

Victoria House

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Michael Best

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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

Victoria House is registered as a children's home and as a special school to provide care and education for up to five boys and girls between the ages of eight and 17. Five children are currently in residence, four of whom attend other local schools full time, with only one pupil currently educated in the school. The school educates pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties who stay for different periods of time. The young people who enter Victoria House have usually experienced a disrupted education. The school seeks to provide a warm, safe and supportive environment where pupils can be helped to renew their enthusiasm for learning, reduce their challenging behaviour and come to terms with the underlying feelings that result in such behaviour. It seeks to provide a broad curriculum which is tailored to the needs of the individual pupil. The educational provision at the school is part of the full-time, all-year-round residential package provided by the proprietor. The school was registered in 2006. The residential provision was inspected by Ofsted Children's Services in July 2007.

Context of the inspection

When it was inspected Ofsted in May 2010, the school met most, but not all, of the regulations. It submitted an action plan outlining how it planned to address those regulations that were not met; this was evaluated and accepted in July 2010. This visit is to evaluate the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan.

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

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The inspection in May 2010 noted that, while the school gathered information about pupils' attainment and progress through regular reading and spelling tests and the use of commercially available test papers, this information was not used well enough to inform plans for teaching and learning. A new assessment system which tracked small steps of progress had been introduced, but this was in the very early stages of implementation. This visit found that the new system introduced by the proprietor has been successfully embedded in everyday practice and is working well. Staff have been trained in assessment, reporting and recording and this is reflected in the greater accuracy of their judgements. Assessment information is systematically recorded and presented in a readily accessible format. Lesson planning now draws on this information and provides a good range of interesting and challenging activities closely matched to pupils' prior learning and needs.

The inspection in May 2010 also found that the various reports written on pupils' progress, including annual reports on their academic progress, were often too brief and did not give enough indication of the pupils' current levels of attainment or the progress they had made. These reports described what had been covered in class rather than what pupils knew, understood and could do. The school has revised its reporting format and the reports seen on this visit effectively address the previous shortcomings. Within each subject, there is an indication of the National Curriculum level at which the pupil is working and a written comment about the progress the pupil has made. Pupils discuss and sign their reports, which are sent to parents and carers.

The inspection in May 2010 reported that the school did not have a suitable three-year accessibility plan. The school has since revised and developed the format of its plan and this now meets the requirements. The three-year plan seen on this visit identifies issues relating to the physical access to the school, the delivery of the curriculum and the provision of information to parents, carers and others. It includes anticipated outcomes along with success indicators; detailed costings are included, particularly for developments to the curriculum.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements.

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Residential special school and children's home for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties		
Date school opened	2006		
Age range of pupils	8–17 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (education)	£34,736		
Address of school	(Castlecare head office) The Manor House Squires Hill Rothwell Northants NN14 6BQ		
Telephone number	01536 711111		
Email address	rburrows@castlehomes.co.uk		
Headteacher	Marion Paige		
Proprietor	Castlecare Education		