

# Freyburg School (Keys Group Ltd)

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Susan Lewis

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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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Freyburg School is a special school for students with severe behavioural, social and emotional difficulties which opened in 2005. It is owned by the Keys Group who also own many similar schools. It is situated in two units ten miles apart; these are Poppies and Duncanwood Lodge. Each unit is on the same site as the children's home in which the students live. The school can admit up to 12 students aged 11 to 16 years, including eight residential and four day students. Currently there are five students on roll, ranging from Year 9 to Year 11. All students are residential and in the care of the local authority. Three students who are based at Duncanwood Lodge have a statement of special educational needs. At Duncanwood Lodge in particular, students often arrive as a result of an emergency placement. Two students had been at the school for approximately two months at the time of the inspection. All students have a history of extremely challenging behaviour, disrupted education and poor or non-attendance at schools previously. Although there are occasional joint activities, a common headteacher and policies, the two units operate almost entirely separately. The school was last inspected in February 2008 when it was found to provide a satisfactory quality of education. Since then it has had several changes of staff. The school aims to provide a safe, secure, positive and supportive environment in which each individual can contribute and feel valued, knowing that his achievements are recognised.

The children's home was last inspected in June 2011, just prior to this inspection but the report had not yet been published.

## **Evaluation of the school**

The quality of education and students' welfare health and safety are inadequate overall, because of shortcomings in these at Duncanwood Lodge. Although the policies and procedures linked to safeguarding comply with requirements, students' well-being is not consistently secured. The quality of education at Poppies is satisfactory but improving rapidly and the teaching and assessment there are now good.

At Duncanwood Lodge too many regulations are not met. In addition, the children's home and the school do not work sufficiently well together to ensure consistent

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

management of behaviour, satisfactory attendance and that students are ready to learn when they arrive at school. As a result, arrangements for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are inadequate. Students at Duncanwood Lodge make inadequate progress.

## Quality of education

Not all the regulations are met. The curriculum and learning experiences provided are inadequate overall. This is despite their strengths at Poppies. Here the curriculum is built into themes that engage students' interest, and are also carefully linked to the course work for the examinations and qualifications they will take. Students are able to take a range of qualifications at GCSE and entry level, as well as vocational qualifications, such as bricklaying. They complete functional skills courses in subjects such as information and communication technology. Students at Poppies make good progress in their mathematics and in their reading and writing as they apply these skills. For example, writing up how they have designed a new sign for the children's home, or made a trammel to enable the sign to be built. The interactive whiteboard and information and communication technology are used well to motivate students and to develop and apply their skills in a range of curriculum areas.

The planned curriculum for both Poppies and Duncanwood, evidenced in the schemes of work for subjects, covers all the required areas. However, the curriculum at Duncanwood is not sufficiently interesting to engage students and does not systematically support their application of skills. It also does not regularly include all the different subjects that should be covered in line with students' statements of special educational needs, particularly for the younger students. There is insufficient depth of study of some subjects such as music or modern foreign languages. Personal, social and health education is not adequately planned. Although students do make some progress in their mathematics and reading skills, too much time is spent on other activities which are more recreational or on managing students' behaviour. Planned lessons cannot be taught because incidents within or outside of the home overflow into lessons. This means time available for learning is not used effectively. Although students may have remained in school, which for some is an achievement, very little learning has taken place. In particular, very little written work and work for qualifications is completed, even where students have been placed at Duncanwood for some time.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. Teaching is good at Poppies because the staff have high expectations of student behaviour, work well together as a team and devise programmes based on themes that engage students' interest and meet their needs well. At Duncanwood Lodge teachers work hard to turn students' attitudes around if they are in school. When students are engaged they make satisfactory progress in lessons, particularly in their reading and mathematics, but they often arrive at school late and not prepared to work. Too much time is lost because of this and students' reluctance to engage in other than self-chosen activities.

There are strong assessment systems in place at Poppies and plans to improve assessment systems further at Duncanwood Lodge. At Duncanwood Lodge students' levels are tracked adequately and there is appropriate attention to national guidance and to identifying student's literacy and numeracy levels and needs. Individual work is carefully linked to these, as in a lesson supporting a student's skill in using multiplication tables. Here the teacher was able to keep the student on task and help him to move forward in the speed at which he recalled number facts. Where learning is less successful it is because not enough account is taken of students' needs or because there is sometimes insufficient challenge in the work. For example, a lesson linked to the novel 'Holes' really engaged reluctant students when they were challenged to find the answers to key questions hidden outside. However, opportunities to check that they had fully understood the answers were lost later in the lesson and time was wasted. Staffing levels at Duncanwood do not always take account of the high level of student need. This means that sometimes too much time is spent simply trying to control behaviour and keeping students safe, rather than driving learning forward. As a result of these inconsistencies, students' progress overall is inadequate. The headteacher, based at Poppies is well aware of what needs to be done, but has too little time to implement improvements at Duncanwood Lodge.

