

Hillcrest

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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Reporting inspector	David Young

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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.^{1,2}

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Information about the school

Hillcrest is a school and children's home registered for up to eight boys aged between eight and 16 years who have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. It is currently based in new accommodation on the site of a children's home owned and operated by Hillcrest Ltd. The new premises opened in September 2010, with some teaching facilities for art and craft remaining at the previous site.

Most of the seven boys, aged between 10 and 15 years, who are attending the school, live in one of the two residential homes owned by the same company. The school was registered in 2006 and was last inspected in May 2010. The residential provision was inspected at the same time. All but one of the boys have a statement of special educational needs and, for most, their formal education has been interrupted because of exclusions and placement breakdowns. The boys come from several different local authorities in the south-east of England, although some are from further afield. The school aims to:

'provide a safe and secure environment to enable pupils to re-engage with education; develop cooperative and interpersonal skills; acquire study skills necessary to realise their own learning potential and to become receptive and willing to challenge themselves in their educational targets'.

Context of the inspection

The school was last inspected in May 2010 when a number of regulations in parts 1, 3, 4 and 6 of the regulatory framework were not met. The school submitted an action plan which was evaluated by Ofsted in August 2010. The evaluation judged that the action proposed by the school was inadequate because it did not include any proposed actions to implement the written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils (paragraph 3(2)(b)). The actions proposed to address all the remaining regulatory failures were judged to be satisfactory, subject to appropriate

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

implementation. The timescales for implementation of the proposed actions were judged to be satisfactory. This inspection on 15 December 2010 is the first monitoring visit to check the school's progress in implementing its action plan.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The inspection in May 2010 found that there were no overarching schemes of work for all of the subjects taught to ensure that there is progression in learning across the full age range as well as to meet the educational needs and interests of all pupils. The school has developed a set of integrated curriculum documents, including a curriculum policy, subject policies and a teaching and learning policy. These provide the context from which schemes of work are being developed. A curriculum map is in place, providing a summary of proposed teaching themes for all subjects for the current school year. Medium-term planning, in the form of schemes of work, is in place for English, mathematics, science, design and technology, and information and communication technology for the autumn term. Planning for personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been produced, consisting of PSHE one-day programmes for individual dates in February, March, May and June 2011. Lesson plans are in place for various subjects. Schemes of work for other subjects and for each year group taught in the school are not yet complete. Arrangements are in place for support to be provided with the development of these schemes by a partner school operated by the same company.

The previous inspection reported that the school did not meet the education requirements of a written policy for the management of bullying, or the requirements for staff training in child protection. A detailed anti-bullying policy has been now been produced, together with supporting documentation for managing and recording incidents. The headteacher attended local authority child protection training for the designated person in December 2010. Plans are in place for the headteacher to cascade the essential elements of this training to all staff in January 2011. Staff have already completed an e-learning training course in child protection. Staff are also registered with the local authority for refresher training when places become available.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school did not meet the education requirements for record-keeping in relation to sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour. Appropriate records are now kept of incidents and sanctions. Records are placed in individual pupil files and a central record is kept for monitoring purposes. The inspection also found that although attendance registers were kept well, there was no admission register for the school. An electronic admission register is now in place which meets regulatory requirements. This can be printed off into hard copy format.

The school's single central record of checks on the suitability of staff and proprietors did not fully meet requirements at the time of the last inspection because

information on the school's board of directors was incomplete. All required details of checks on the school's directors are now included in the single central register, including identity, right to work in the United Kingdom (with provision for overseas checks, if required), and dates of checks.

The previous inspection report stated that not all the regulations for the provision of information were met as the school's prospectus was out of date, and details of income and expenditure were not provided annually to funding local authorities. A new prospectus has been prepared in draft form ready for printing in the new year. This makes clear that all required policies and information are available on request by parents and carers. Copies of the school's 'safeguarding children policy' are ready for distribution with the prospectus. The required funding details are now provided to local authorities annually by the company's head office.

The school has made satisfactory progress towards implementing its action plan and now meets all but one of the regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010³ ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- complete the production of schemes of work (medium-term plans) for all subjects and for each year group taught in the school (paragraph 1(2)). (new regulations paragraph 2(1)).

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

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special School		
Date school opened	2006		
Age range of pupils	8–16		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 7	Girls: 0	Total: 7
Number of boarders	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 7	Girls: 0	Total: 7
Annual fees (day pupils)	£31,616–£38,038		
Annual fees (boarders)	£166,400–£200,200		
Headteacher	Ms Elizabeth Poore		
Proprietor	Mr B H D Sampson		