

Inspection of Cardrew Court School

Cardrew Industrial Estate, Cardrew Way, Redruth, Cornwall TR15 1SS

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 June 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Cardrew Court School is a place of healing and reintegration for its pupils. Pupils arrive following long periods out of education. Most settle quickly and re-engage in their education positively. Staff share high aspirations. They seek to secure positive learning experiences for pupils. Pupils study personalised programmes, built around a precisely considered core curriculum. They commit to their learning because they know staff care about their success. Most pupils go on to improve their attendance and achieve well.

Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff. Staff promote care, tolerance and respect. Discriminatory or unkind behaviour is not tolerated. Pupils say that bullying is very rare, if it ever happens. They know who they can speak to if they are worried. Consequently, pupils are safe.

Established routines and high expectations help pupils to experience success. As a result, the school is calm, and lessons are purposeful. Although exceptionally rare, when pupils are reluctant to learn, staff know what to do. This helps pupils to manage their own feelings and refocus on learning successfully. Collectively, this helps pupils to develop positive attitudes about school and their learning. They also learn how to maintain relationships and recognise their own self-worth.

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

The school has secured an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils arrive following fragmented periods in their education. Many have been out of school for years. The school works closely with its in-house therapists and the local authority to identify pupils' individual needs swiftly. Once identified, the school develops personalised programmes of study for individual pupils. Skilled teachers and support staff utilise strong relationships to help deliver the curriculum effectively. Useful strategies, including the unrelenting focus on improving vocabulary, enhance pupils' learning well. As a result, pupils learn key subject content with increasing success.

Clearly identified knowledge is sequenced carefully in most subjects. Teachers ensure they look to adapt lessons to meet individual needs sharply and address gaps in pupils' learning. However, some subjects are newer in development than others and are less skilfully delivered. Where this is the case, staff are not fully secure in knowing what to teach pupils and when. This means that pupils do not learn new knowledge as methodically as in the more established subjects. Similarly, the checks staff make on pupils' knowledge are less precise where subjects are newer in development. As a result, on occasion, gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions go unnoticed and so unaddressed.

Pupils' reading is prioritised. The reading curriculum is sequenced carefully and underpinned by high-quality texts. Staff use timely checks to ensure pupils build on what they already know and can do. Pupils in the early stages of reading are

identified early. They learn phonics step by step and with success. Many pupils say they love reading and the books and stories that staff share with them.

Pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, due to their needs, pupils' overall attendance can be low. The school works closely with every family, alongside other external services, to remove barriers to better attendance. As a result, nearly all pupils attend more regularly than was previously the case. For some, their attendance is significantly better than in the past. Staff use their deep knowledge of pupils' needs to ensure they promote positive behaviour and attitudes effectively. Pupils respond positively to the excellent relationships that are secured and behave well.

The promotion of pupils' personal development is strong. Staff ensure that pupils have a rich experience of their local community. In lessons, pupils discuss beliefs and values through religious studies and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. This helps to develop pupils' moral compasses and preparation for adult life in modern Britain. Pupils receive useful and well-considered careers advice. The school ensures that pupils' views and opinions are used to make positive adaptations to the wider opportunities that are available. For example, pupils benefit from a growing number of clubs and extra-curricular trips and visits set up directly on the back of pupils' interests and aspirations.

The leadership of the school is very effective. Leaders have looked to make the best use of useful external support from the Special Partnership Trust and local authority to enhance their work since opening the school. The governing body provides insightful challenge to ensure that the school's values are realised in practice. Useful policy and practice, including the drawing up and implementation of a published accessibility plan, reflect leader's ambition for pupils. As a result, the independent school standards (the standards) are met fully and over time and the school meets schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor has ensured that the school's plans for growth align with the needs of the local authority. Collectively, leaders have an efficiently conceived plan to ensure that this growth does not have a negative effect on the strength of provision that has been established since the school opened. Staff share leaders' ambition. Many rightly believe that leaders consider their well-being and support them to do better. Consequently, the school is continuously improving.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The delivery of the curriculum is stronger in some subjects than others. This means pupils learn and remember more in some subjects compared to others. The school should continue to embed and develop the curriculum so that its delivery is consistently strong and pupils learn more and remember more across all subjects.
- The checks made by staff to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge is variable. This means that, occasionally, pupils have gaps in their knowledge or misconceptions that go unaddressed. The school should strengthen the checks that staff make on pupils' knowledge so that gaps are identified swiftly and addressed consistently.

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

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

School details

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| Unique reference number | 150803 |
| DfE registration number | 908/6013 |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 10374886 |
| Type of school | Other Independent Special School |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 32 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Cardrew School Operations Ltd |
| Chair | Jeffrey Jenner |
| Headteacher | Kerry Towers |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £55,000 |
| Telephone number | 01209912126 |
| Website | www.cardrewcourt.org |
| Email address | office@cardrewcourt.org |

Information about this school

- Cardrew Court School is an independent special day school in Cornwall. It provides education for pupils with SEND and a primary need of social, emotional or mental health needs. Some pupils have other needs, including autism.
- The school is registered for up to 32 pupils aged between 7 and 16 years of age.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school opened in September 2024. It provides education from the same address, namely: Cardrew Industrial Estate, Cardrew Way, Redruth, Cornwall TR15 1SS.
- The school commissions support from the Special Partnership Trust.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the proprietor, governors and strategic leaders, including the headteacher, who is also responsible for safeguarding and behaviour. They also spoke to the chief executive officer from the Special Partnership Trust and a representative from the admitting local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PSHE and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils and spoke with pupils informally during lessons and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors made tours of the premises and reviewed a range of school documents in order to check the school's compliance with the standards. They also looked at the school's plans relating to its material change application.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**
- The school is currently registered for up to 32 pupils aged between 7 to 16 years old. The proprietor wishes to change the maximum number of pupils the school can admit, from 32 up to 88 pupils.
- The proprietor has refurbished more of the school's current accommodation to a very high standard. This is sufficient to allow for the proposed extra pupils. The school has also considered a systematic plan to increase the current role incrementally and slowly should the proprietor's application be approved. The proprietor has sensibly worked with the local authority to ensure the material change can meet local need.

Information about the material change inspection

- This part of the inspection was commissioned by the DfE in response to the proprietor's request to change the maximum number of pupils from 32 to 88.
- This is the first time the school has applied for this particular material change.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to assess whether the school is likely to meet the independent school standards. Inspectors gathered this information alongside normal standard inspection activities.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Burgess

Ofsted Inspector

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