

Bradshaw Farm Independent School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon
Social care inspector	Caroline Oldham

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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 school opened in July 2010 and is undergoing its first inspection. It is an independent special school attached to a children's home and is registered for boys and girls aged from 11 to 16 years. The children's home was last inspected in November 2010. At present the school has six girls on roll who are between 14 and 16 years old. The girls are looked after by their local authorities who, largely out of a need for urgent action, have placed them in the children's home for their safety and care. They are vulnerable in their home communities and have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. One has a statement of special educational needs.

The children's home and school aim to offer a safe haven in which staff help students by implementing a consistent care plan and education programme.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is satisfactory. The curriculum is not yet a close match to students' needs, although it is satisfactory as are teaching and assessment. Students make satisfactory progress and their behaviour is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students' welfare, health and safety are good and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The school's aims are being met and it meets all of the regulations for registration as an independent school. The quality of the residential provision was judged to be outstanding.

Quality of education

The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to the opportunities for students to make progress and to prepare for the future. It provides all of the required areas of learning, which are set out in acceptable plans and the weekly school timetable.

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

There are two key factors significantly influencing how the curriculum meets students' needs. The length of time students spend living in the children's home is variable, but is usually short-term. Students arrive mainly at a time of crisis and always presenting challenging behaviour, low attainment and antipathy towards school. The school curriculum is not, in its entirety, designed well to reflect all of these realities. It is strengthened by the work done in the children's home towards meeting students' needs. This work contributes significantly to improving students' well-being, self-esteem and independence. In the school, the curriculum is set out as it might be in any school but there is not a balance of work and activities giving sharp focus to, and making a positive impact on, students' immediate and short term needs. The core aims concern building a positive attitude to school, improving learning skills and increasing self-confidence in a capacity for students to make progress and achieve.

What militates against the curriculum fully achieving these aims is that the teacher is part-time, teaching in the morning only. Care staff are left in charge of afternoon lessons. This arrangement reduces the impact of leadership in achieving the school's core aims. Moreover, the scope for monitoring, evaluating and improving the curriculum is too limited. Care staff who are given teaching responsibilities in the school are not supervised and supported sufficiently to ensure they teach their parts of the curriculum effectively. Afternoon activities have plans and while some of these make a positive contribution to learning and progress such as cookery and life skills, others such as lessons in personal, social and health education do not. Overall, provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory, when account is taken of the children's home contribution. Furthermore, the limited time the teacher spends in school means the provision for literacy and numeracy is not well balanced across the week.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. While lesson planning is written out in great detail, this does not always lead to effective teaching. Students find it difficult to engage positively in learning. Teaching does not always go far enough to generate the good quality interest among students needed to sustain good efforts. Students are not skilled in listening to lengthy explanations and absorbing detailed information and this is how some lessons are started. However, when they get to working on well-defined practical tasks further into the lesson they respond with good attention and effort. The relationship with the teacher is good, leading to good behaviour and a positive rapport which enables students to overcome any reluctance to attend and do work. Care staff assisting in lessons, are not instructed well enough to support learning and occasionally they and the teacher give too much help to students, instead of encouraging them to manage their own learning independently. Assessment procedures are used effectively to establish each student's attainment when they arrive. This assessment is used satisfactorily to set short-term targets and keep track of progress. As a result, where students have a statement of special educational needs, the requirements it sets out are being met satisfactorily.

Progress is satisfactory. The combined efforts of the children's home and school means students are better prepared when leaving, in terms of improved self-esteem

and life skills, to cope with the demands of a new school or further education at college. Students who have stayed at Bradshaw Farm for long enough have gained entry level certificates in English and mathematics. Given sufficient time, students improve their attitude to learning and their school attendance.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' experiences of living in the children's home and attending school ensure their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Self-esteem improves as a result of the effective work by all staff in helping students develop confidence and achieve more control over the circumstances of their lives. The insights and skills students develop, through the work of the children's home and the challenges of outdoor activities, means they cope with everyday demands more effectively. Attendance, behaviour and enjoyment of school improve with time. Students develop good relationships with adults and with each other. Their behaviour is good, regularly demonstrating positive regard for others through politeness in particular. Students have satisfactory opportunities to learn about public institutions and services. Equally, they learn about their own and other cultures in lessons and through activities in the children's home such as cooking foods of different cultures. While at the children's home, students have little opportunity of encountering people from different cultural backgrounds to their own.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The arrangement for the welfare, health and safety of students are good. Students are cared for well by all adults. Staff maintain a strong commitment to ensuring students' well-being, health and safety by following clearly defined policies. Safeguarding has high priority and robust procedures are consistent between school and the children's home. Students stay safe and learn how to keep safe. There is good provision through specialist therapeutic interventions, helping students explore and understand more about their experiences and feelings, which is strengthening their self-esteem. The effective implementation of the anti-bullying and behaviour policies leads to students showing good regard for each other. A healthy life style is promoted effectively through the provision of nutritious meals and good opportunities for physical activities. Qualified nurses visit regularly and contribute significantly to raising students' awareness of health matters.

The school fully meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended).

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the checks to confirm the suitability of staff and proprietors are carried out and meet requirements. Evidence of these checks and when they were made are clearly recorded in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The classroom is of an appropriate size for the maximum of six students. It is set out efficiently for teaching and learning, with good displays and accessible storage for pupils' work and learning resources. It is well arranged to ensure students' safety and is within the secure boundaries of the children's home. A small room off the classroom holds the computer equipment. This resource did not play any significant part in learning during the inspection and computers, if placed in the main part of the classroom, would be made more accessible for learning.

Provision of information

The children's home statement of purpose provides parents, carers and others with comprehensive and detailed information. In addition, the school's prospectus set out the required up-to-date information on the curriculum and its policies. Parents, carers and local authorities receive written reports on their children's progress.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure is set out clearly and can be easily understood by parents, carers and others.

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').³

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 curriculum to better reflect students' needs by focusing sharply on core aims of improving their attitude to learning; their learning skills and their capacity to achieve.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by developing approaches to lessons that engage students more effectively in learning, provide more opportunities for active learning and for students to manage their own 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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The quality of boarding provision

Effectiveness of boarding provision	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Date school opened	12 July 2010		
Age range of pupils	11–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 6	Total: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 6	Total: 6
Annual fees	£170,820		
Email address	admin@roachschool.net		
Headteacher	Matt Wilson		
Proprietor	Dr Sean Fitzpatrick		