

Purbeck View School

Independent special school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton
Social care inspector	Clare Davies

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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

Purbeck View School is an independent residential school also registered as a children's home. The school provides a mix of residential care and education throughout the year for students aged 9 to 19 years who have autistic spectrum disorders. There are 44 boys and five girls on roll; all of these are boarders. All students have statements of special educational needs and are funded and referred by a large number of local authorities. The school aims to enable its students to achieve their full potential by developing their strategies in dealing with the challenges of autism. Ofsted last inspected the school in a combined education and social care inspection in 2007 when it met all the regulations for registration.

Evaluation of the school

Purbeck View School provides an outstanding quality of education that successfully achieves its aims. The innovative curriculum newly devised to meet the specific needs of students with autism is outstanding. The secure procedures that successfully integrate care and education meet the complex needs of the students. Teaching is outstanding; as a result, students make outstanding progress and their behaviour is outstanding. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and provision for their welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The procedures for safeguarding are robust. Much of the recent success of the school is due to the work of the new senior management team. The school has improved since its last inspection, particularly in relation to the curriculum. It continues to meet all the independent school regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. Since the last inspection a considerable

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

amount of work has gone into developing the curriculum. This is partly as a result of a recommendation in the last report. The school has devised a curriculum it has called 'STARS', a System for Teaching Students with Autism Real Skills. It is very well documented, showing clearly how the students are supported and shows progression across the different age and ability groups. It is effective because it focuses on the specific learning needs of the students and is planned in such a way to enable the students' progress to be tracked in very small steps, which can then be accurately documented. As a result, most students make outstanding progress in the core skills of literacy and numeracy and in functional life skills, such as acquiring independent living skills. All their statements are very carefully scrutinised and the main objectives are highlighted with a focus on three objectives each year. Each student has a very detailed individual education plan with targets based on these objectives, which is followed rigorously. The targets are carefully tracked during the 24-hour curriculum. The learning strands cover the breadth of the National Curriculum. The educational and welfare aspects of students' learning are regarded as inseparable. The curriculum ensures a free flow of activities throughout the day with no breaks between day and residential care. This gives students continuity and confidence in predicting and understanding their day. Alongside the main educational curriculum, an extended range of therapies is available throughout the year. These involve psychology, occupational and speech and language therapy. There is a rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities, off-site visits, visitors to the school and evening and weekend activity programmes. Older students are well prepared for their next stage through a careers development programme with all post-16 students having work experience.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Staff create a positive learning environment in which the students can feel safe, respected and valued and experience a range of challenges. Staff demonstrate clearly through their planning how the students are expected to progress, based on a thorough knowledge of each student's attainment and specific needs. In addition to their subject knowledge, the expertise of staff in this specialised area of education enables them to plan effectively to meet the spectrum of needs of students. A wide range of teaching methods is used to engage and sustain the students' interest, with humour being used most effectively. In response to recommendations in the last report, staff now make sure that higher attaining students receive a higher level of challenge in their learning and include a wider range of sensory experiences. Older students are especially encouraged to plan, organise and reflect on their learning. They are also given opportunities to demonstrate their individuality and staff are very supportive in helping them to develop their independence and self-management skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well by both staff and students to extend learning. Some of the less able students would benefit from further use of specifically adapted ICT equipment to assist their learning. Resources are very good and the new physical education facilities, equipment and additional staff expertise are proving beneficial. The daily routines, expectations and rules are well established and very well known to the students, giving them security and firm boundaries.

