

The Annex House School

Independent special school standard inspection report

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Reporting <input type="checkbox"/> nspector	Greg Sorrell
Social care inspector	Lucy Ansell

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.^{1, 2}

An inspection of the care provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for children's homes. This inspection took place at the same time but the full report is published separately on Ofsted's website and should be read in conjunction with this report which covers the educational registration of the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Annex House School is a special school located on the same site as the children's home where the pupils live. It provides education for pupils who have special educational needs relating to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and other learning needs. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are currently five pupils on roll aged between 10 and 16, all of whom are in local authority care, although two stay with their families at various times during the week. The school, part of J & R Care Limited, first opened in March 2006 and was registered in March 2007. The education provision was last inspected in December 2007 and the most recent full care inspection was in December 2009. The school's stated aims include providing a safe, secure environment in which learners feel valued in order to progress with both academic and social learning.

EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL

The Annex House School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. All of them have experienced significant disruption in their personal lives and each has a very fragmented educational history. The school helps them to re-engage with schooling and thus meets its aims. The curriculum and the quality of teaching and assessment are satisfactory. The school's safeguarding arrangements are good. The school has improved since the last inspection and meets the vast majority of the regulations.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. All subjects of the National Curriculum are offered, suitably adjusted to meet the needs of those pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The curriculum is supported by relevant policies and schemes of work drawn from national guidance at each key stage. There is an appropriate emphasis on the promotion of pupils' personal development as well as their basic skills in literacy and numeracy, although they are not taught discretely every day. The subjects of the National Curriculum are taught throughout the week with a focus on personalised learning and work experience when available. Where appropriate, schemes of work relate to the requirements of examination boards, including GCSE, BTEC awards and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) bronze, silver and gold awards. The timetable is determined by the presence of specialist staff, for example creative arts work and specialist physical education programmes take place on particular days. Appropriate consideration is given to the needs of pupils working at a different key stage to the majority of pupils. Individual education plans take account of the full range of factors impacting on pupils' learning and behaviour. These plans also involve external agencies who provide a range of therapies. There are clear behavioural targets for pupils and they understand what they have to do to improve. There are some good examples within the plans of precisely set targets in English, but not all target setting is of such high quality. The care staff provide at least one residential school journey a year which provides well for pupils' personal development and for their skill development in outdoor activities.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge in their specialist areas and there are specialist external staff for physical education. The teaching staff have adequate subject knowledge for the wide range of other subjects they teach. Lesson planning is satisfactory overall and results in worthwhile experiences. Exceptions to this in some respects are the end-of-day physical education lessons on four days a week. Whilst these sessions are enjoyed and lead to successful outcomes, they lack planning, which results in time not always being used effectively as it might be. The most successful lessons build upon pupils' prior knowledge and teachers' astute use of probing questions. Where learning is less successful, pupils' preferred learning styles are not taken sufficiently into account and there is an over-reliance on written work, which the pupils are often reluctant to undertake. The management of pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and in most cases learning resumes after disruptions in class. A key factor in this regard is the positive relationship between pupils and care staff who act as classroom assistants. Staff make the best use of the classroom resources available to them and a loan agreement with another local school meets any shortfalls in the school's own stock.

The assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory. Teachers make appropriate use of national guidance and that provided by examination boards. There are good examples of constructive marking that shows pupils how to improve their work. Less

useful are the targets for improvement in written reports on pupils' work, especially where these are behavioural in nature and do not sufficiently indicate to pupils how to advance academically. The pupils make satisfactory progress overall by the end of Key Stage 4, achieving external accreditation through GCSE and Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awards in addition to BTEC and ASDAN. However, in art and physical education the pupils make outstanding progress due to improved attendance, attitudes and specialist teaching.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The majority of pupils indicate that they enjoy school although this is not always reflected in their attendance and punctuality, which are nonetheless satisfactory overall. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and there is strong evidence of enjoyment and achievement in lessons, particularly the accredited courses in art and physical education. At other times, their relationships with peers and staff are fragile and reflect a lack of respect which impedes the quality of learning and the progress they make. However, there are occasions when some pupils refuse to become distracted and maintain their studies. They know and understand the school's rewards and sanctions policies, although occasionally their demand for rewards undermines the staff's ability to acknowledge positive behaviour as and when it occurs. The tutorial programme enables pupils to reflect upon their behaviour at regular intervals, but there are no opportunities for pupils to show responsibility during the school day. The pupils are also encouraged to reflect upon their behaviour and progress at the assembly at the end of the week. They all know their behavioural targets and recognise room for improvement. The curriculum, including the personal, social, health and citizenship programme, provides adequate opportunities for the pupils to consider the wider elements of British society and institutions. These include aspects of Black history and multicultural influences on art and literature. Regular visits from qualified staff assist their understanding of the requirements for a safe and healthy lifestyle. The pupils have a range of responsibilities in the home, such as keeping their rooms tidy and thereby making a contribution to their own community. A number of pupils also have friendships out of school hours in the local community. The role of school prefects has been adopted by pupils at times although with only limited sustained success.

WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. There are appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the safety of pupils on- and off-site, for example when going on visits to the local community and on residential school journeys. Safeguarding procedures are good and fully compliant with requirements. There are appropriate policies for child protection and safe recruitment of staff. All staff are regularly trained at appropriate levels in matters relating to child protection.

Registers of attendance and records of incidents and accidents are appropriately kept. However, the school does not maintain an admission register as required. The pupils enjoy healthy meals and access to regular exercise. Regular visits from external agencies, including nursing staff and therapists, ensure that the pupils' medical needs are met. All pupils have individual care plans with a strong focus on their personal development and behavioural needs. The pupils say they are able to talk to staff if they have concerns. Residential staff support learning in classrooms and attend 'house meetings' to review the day. These meetings are not attended by teachers, which reduces their effectiveness. Regular maintenance ensures that any damage is promptly remedied. Incidents and accidents are properly recorded. Fire safety equipment is routinely tested and fire drills are carried out when the pupils are in their home. However, fire drills have not been carried out in the school during the taught day. The school fulfils its responsibilities well in respect of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

SUITABILITY OF STAFF, SUPPLY STAFF AND PROPRIETORS

The school has clear, rigorous and well-established procedures for checking the suitability of all staff. All the required checks have been appropriately completed and are recorded in a single central register as required.

PREMISES OF AND ACCOMMODATION AT THE SCHOOL

The school's premises and accommodation enable safe and effective learning. They are well maintained and in good decorative order. The school now has two classrooms that are suitable in size for the number of pupils currently on roll. One has sufficient computers for individual use and the other room is suitable for practical activities such as art. Wall displays are informative and also include examples of pupils' work that celebrate achievement. The ground floor of the residential accommodation provides suitable facilities for dining, food technology and administration. If pupils are ill during the school day they are able to go to their bedrooms, which are nearby. The outdoor area provides ample opportunities for safe play and good use is made of a local park and sports facilities to support the curriculum.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

The school provides all parents, carers and referring authorities with accurate and up-to-date information. The recently revised prospectus is an informative document and there is also useful guidance for pupils and parents to assist transition to care. Written reports, including those provided by care staff and for the annual review of pupils' statements of special educational needs, give a clear overview of how the pupils' behaviour is developing. The reports also describe what has been taught but

sometimes provide too little information about the pupils' academic progress and future targets. All other required information provided to parents, carers and outside bodies is appropriate. No views on the school were received from placing authorities; however, one parent reported that they were satisfied with the information received.

MANNER IN WHICH COMPLAINTS ARE TO BE HANDLED

The school has appropriate policies and procedures that fully meet requirements.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BOARDING PROVISION

The care provision was judged to be satisfactory and national minimum standards were met. A full report on the care provision is available on Ofsted's website and should be viewed in conjunction with this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005⁴ by having regular fire drills from the school premises (paragraph 13)
- maintain a school admission register (paragraph 17).

Please see the report on Ofsted's website relating to the care provision in the children's home which should be read in conjunction with this report.

WHAT THE SCHOOL COULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051541.htm

- ensure in all lessons a sharper match of teachers' lesson planning to pupils' individual needs
- improve the quality and use of academic targets in lesson planning and pupils' reports so that the pupils may better understand how to improve their work
- provide more opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility and make choices during the school day
- include all teaching staff in the house meetings where the pupils' behaviour is discussed.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			√	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			√	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			√	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			√	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			√	
The behaviour of pupils			√	

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			√	
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The quality of boarding provision

Effectiveness of boarding provision			√	
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SCHOOL DETAILS

School status	Independent
Type of school	Special school for pupils who have special educational needs relating to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and other learning needs
Date school opened	March 2006
Age range of pupils	10–16 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	5
Number of boarders	5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils who are looked after	5
Annual fees (boarders)	£184,000
Telephone number	01322 618776
Email address	jnparish@aol.com
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Parish
Proprietor	Mrs Jane Parish