

# The Derwen School

Whittington Road, Gobowen, Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 3NA

## Inspection dates

25–27 June 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The leadership of the school is impressive. In a very short time, leaders have established a caring culture. Pupils who have not attended education for a considerable time settle into school quickly.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils take part in practical learning alongside core subjects. Pupils make good progress across the curriculum from their individual starting points.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils are key strengths of the school. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum helps pupils to learn about themselves and others. Relationships throughout the school are positive.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school and of their achievements. Their conduct is exemplary. Pupils attend well and say they enjoy coming to school.
- Leaders and the proprietor have made sure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are appropriately trained and highly vigilant. They take swift action if there are concerns about pupils' safety. Pupils say they feel safe at school.
- The majority of teachers use information on pupils' prior learning and interests to plan and provide engaging lessons effectively. On occasion, teachers do not question pupils well enough or challenge the most able pupils to reach their potential.
- There are currently no post-16 students on roll. However, leaders have considered and outlined the curriculum. Plans show a range of broad and balanced experiences.
- Pupils arrive at the school with limited social experiences. Leaders carefully plan opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. As a result, pupils learn about and respect differences in people and cultures.

### 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 the quality of teaching by making sure that:
  - teachers consider pupils' prior learning to plan and deliver teaching that is consistently challenging for the most able pupils
  - teachers' questioning consistently deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Continue to develop the post-16 curriculum to make sure that students can access appropriate routes to prepare them for the future.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The proprietor has made sure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- In a very short space of time, leaders have established a caring culture. The ethos is shared by all members of the school community. Staff care deeply for pupils. Pupils who have previously missed a lot of education say they enjoy coming to school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and personalised to meet individual needs. Alongside core subjects, pupils access practical learning, including physical education, food technology, art and horticulture. As a result of a range of exciting opportunities, pupils regain an interest in learning.
- Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They set out high expectations for teaching and learning. Quality assurance processes are rigorous. Leaders identify strengths and areas for development. Teachers value their professional development and the support from leaders to improve. As a result, teaching across the school is consistently strong.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Adaptations are made to learning to ensure that pupils' academic, physical and sensory needs are met. Interventions are timely and appropriate. Pupils make good progress towards their personal targets.
- Pupils arrive at the school with limited social experiences. Leaders carefully plan opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social awareness. Pupils learn about other countries and customs. They learn to value and appreciate differences between themselves and others. School helps them to understand their own identity. Pupils who have previously experienced difficulties in social situations enjoy visits into the local community. They plan regular shopping trips and use budgeting skills.
- Professionals who place pupils at the school speak highly of the provision. They say that the school is quick to find solutions to support pupils. Communication from the school is good and frequent. Professionals are well informed on pupils' progress and attendance.
- Parents and carers are impressed with the school. They say the school has 'gone beyond their expectations' in helping their children to take part in learning. They would recommend the school to others.
- Currently, there are no post-16 students on roll. It is not possible therefore to evaluate the impact of the sixth form. Leaders have outlined potential opportunities, including vocational routes, work-related learning and GCSE courses for future students.

### Governance

- The arrangements for governance are effective. The work of the school is overseen by the chief executive officer, who is also the proprietor. The principal produces frequent, detailed reports on all aspects of the school's work. As a result, the proprietor has a precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Suitable areas to develop are identified, and subsequent action plans are appropriate to secure improvement.