Although there are appropriate links to Connexions and other agencies, and a more work related curriculum at Poppies, students are not prepared well enough for the next stages of their life. This is particularly the case at Duncanwood Lodge. Low attendance, punctuality and unsatisfactory behaviour in the home, the school and the community limit students' opportunities to learn in this part of the school.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is inadequate overall as is their behaviour. Although there is some progress over time, it is too little. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and behaviour are satisfactory at Poppies where students demonstrate an increasing willingness to take responsibility for their behaviour, to appreciate other's perspectives and to make their contribution to both school and community life. This is because of the strengths of the personal, social and health education programme at Poppies, the good relationships and high expectations of staff here. Staff within the children's home at Poppies and the school work well together to provide consistent messages about acceptable behaviour and personal responsibility. At Duncanwood Lodge, the personal social and health education programme is inadequate. Through their life skills programme and their study of books students do have opportunities to reflect on issues such as drug abuse, relationships, crime and prison life and public institutions, but struggle to use these lessons to adapt their own behaviour. Students are helped towards more self-awareness of their behavioural and learning needs and generally get on satisfactorily together in school. However, there are too many incidences of very inappropriate behaviour both within and out of school. Sometimes

students openly flout rules and this is not dealt with effectively by staff. Inconsistencies in management of these within the home as well, mean students therefore feel that rules are 'for bending'. Staff do work hard to build relationships with students and students say they know their teachers 'want the best' for them.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are inadequate. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures are in place and should secure provision, as they do in Poppies. However, the procedures are not always followed through within the 24 hour provision at Duncanwood Lodge, such as in relation to rewards and sanctions and student's inappropriate behaviour. Students are, therefore, not actively safeguarded from harm. Although healthy meals are available through the residential accommodation, student health is compromised for example, through the level of smoking. Bullying is virtually non-existent and is dealt with effectively by staff as a result of a strong antibullying policy. However, incidents of highly inappropriate behaviour are frequent at Duncanwood Lodge.

Given the vulnerability of students, child protection arrangements have a high profile and meet requirements in terms of policies and procedures. Appropriate policies and practices regarding safe recruitment of staff are also in place. Visits away from school are adequately staffed and appropriately risk assessed. When students enter the school appropriate risk assessments are put into place around individuals. However staffing levels at Duncanwood Lodge do not take account of the complexity of student's needs and ensure they can learn as well as be kept safe. There is an appropriate disability access plan and attention to the school's duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.<sup>3</sup>

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

All regulations are met. All of the checks required on the suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor have been carried out and are recorded appropriately in the single central register.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The classrooms at both Duncanwood Lodge and Poppies are of a good size for the number of students and in good repair. There are additional small rooms suitable for individual and smaller group teaching. Appropriate safety measures and checks are in place in relation to fire regulations and the use of electrical equipment. At Poppies there are adequate outside areas and at Duncanwood the site is more extensive and heavily wooded. There are some inadequate security arrangements which were

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<sup>3</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2001/ukpga\\_20010010\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2001/ukpga_20010010_en_1)

drawn to the attention of the school. There are few facilities in the grounds at both schools for purposeful occupation during break times.

## **Provision of information**

All regulations are met. The school does not have a website but all the required information is provided in the school's prospectus and made available as required to families and local authorities. Information provided about students' academic progress and progress towards the objectives on their statements of special educational needs is good at Poppies and adequate at Duncanwood Lodge where the information provided is sometimes too general.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school has appropriate procedures and policies in place that fully meet requirements.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>4</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must ensure:

- there is a curriculum policy set out in writing which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and that it is implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1))
- where pupils have a statement of special educational needs that the education provided fulfils its requirements (paragraph 2(2)(e))
- provision is made for personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos (paragraph 2(2)(f))
- that the curriculum provides adequate preparation of students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (paragraph 2(2) (j))
- the teaching involves well planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities and appropriate management of class time (paragraph 3(c))

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<sup>4</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made)

- the teaching utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraph 3(h))

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (standards in part 2) and must:

- enable students to distinguish between right and wrong and respect the law (paragraph 5(b))
- encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and contribute further to community life (paragraph 5 (c))

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- implement effectively a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils including the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 9)
- ensure measures are in place to secure pupils' health and safety which have regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (DfES 0803/2001)<sup>5</sup> (paragraph 11)
- deploy school staff in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils (*paragraph 15*)

*The school does not meet all requirements* in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- improve security arrangements (paragraph 23(d))

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- review all aspects of provision at Duncanwood Lodge, including the ways in which the home and school work together to ensure that the students make sufficient progress in their learning.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.teachernet.gov.uk/\\_doc/4017/Responsibilites%20and%20Powers.doc](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/4017/Responsibilites%20and%20Powers.doc)



## 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

<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties
<b>Date school opened</b>	February 2005
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 5
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 5
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 5
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£33540
<b>Email address</b>	davecarr@keyschildcare.co.uk
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Carr
<b>Proprietor</b>	Keys Group Ltd