Most students make outstanding progress in their learning because of the range of communication opportunities available to them. Most take a full part in lessons and also respond well when they receive one-to-one support from classroom assistants, who fulfill their task admirably. Teachers and their assistants work as effective teams to maximise every opportunity for learning that they devise for the students. The work undertaken in lessons successfully embraces the school's philosophy to challenge the limitations imposed by each student's autism. Students are continually assessed during lessons and, as recommended in the last report, staff now include students in the evaluation of their learning through the use of interactive assessment within lessons. The assessment of students' learning is through a detailed set of procedures which begin on entry and are reviewed continuously, informally and at twice-yearly reviews. The school has a rigorous target-setting process, with targets set for the end of the academic year and each key stage.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school provides a rich range of opportunities that are challenging to students but which also nurture their growing confidence to access and communicate with the world around them. The assemblies give students an opportunity for quiet reflection, community singing and a sense of belonging. Most students work hard to manage their behaviour. Sometimes they need support from staff who follow each student's individual behaviour management plan until the student is able to control himself. The students sometimes need time and space to calm themselves and staff are excellent at managing this. Staff treat students with dignity and respect at all times using non-confrontational methods, which encourage them to develop their sense of right and wrong. As a result, students' behaviour is outstanding. In lessons, as well as around the school, students clearly enjoy their experiences. One student said, 'It's fantastic to be here', while another said, 'It's a very good school, they keep me safe.' The school places a great emphasis on the development of each student's sense of independence and also encourages them to contribute to the wider life of the school. This is achieved commensurate with the maturity and understanding of each student. The supportive, caring environment helps to build up the students' self-esteem, enabling them to form positive relationships. The consistent and clear structure of activities, both in school and in the residential home, helps to promote students' sense of self-worth and their awareness of others. Staff provide very positive role models. This promotes the students' understanding of right and wrong and helps to reduce their anxiety. They frequently visit the local community for shopping, undertaking work experience and contributing to events such as the annual local carnival. Students' different cultural backgrounds are celebrated and valued; students are accompanied to their chosen places of worship.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school operates according to a range of policies common throughout the company. Staff in

the residences and education settings apply the policies rigorously and the outcomes to these are monitored regularly. The procedures designed to safeguard students from a range of risks, although rigorously applied, do not stifle students' experience of a wide range of opportunities within the school as well as in the local community. The school has devised and implemented a full range of policies for anti-bullying, health and safety on visits outside school, behaviour and safeguarding. Provision for the safeguarding of the students is very robust with all staff receiving a high level of training. There is a trained nurse on site and all accidents are recorded accurately. Health and safety are made a high priority with detailed risk assessments carried out on all activities and on the students. Students are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle through the curriculum, which teaches them about risks they might face, by encouraging them to take part in regular exercise and through provision of nutritious meals. All staff are assiduous in their supervision of students. Fire precautions are very good with a detailed fire risk assessment. Regular fire drills are held and recorded. The admission and attendance registers are kept according to the regulations. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act and has devised and implemented a three-year accessibility plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school rigorously checks all staff for their suitability to work with children and the information is held accurately on the single central register of staff appointments.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school occupies a large site. The buildings and grounds are welcoming and maintained well. The school is a pleasant environment in which students can work safely and flourish. There is a very good range of specialist facilities, some of which have been added to recently. The school has identified in its development plan the intention to develop further specialist facilities to enhance students' learning.

Provision of information

The school provides a good range of information to parents, carers and others through its prospectus, website and newsletters. Those parents, carers and placing authorities that responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed a very high degree of satisfaction with the school. Parents and carers made comments such as: 'Purbeck School has been the answer to our prayers...it is an excellent school.' One placing authority noted that the student had made excellent progress since being at the school. Parents, carers and others are kept well informed through weekly individual newsletters, an annual regular report and consultation meetings. They are able to contribute fully to annual reviews for their children and prior to these they receive a range of reports from both the education and care provision within the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a range of procedures, which fully meet the regulations.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The care provision was judged to be outstanding 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').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- consider the use of more student-friendly ICT equipment to engage the less able students
- as planned, develop further specialist subject facilities to enhance the students' learning.

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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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Residential special school for students with autistic spectrum disorders		
Date school opened	1994		
Age range of students	9–19 years		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 44	Girls: 5	Total: 49
Number of boarders	Boys: 44	Girls: 5	Total: 49
Number of students with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 44	Girls: 5	Total: 49
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 26	Girls: 5	Total: 31
Annual fees (day students)	£68,092		
Annual fees (boarders)	£136,184 – £186,356		
Telephone number	01929 422760		
Email address	susan.harvey@cambianguroup.com		
Headteacher	Susan Harvey		
Proprietor	Cambian Education Services Ltd		