

Weston – Green Corns

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Terry McKenzie
Social care inspector	Stephen Trainor

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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

Weston - Green Corns is a very small independent special school and children's home which is part of the Continuum Group. The school was established in 2006. It aims to provide care and education in a safe environment for girls and boys between the ages of 10 and 18 years who may or may not experience learning difficulties. There is currently one student on roll. Weston can accommodate students who have a statement of special educational needs. No students currently have a statement of special educational needs. It is expected that the young people who live in the home also attend the school that is situated within the home. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2007 whilst the previous inspection of the children's home was undertaken in January 2010.

Evaluation of the school

Weston - Green Corns meets all of the regulations for an independent school and is successful in meeting its declared aims. Teaching and students' progress are satisfactory and lead to the school providing a satisfactory quality of education. The school has improved since the last inspection in its provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is now good. Provision for students' welfare, health and safety has improved also since the last inspection and is good. Students are safeguarded and protected by robust practices and procedures. The children's home provides a good quality of provision.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good because it is carefully designed to enable all students to learn and make progress. Curriculum documents such as policies, plans and schemes of work are very thorough so that the peripatetic teachers serving the school can concentrate on planning to help individual students. The curriculum is particularly

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

designed to help those with special educational needs to settle quickly and engage with lessons. An emphasis is placed on helping students to improve their basic skills in literacy and numeracy and on promoting their personal development through personal, social and health education. The promotion of these essential skills for life continues beyond the school day so that students receive valuable help and support in learning about how to move on to the next stages of their lives through working with members of the boarding staff.

Full and detailed placement plans are produced by the boarding team and sensible targets are set to encourage the students to become more independent. For example, students learn how to manage their money through shopping and they are supported by boarding staff in becoming more confident about accessing public services such as libraries and sports centres. Opportunities are provided for students to learn about the world of work. For example, college placements are arranged to suit their individual needs whilst supported work experience is a regular event for the older students. There are strong links with the Connexions agency for careers guidance. Much attention is given to experiencing success so that students can gain confidence in their learning and acquire qualifications and accreditations such as Entry Level Certificates. Some follow GCSE courses and all undertake the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) both in and out of school hours. Post-16 courses are planned to take account of students' interests and ambitions with most of the learning planned to take place away from the school site through vocational training and college courses.

Teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall and in some lessons teaching is good. In the better lessons teachers are confident about the subjects that they are teaching and they use their skills effectively to help students to complete tasks. Students behave well because they appreciate the good relationships they have with the adults in the classroom. They contribute appropriately and enjoy exploring ideas in lessons. They answer questions confidently through the formal and informal conversations that take place about their learning. Teachers and students employ computers to aid learning when appropriate and students thus gain skills in using information and communication technology. The planning of lessons is adequate because teachers describe general learning objectives in their plans. However, teachers do not always make full use of lesson targets, so students do not always know exactly what is required from them in the lesson and how to be successful.

Assessment is satisfactory because teachers have a reasonably clear understanding of the levels at which students are operating. This is mainly determined through the use of baseline assessments upon entry that are supported by reading and spelling tests. The good records kept by boarding staff indicate that, over time, students become more independent through learning to take more responsibility for their own education and welfare. Records also indicate that the children's home and school are successful in helping students to improve and manage their own behaviour. Opportunities are missed, however, for the undertaking of assessments during lessons that would help teachers and students know more about the amount of progress being made. Teachers and members of the boarding team contribute to

regular assessment summaries which indicate that overall, students make satisfactory progress in their learning during their time in the children's home and at the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. In this respect the work of the school is well supported by the boarding team that helps to further students' future economic well-being through the skills for life programme. A common system of rewards and sanctions operates throughout the school and children's home so that students receive consistent messages about their behaviour. Thus, in time, their self-awareness is raised and they gain confidence in knowing what is acceptable. They come to understand about right and wrong and, with the support of the 'waking-day' citizenship curriculum, they learn about respect for others together with their own rights and responsibilities.

The school ensures that students have a wide range of off-site experiences so that they can learn about how other people lead their lives. They visit museums, art galleries and places of worship. They meet with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds and this helps them to become more tolerant towards others. They celebrate feast days and international events through preparing different foods and focussing on aspects of the history and geography of different countries in the world.

Behaviour is good and improving because staff are becoming more successful in implementing behaviour management strategies and encouraging students to take part in lessons. Similarly, attendance improves when students come to realise that Weston has much to offer them by providing chances for improving their lives through education and training. Over time, therefore, students begin to take more responsibility for their own actions. They are encouraged to contribute to discussions about their own education and care and to help staff formulate decisions that will affect their futures.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good and has improved since the last inspection. Managers ensure that all requirements for safeguarding and child protection are met. All staff undertake basic awareness training for safeguarding. The level of training for the designated safeguarding person exceeds that required by the regulations. There is good understanding and cooperation between managers and staff with regard to safeguarding and child protection. For example, good quality risk assessments are completed in respect of off-site visits and activities. The school and children's home ensure that students are healthy and feel safe at Weston. Opportunities abound for recreational activities and students are encouraged to prepare healthy meals. Good consideration is given by the dedicated staff to meeting students' individual needs. The policies and practices are carefully designed to minimise risks to students. Staff are learning to the use policies and

procedures to allow students the opportunities to undertake activities that will help them develop fully as members of society. For example, staff are aware that students should play a part in administering their own medication and that students should occasionally have reduced levels of supervision in order to undertake certain activities.

The school has a suitable three-year accessibility plan as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the required checks are carried out before new staff are appointed. All regulations are met with regard to checking the suitability of the proprietor and staff. The school maintains a suitable single central register which records the checks as required.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school occupies one room in the children's home and makes use of other resources in the house as required. For example, the kitchen is used for food technology lessons. The school room and other areas provide a safe environment that is entirely appropriate to meet the needs of the students that live and learn here. Since the last inspection teachers have improved the availability and use by students of practical materials in lessons.

Provision of information

The school's prospectus provides all of the information required by the regulations and indicates how additional information can be requested by persons entitled to receive it. Local authorities are informed annually about the breakdown of expenditure for students at the school and they also receive annual reports in respect of any student with a statement of special educational needs. Termly reports are provided to parents and carers that summarise academic and social progress together with information about aspects of behaviour and personal development.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a suitable policy and procedures to address complaints.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The care provision was judged to be good 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')

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:

- Improve the use of assessment information so it provides better guidance for teachers when planning lessons.
- Improve the setting of lesson targets so that they can provide better evidence of the progress made by students during lessons.

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		
Date school opened	March 2006		
Age range of pupils	10-18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 1	Girls:	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (boarders)	£257,400		
Company telephone number	01706 644471		
Email address	Angela.norris-heyas@greencorns.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs A Norris-Heyes		
Proprietor	Continuum Group		