

Inspection of Stroud and Cotswold Alternative Provision School

Belle Vue Centre, Belle Vue Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 1JP

Inspection dates: 23–24 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The Stroud and Cotswold Alternative Provision School is calm and orderly. Pupils who come here have often had negative experiences of education. Some have not felt safe in school before. When new pupils arrive, staff welcome them, give them a fresh start and a safe place to learn. Staff are experts at building strong, positive relationships with pupils. This helps new pupils settle down quickly and it allows them to rebuild confidence in their ability to learn.

A quote from a message from a parent to the headteacher sums up this approach. 'I feel that you have had a critical role in helping my child settle and feel safe, enabling them to begin to thrive and fulfil the potential I know they have. Thank you for giving them another opportunity and seeing past the behaviour they have displayed at times.'

Whether a pupil attends for a short time or until the end of Year 11, there is an expectation that they will work hard. This school is not just about helping pupils behave better. It is about achieving academic qualifications. As a Year 11 pupil told us, 'This is a good learning environment.'

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

The headteacher is passionate about providing a high-quality education for pupils at this school. The leadership team have designed an appropriate curriculum. This provides pupils with a range of academic and vocational opportunities, as well as a focus on personal development.

Highly skilled specialist teachers help pupils to re-engage with learning. Teachers adapt the curriculum so that pupils who have fallen behind with their education can quickly gain the knowledge they have missed. However, in some instances, with teachers who are not specialists in the subject, this is less effective. Support staff provide expert help for pupils. This helps pupils to improve their attitude to learning.

There is an expectation that pupils who remain at the school will gain academic qualifications which prepare them for leaving school. In key stage 4, careers guidance is well organised. A former pupil who spoke to inspectors said, 'I'm glad I came here. Without this place, I would never have got an apprenticeship.' In key stage 3, the careers guidance curriculum is not so well structured.

For those pupils who attend the school for a short time, the curriculum is tailored with an emphasis on personal development. Staff help pupils to recognise their poor attitudes that they need to change. The aim is for them to return successfully to mainstream schools.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum that provides a wide range of experiences beyond academic lessons. Pupils learn to treat people with respect. They learn about different cultures and lifestyles. The school council gives them

experience of democracy. Visiting speakers give pupils an understanding of current issues, such as knife crime. There are opportunities to learn to play music. Pupils attend a local carpentry workshop to learn woodworking skills.

Reading forms an important part of the school day for pupils. In the primary class, pupils are well supported to become confident readers. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to adapt the curriculum and provide each pupil with a personalised reading plan. Staff support pupils who have gaps in their understanding to gain the skills they need to improve their reading. In all classes, there is time set aside for reading every day. In these sessions, teachers join pupils in reading a range of texts. This approach helps to keep a sharp focus on the importance of reading – both for pleasure and readiness for the world of work.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Well-presented work in well cared for books demonstrates how pupils value their education. Behaviour and attitudes in lessons are positive. On rare occasions when a pupil struggles to stay engaged in lessons, skilled staff ensure that other pupils are not disturbed.

Pupils' attendance continues to be a challenge for the school. Staff use a wide range of strategies to encourage pupils to attend regularly. For many pupils, this has a positive impact on their attendance. For these pupils, their attendance improves. However, there are some pupils whose attendance remains very low.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safety and well-being of pupils are at the heart of the school's work. Leaders take their responsibilities for pupils' safety very seriously. All staff receive appropriate training, which means that they know what to do to keep pupils safe.

Daily staff meetings provide opportunities for the sharing of concerns. Leaders follow up any concerns over pupils' safety quickly. They record these concerns thoroughly and have good links with other agencies to support pupils' welfare.

Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to talk to if they have any concerns. Parents are confident that their pupils are safe at school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's individualised approach to delivering the curriculum helps pupils to fill gaps in their learning. Specialist teachers use expert subject knowledge to adapt lessons. This approach helps to meet the needs of individual pupils. In lessons taught by non-specialist teachers, more-limited subject knowledge reduces the effectiveness of this approach. Leaders must take action to support

non-specialist teachers to develop the subject knowledge necessary to deliver an individualised curriculum.

- Careers guidance in key stage 4 is well organised. It is effective at helping pupils prepare for the next stage of their education. In key stage 3, the careers guidance programme lacks the same level of organisation. The key stage 3 curriculum contains elements of careers guidance, but it lacks the structure and sequencing found at key stage 4. Leaders should take action to improve the planning and delivery of careers guidance in key stage 3.
- Attendance remains an issue. Leaders use home visits by school staff, and other agencies, to check that absent pupils are safe. The use of short-term reduced timetables helps pupils who have been absent for a long time to re-engage with their education. However, the attendance of some pupils remains very low. Leaders must continue to find ways to work with these pupils so that they engage in education.

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 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](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	135331
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10111474
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	6 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Appropriate authority	Management committee
Chair	Jonathan Bell
Headteacher	Nick Stanton
Website	www.scaps.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 July 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the role of the management committee has changed. It is solely responsible for this school and has no role concerning other alternative provision in the county.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders, a group of staff, a representative from Gloucestershire County Council and members of the management committee.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's procedures for recruiting staff. Inspectors also considered the quality of staff training, and the procedures that are in place to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils before school and at lunchtime. Inspectors met formally with a group of key stage 4 pupils.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives into the following subjects: mathematics, English and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. This involved a meeting with subject leaders, visits to a sample of lessons in these subjects, work

scrutiny of books and discussions with teachers and with pupils from the lessons observed.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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