffi Penny, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Nicholson

Ofsted Inspector

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