- The proprietor is ambitious for all pupils. School leaders are challenged and supported by the organisation to make sure pupils receive a high-quality learning experience. Leaders at all levels want the best for pupils.
- The oversight of safeguarding is managed at board level. This additional scrutiny ensures that any concerns raised are followed up appropriately. Safeguarding is a high priority within the organisation.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy is comprehensive. It is written with regard to current legislation issued by the Secretary of State. It makes clear the processes to follow where there are concerns about a child. The policy is published on the school's website. Paper copies are available upon request.
- The school has two designated safeguarding officers. They are trained to an appropriate level and have a good understanding of their role. They are aware of risks within the local area. Leaders make sure that pupils have regular opportunities to learn how to keep safe. Pupils know about road safety and how to keep safe online.
- All staff are trained in child protection. They know how to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect. Staff are aware of the risks of child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and female genital mutilation. They are highly vigilant and quick to report anything of concern. Nothing is left to chance when it comes to the safety of pupils.
- Leaders carry out appropriate checks on staff's suitability to work with children before they join the school. The checks are recorded accurately on the school's single central record, which meets requirements.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive. Current pupils have had previous negative school experiences. They have not attended school for a considerable time. Teachers know about pupils' barriers to learning and make sure that learning is linked to their interests. Teachers create a warm, friendly atmosphere where pupils settle quickly and engage well in learning. Teaching evokes pupils' curiosity. Pupils want to come to school and they want to learn.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Routines are well established. Pupils are expected to come to school on time and work hard. Pupils display positive attitudes and show enthusiasm for their learning.
- In English, teachers engage pupils well through imaginative activities linked to their special interests. They learn how to develop descriptive writing skills and can write short creative stories, including an exciting football commentary. Pupils develop written skills over time. Their grammatical knowledge and use of punctuation improve over time.
- In mathematics, pupils learn how to weigh, measure and estimate. Teachers make sure that pupils can use these skills in other subjects, including food technology and horticulture. As a result, they learn to apply mathematical skills in practical settings.

- Pupils read every day. Teachers make sure that books are linked to pupils' personal interests. They engage well in a standardised reading scheme. Their interest in reading is improving over time. They read aloud fluently and attempt new words with confidence.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress across the curriculum. Teachers are quick to identify and support those who start to fall behind. Through appropriate targeted support, pupils progress quickly from mark-making to demonstrating greater pencil control and developing handwriting skills.
- The school provides accurate information for parents. As a result, parents and carers know what progress their child is making.
- Teachers provide feedback to pupils in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils' responses to feedback shows that they are proud of achieving their targets. This feedback is purposeful and used as a guidance tool to revisit previous learning with pupils. Pupils learn from their mistakes and commit to improving their work.
- Teachers know pupils well. The majority use previous information to plan and provide lessons based on what pupils already know and can already do. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. The majority use skilful questioning to secure learning and deepen pupils' knowledge, but this is not consistent. On occasion, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This limits the progress they make.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The welfare of pupils is a high priority in the school. Leaders make sure that the environment is safe and supportive. The induction for new pupils is exceptional. Staff go above and beyond to make sure pupils are welcomed. All pupils thrive in an environment where they are cared for, nurtured and understood. High levels of supervision ensure that pupils are looked after very well. Pupils who met with the inspector said they feel safe at school.
- Pupils make significant social and emotional progress. They arrive at the school with limited social experiences and struggle to forge relationships with others. The PSHE education curriculum is extremely effective. Pupils know how to keep safe. Pupils learn about friendships, identity and making healthy choices. As a result, they learn about themselves and the world around them extremely well.
- Staff know pupils well and are responsive to their needs. They make sure pupils have time, space and support. Learning spaces are appropriately adapted to ensure that pupils have personal areas in which to reflect. Staff consistently help pupils to develop techniques to regulate their emotions and overcome anxieties.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They are keen to showcase their work and talk about their achievements. For current pupils, this has been their first positive experience of learning.
- The school does not tolerate any form of bullying. The bullying policy is clear and followed by all staff. Pupils learn about being kind and helping others. They know that

bullying is unacceptable. The school reports no incidences of bullying. Pupils' responses to Ofsted's survey also show that this is the case.

