

Pivot Academy

Rawfolds Way, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire BD19 5LJ

Inspection dates

16–18 January 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor, governors and school leaders are highly committed to ensuring that pupils flourish both academically and personally. As a result, they have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- School leaders and staff successfully prioritise the establishment of positive relationships with parents and carers.
- The school provides an oasis of calm for pupils who have previously experienced disruption to their schooling. This makes a significant difference to pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Staff use a range of suitable assessments to inform their planning. This means that they are able to cater effectively for pupils' different starting points and needs.
- There are notable improvements in pupils' attendance and behaviour after they join the school.
- Most pupils make good progress in a range of subjects from when they join the school. Pupils' achievement in art and photography is exceptional.
- There are effective procedures in place to further improve the quality of teaching.
- The provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has some small variabilities.
- The school's systems for tracking pupils' progress are not fully embedded. Pupils' academic targets are not always sufficiently aspirational.
- Arrangements for governance need further strengthening.
- School leaders do not do enough to develop pupils' literacy skills, in particular their reading.

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?

- Increase the rate of pupils' learning and progress by:
 - further developing the school's assessment systems so that staff are able to provide higher levels of challenge to all pupils
 - continuing to enhance the provision for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, so that there is consistently strong practice across all areas of the school
 - improving pupils' literacy skills, with particular emphasis on developing their reading skills
 - ensuring that pupils' attendance and behaviour continues to improve.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders carry out the planned expansion of the governing body, to increase their skills and ability to provide additional challenge to leaders.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and his core team of leaders are brave, visionary and ambitious. They ensure that all the independent school standards are met. Leaders have a cohesive approach to ensuring that the school provides a safe haven for pupils with multiple needs. As a result, pupils who join the school begin to thrive.
- Staff at the school successfully build strong relationships with parents and carers. Leaders and key workers hold regular, sometimes daily, face-to-face meetings with parents and carers. This results in effective transition arrangements, and gives pupils time to build their confidence when they arrive at Pivot Academy.
- School leaders have embedded a 'can-do' culture. Pupils are at the heart of the school. The proprietor's vision and enthusiasm filter through the school. The majority of pupils and staff are highly supportive of the school's leaders.
- The school's commitment to equalities is commendable. Leaders ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils, regardless of what has happened previously. Some pupils are dual-registered so that they have the opportunity to return to their schools, if appropriate.
- There are effective performance management systems in place. Leaders have a secure understanding of how teaching can improve. This results in a programme of tailored professional development for staff.
- Local school leaders and other professionals are highly complimentary about the provision at Pivot Academy. One said, 'Overall, Pivot offer exceptional support and guidance.'
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It incorporates some extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to catch up with their work. The curriculum supports the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. The curriculum is enriched by additional opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in practice.
- The coordinator for SEN is knowledgeable and experienced. Until very recently, she has had limited time to carry out her role. Consequently, work to identify and plan for pupils' needs is less well embedded in the Pivot 6 temporary provision.
- Leaders do not have a comprehensive overview of pupils' starting points when they enter the school. Leaders are aware of this, and the school's system for recording assessments has recently been updated. Currently, pupils' academic targets do not always reflect the need to make up for their previously lost learning.
- The Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to consider, as part of the standard inspection, a material change to increase the school's age range to 12 to 16 years. A highly skilled leader and other resources are in place to accommodate the school's request for a material change. The premises are fit for purpose. The updated curriculum and associated schemes of work reflect the requirements for new Year 8 pupils. Suitable arrangements are in place to accommodate any Year 8 pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards if the material change is implemented.

