

Draycott Moor College

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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Reporting inspector	George Derby

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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 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

Draycott Moor College is an independent day special school for up to 36 students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. There are nine students on roll. Year 11 students had left the college at the time of this visit. The college is owned and managed by Educare, a care and education company which owns a number of independent schools and children's homes. The college is located in a small village in Staffordshire and occupies a building which was originally the local primary school. It is near the border with Stoke-on-Trent. Most of the students are funded by Stoke-on-Trent local authority; some are from Staffordshire. All but two students have a statement of special educational needs.

Context of the inspection

The college had a standard inspection in 2009 when it was judged to provide an inadequate quality of education. A progress monitoring inspection in February 2010 judged that college had made good progress in implementing its action plan. An unannounced emergency school inspection took place in February 2011 following complaints from the local community about students' behaviour, damage caused to property and smoking. As a result of this visit, the college failed a significant number of regulations.

An action plan relating to the shortcomings identified by the emergency visit was evaluated in June 2011 and some improvement was needed. This is the first visit to evaluate progress against the action plan. An acting headteacher, who was previously the deputy headteacher, currently leads the college. In addition, two new members of staff have been appointed. The college has had several changes of headteacher over the past two years.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The college has made satisfactory progress in implementing its action plan. Much has been done to forge good relationships with the local community and there is now a

more positive view by neighbours of the work of the college and of the students themselves. All but one of the regulations previously failed have been met.

At the time of the visit in February 2011, records showed that students had been out of control at times and that systems to manage their behaviour were poor. Exclusion, physical restraint and behavioural incidents were far too frequent. Student caused problems in the neighbourhood and their smoking led to complaints by neighbours. Too little was done to combat students' smoking habits. Little account was taken by staff of students' personal needs and the requirements of their statements of special educational needs. Planning to help students improve their learning and behaviour was weak, as was the recording and analysis of incidents. Few students came to college regularly and the college could not always account for some students' whereabouts. When students were studying offsite, the college was unaware of work they were doing, the progress made and their attendance. An examination of the college's safeguarding procedures identified shortfalls in the child protection policy, staff training, and the checks made and recorded on staff on appointment.

The implementation of the college's plans to increase the level of supervision of students, especially at the beginning and end of each day, has ensured that students do not smoke and cause problems in the neighbourhood. Health promotion and support through nursing services is helping students address their smoking habit, although the college does not keep records to show the impact of its work in this respect.

The college planned to introduce a robust system to take better account of the behavioural needs of students. As a result of implementing the plan, attendance has improved and incidences of challenging behaviour have significantly reduced. Records of behaviour are now detailed and satisfactorily analysed for trends and patterns. This is helping the college and students to learn lessons from what happens, especially through de-briefing and feedback. Students now more readily accept responsibility for their actions.

The college planned to review the reward and progress assessment systems. The improved reward system has been based on a detailed behavioural assessment of students and has included students' views. In addition, through an increased range of academic assessments staff are becoming better equipped to understand all aspects of students' needs, especially how they learn. The reward system is well liked by students and is mostly clear to them. Staff have received training in how to better construct and evaluate the targets that are set, the techniques to use to manage students' behaviour and how to use targets in lessons. Behaviour is now better managed, students are more attentive and have greater involvement in learning; they are enjoying lessons now. Some student targets are not specific enough though, especially around their showing respect for others, and reward points are not always awarded accurately or consistently by staff.

As the college planned, students' statements have been scrutinised and better account is taken of their contents. In some cases these have been revised by the

local authority to take better account of students' personal needs within the college context. Students' 'learning journeys', devised by staff, outline their needs well. Targets and strategies to help them have been suitably constructed by the college and give clear guidance for staff. Lesson planning now contains detailed behavioural targets for staff to address in relation to student's needs. However, learning targets are not yet always matched well enough to the individual student. In addition, the reminding of students, and the review, of all their targets is inconsistent at times.

Through staff training, better policies and improved procedures, planned since the last visit, the college's approach to safeguarding has improved. A comprehensive child protection policy contains all the required elements and gives clear guidance. What the college should do if an allegation is made against staff is made clear. Two designated staff for child protection have been trained at a higher level and the rest of the staff at a basic level, in accordance with the college's action plan. Risk assessments are thorough, as are student's behaviour plans. All the required information about staffing recruitment and vetting checks is now contained on the college's single central register.

The college now keeps a careful track of its students when offsite. This includes the programmes followed, the progress made and their attendance. However, it does not always record attendance accurately. Records checked during this inspection showed that one exclusion was recorded as an authorised absence in the college's attendance register.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010¹ ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- ensure the attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.		
Date school opened	June 2008		
Age range of pupils	11–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 7	Girls: 2	Total: 9
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 6	Girls: 1	Total: 7
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,025		
Address of school	Draycott Old Road Draycott-in-the-Moors Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9AH		
Telephone number	01782 399849		
Email address	draycotthead@educareservices.co.uk		
Headteacher	Roger Flint (acting headteacher)		
Proprietor	Educare Adolescent Services		