- Pupils explore a range of career options appropriate to their future choices. Leaders have made links with the adjacent college to secure work experience opportunities in the garden centre and hospitality area. Leaders make sure that pupils receive impartial support. Pupils receive appropriate support to help them access opportunities.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils join the school following long periods of disengagement with learning. They often arrive with negative views of education. Current pupils demonstrated challenging behaviours in previous settings. Many have experienced multiple placements before joining the school.
- Staff have high expectations for positive behaviour. The behaviour policy is clear. It is applied consistently by all staff and understood by pupils. Pupils can make links between positive behaviour and positive experiences such as 'golden time'. As a result, parents, staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey say that behaviour is consistently good.
- Constructive relationships throughout the school underpin pupils' behaviour and conduct. All staff know pupils well. They can recognise when pupils are experiencing difficulties. They quickly adapt activities to make sure pupils are supported. Negative behaviour is rare. Staff manage incidents swiftly and pupils are supported well. Pupils can return to learning quickly. Over time, the number of behavioural incidents has decreased.
- Pupils learn how to recognise their own behavioural difficulties and how to manage them. They ask for help and tell teachers if they are struggling. As a result, pupils' anxieties decrease, and they thrive in a wholly supportive environment.
- Attendance for current pupils is high. Pupils who have previously missed long periods of school attend every day. School attendance for all pupils has significantly increased since being placed at the provision.
- There is a high focus on attending school on time. Leaders have high expectations and expect pupils to be punctual and ready to learn. Leaders work with parents and carers to promote good punctuality. Strategies are effective and linked to personal targets. As a result, punctuality has improved over time and poor punctuality has significantly decreased.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils can join the school at any point throughout the academic year. Some pupils arrive as late as Year 11. Prior to joining the school, all pupils have experienced disruption to their education. Pupils arrive with significant gaps in learning. Their literacy and numeracy skills are extremely low for their age. Staff quickly assess pupils upon arrival and adapt learning to help pupils to catch up. Pupils benefit from high-quality support. As a result, the majority of current pupils are on track to achieve their personal targets for English and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books shows a good level of progress from their starting points. Pupils' written skills develop well over time. For example, they use adjectives to make writing

more interesting and creative. They learn to write for a variety of purposes. Over time, they learn new words and develop a rich vocabulary. The majority of pupils make good progress across the curriculum. They are well prepared for the next phase of their learning or employment and training.

- The current cohort all have SEND and an EHC plan. Teachers make sure that pupils receive appropriate interventions. They quickly adapt learning and ensure that pupils are supported effectively. As a result, the vast majority of pupils make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Pupils arrive with reading ages that are significantly lower than their chronological ages. Pupils engage well in a range of genres matched to their own interests. They read aloud confidently, can talk about key characters and make informed predictions about what happens next in the story. Pupils' love of reading is developing quickly.

## School details

Unique reference number	146522
DfE registration number	893/6037
Inspection number	10100048

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 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Bryn Melyn Care Limited
Chair	Bob Yetzes
Principal	David Glaves
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,300
Telephone number	01952 504715
Website	<a href="https://thederwenschool.org.uk/">https://thederwenschool.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:education.derwin@brynmelyncare.com">education.derwin@brynmelyncare.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The Derwen School is located in a village near Oswestry. The school is managed by the Bryn Melyn Care Group. The school occupies buildings that were formerly part of the adjacent specialist college of further education.



- The school consists of several generic classrooms, a multi-purpose dining area, sensory quiet space, first-aid room, kitchen and office/administration area. Pupils have regular access to the college's sports field and swimming pool.
- The school offers up to 44 places for pupils aged 11 to 18 years, with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and specifically moderate to severe learning difficulties. Current pupils have an EHC plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by local authorities, including Telford and Wrekin and Cheshire East.
- The pre-registration inspection took place in December 2018. The school opened in January 2019. The school admitted its first pupils in April 2019. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school offers places to post-16 students. At the time of inspection, there were no post-16 students on roll. Consequently, there was insufficient evidence about teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare and outcomes for the sixth form. No judgement was made about this aspect of the provision.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with a day's notice.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the assistant principal and the chief executive officer, who is also the proprietor. The inspector also spoke with pupils. A telephone conversation was held with a local authority professional responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- The inspector observed lessons across the curriculum, including English, mathematics, PSHE education and science. Work in pupils' books was also reviewed across several subjects, including art, mathematics, science, PSHE education and English.
- The inspector toured the premises accompanied by the principal.
- Several key policies were examined, including safeguarding, complaints, admissions, behaviour and the curriculum. The inspector also reviewed the school's admissions register.
- A small number of responses to Ofsted's survey for parents and pupils were considered. Seven responses to Ofsted's survey for staff were also considered.

## Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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