Governance

- The chair of the governing body has a comprehensive view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She, in conjunction with leaders, has devised a suitable school improvement plan which focuses on the right issues. There is no hint of complacency among governors.
- Governors ensure that external funding is spent appropriately and reported back to the local authority. They provide bespoke support for individual pupils based on genuine need. Governors have a worthy ambition to gradually reduce the amount of support required for pupils, in line with the progress that they make.
- Governors recognise that they need to expand the skills and experience of the newly established governing body. At present, too many governors are also staff at the school. Consequently, governors do not always provide sufficient challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders take their responsibility for safeguarding very seriously. An appropriate safeguarding policy is in place, which takes account of the latest statutory requirements. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's temporary website; the policy is also available on request, to parents and carers, and implemented in practice.
- The human resources manager has well-organised safer recruitment procedures. She quickly corrected some minor administrative errors on the single central record.
- The designated safeguarding leader and his team have a high level of expertise, including trained social workers. The team reacts immediately to any potential concerns and is vigilant in ensuring that appropriate action is taken by external agencies. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- All staff, including those who are recently appointed, have undergone child protection and a range of other relevant health and safety training. They know that safeguarding is 'never somebody else's problem'. They are aware of the statutory 'Prevent' duty. As a result, staff know how to keep pupils safe. They are alert to a range of issues, including potential signs of radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.
- Staff work highly effectively with pupils who reach a crisis point. All staff are experts in de-escalation techniques and leaders rarely need to restrain or exclude pupils. Pupils swiftly re-engage in their learning as a result.
- There are thorough procedures in place to check on the safety of pupils' work experience placements. The school's risk assessments are secure and appropriately tailored for individual pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- All staff take account of pupils' starting points and needs when planning lessons. As a result, the most able pupils are provided with activities that stretch and challenge them. The least able pupils receive appropriate support that enables them to work independently.

- Teaching is characterised by strong, respectful relationships between pupils and teachers. This results in a culture of mutual trust where pupils gradually become confident to learn. Pupils who have previously disengaged with learning start to thrive.
- Teachers use creative questioning to help pupils understand better. Pupils respond well to their gentle approach. Pupils visibly grow in confidence when they answer correctly.
- Teachers take every opportunity to help pupils apply their learning in practice. For example, on a recent visit to Bretton Hall, pupils completed activities relating to estimating, map-reading, photography and health and fitness. This helps pupils to understand the purpose of their learning in the classroom.
- The quality of pupils' work in the creative arts is of a high standard. For example, key stage 3 pupils make tie-dyed t-shirts. At key stage 4, they produce stunning photographs with the support of a professional photographer. Pupils are highly engaged in their learning and this results in raised self-esteem.
- Most teachers take opportunities to embed numeracy in pupils' work. For example, in computing, pupils carry out calculations and check them using a spreadsheet. Pupils know how to draw and label graphs in subjects other than mathematics.
- The provision for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is variable across the three provisions. At the Cleckheaton site, and in the 'bungalow', the provision is strong. However, at 'Pivot 6', support for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is less well developed.
- Pupils do not undertake regular homework. However, school leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn after school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils receive exceptional care and support from the moment they join the school. The restorative ethos and culture supports the development of pupils' social and emotional skills. Pupils start to develop their self-esteem.
- Pupils receive highly practical support for nicotine addiction. For example, pupils who arrive at the school as smokers are quickly identified and put on a smoking cessation programme with the school nurse. In the short time since starting at the school, some pupils have already reduced their smoking habit.
- Pupils learn about the importance of relationships in their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. Some pupils have worked successfully as volunteers at a local church coffee morning. Pupils say that, since coming to the school, they have learned 'respect for each other and for staff'.
- The school teaches pupils effectively about all aspects of keeping safe, including online safety. Pupils explore moral issues such as the consequences of using mobile phones while driving. Pupils have a secure understanding of the risks of giving their details online and the inappropriate nature of sexting.

- Pupils have a daily reflection session with their individual key worker. This encourages pupils to think about what has happened during the day and consider how they can become even more successful learners.
- Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of the rule of law and tolerance of others. Pupils know that racism and homophobia are unacceptable. Some pupils are less well informed about other aspects of British values, such as the parliamentary process and democracy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils agree that behaviour is good. Pupils say that staff are 'on to you' immediately. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour rarely escalate further.
- Most staff reinforce the school's high expectations of behaviour and learning. Staff continually provide pupils with proportionate praise and reward. Most pupils respond well to this and their learning is rarely interrupted.
- Pupils' overall attendance is lower than that of other secondary schools nationally. Some pupils are regularly absent. Leaders take some well-considered actions to encourage pupils to attend. After starting at Pivot Academy, most pupils' attendance improves significantly compared to their attendance at their previous school. Pupils with SEN and/or disabilities attend in line with their peers.
- Pupils report that bullying occurs occasionally but is dealt with effectively by staff. The school's bullying records confirm that bullying is taken seriously by school leaders.
- Pupils conduct themselves well on corridors and in recreational areas. They are punctual to lessons. During breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils are appropriately supervised by staff. Adults work pro-actively to engage pupils in social activity and conversation.
- Very occasionally, pupils use graffiti in their books. Staff take quick action to ensure that pupils understand the importance of demonstrating pride in their work.
- On some rare occasions, the school's systems for behaviour management are not applied consistently by all staff. For example, not all staff challenge pupils' inappropriate language.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders successfully prioritise pupils' academic achievement, alongside their emotional growth. Leaders use a range of suitable assessments for pupils when they enter the school. This ensures that staff have a rounded picture of a pupil's potential, rather than a snapshot.
- Pupils join the school at various ages, often after disruption to their education. Most pupils currently at the school make strong progress from their starting points in a range of different subjects.
- The school is diligent in ensuring that they support pupils' emotional development. Pupils gradually become independent and resilient. Staff identify a realistic development journey

that supports pupils' future lives. The school makes a marked difference to pupils who would otherwise have nowhere to go.

- Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education. They benefit from a range of visiting speakers, college visits and access to independent, impartial careers advice. Pupils who attend work experience placements talk with pride about their achievements at work.
- Pupils typically enter the school with levels of achievement that are lower than those associated with their age. Pupils follow suitable entry-level courses in literacy, numeracy and computing as well as a range of GCSEs. The school's assessment information, supported by pupils' work, demonstrates that the majority of pupils make good progress in a short period of time across a range of subjects, including geography and art.
- Pupils with SEN and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers in school. As a result, they are starting to catch up with pupils nationally with the same starting points.
- Pupils make strong progress in English. Teachers emphasise the importance of spelling and punctuation. The most able pupils are given frequent opportunities for extended writing.
- In mathematics, current pupils make good progress from their starting points. They have opportunities to reason and use problem-solving. As a result, they are able to apply their knowledge to real-life situations.
- The majority of pupils in 'Pivot 6' temporary provision make good progress across subjects. Staff ensure that they are well prepared emotionally for integration into their new secondary schools.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to improve their literacy skills. There is a regular reading session in the morning, but the activity is not always well suited to pupils' needs. Pupils with low literacy skills are not encouraged to have a reading book. In 'Pivot 6', pupils rarely attempt extended writing. As a result, some pupils do not make enough progress in their reading.

School details

Unique reference number	144857
DfE registration number	382/6008
Inspection number	10044626

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	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Michael Smith
Chair	Lesley Boyd
Headteacher	Andrew Kitterick
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,650 – £35,000
Telephone number	01484 766350
Website	www.pivot-group.uk
Email address	info@pivot-group.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Pivot Academy is a secondary day school which caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion. Pupils have often experienced significant disruption to their education prior to attending the school. The school's vision is to identify an alternative education pathway for students through 'high-quality assessment, identification of need and a focus on outcomes'.
- The school is located on two sites. Key stage 4 pupils are at the Cleckheaton site, which opened in September 2017. There are two buildings on the Bradley site: the 'bungalow', which opened in December 2017, caters for pupils in Years 8 and 9; and 'Pivot 6', which

provides temporary provision for pupils who have been permanently excluded from their school and are waiting to start at a new school.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- There are too few pupils eligible for pupil premium and enhanced pupil premium funding to identify them in this report.
- A new interim headteacher took up his post two days prior to the inspection.
- The school was registered by the Department for Education on 22 August 2017. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days.
- The lead inspector toured the premises on the two sites, to ensure that the premises are meeting the relevant independent school standards.
- The inspectors spoke informally with pupils and staff during the inspection. They also held meetings with a group of pupils on each site.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the proprietor and other senior leaders. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the governing body on the telephone.
- Inspectors, accompanied by senior leaders, toured a variety of lessons across each site. An inspector observed pupils reading. Inspectors also examined pupils' work in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and 13 responses to the pupil survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, evidence from the school's own parental survey was taken into consideration.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's policy and procedures; performance management documentation; the school's own self-evaluation and school improvement plan; minutes of the first governing body meeting; and the school's own assessment information.
- The lead inspector checked the school's temporary website to confirm that the required policies are available to parents, including the safeguarding policy.
- The Department for Education commissioned Ofsted, as part of this inspection, to consider the school's application to make a material change to increase the age range of pupils to 12 to 16.

Inspection team

Julia Wright, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Reeves

Her Majesty's Inspector

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