

Old Sams Farm Independent School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Unique Reference Number (URN)	136168
URN for social care	SC005050
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Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon
Social care inspector	Trevor Hall

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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 up to three boys and girls aged from 11 to 16 years. The proprietor has requested approval to increase the school's roll to a maximum of five. At present the school has five boys on roll who are between 11 and 16 years old. All have a statement of special educational needs identifying behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The boys are all looked after by their local authorities who have placed them in the children's home until permanent arrangements for their care are decided.

The children's home and school offer students support with a care plan and education programme aimed at re-engaging them with learning and preparing them for the future.

Evaluation of the school

The good quality of education provided is ensuring students make good progress. They leave well prepared for the future as the result of a good curriculum and good teaching and assessment. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, especially their behaviour which is outstanding. The arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are outstanding and this includes robust procedures for safeguarding them. Boarding provision in the children's home is outstanding. All of the regulations are met. The school's accommodation meets the requirements for five students and a change to its registration to reflect this is recommended.

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

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and is effectively implemented. It meets the needs of students, the requirements of their statements of special educational needs and prepares them well for a return to school or for entry to college courses. The work and activities planned are well received by the students, enabling them to learn and make progress. Progress is good as a result of students settling well in the children's home and school. All students make significant progress in improving their attendance, behaviour and self-esteem. They quickly adopt a positive attitude to learning, make good efforts and take care in completing work. A recent improvement has been the opportunity for students to gain accreditation for their work. Those who have been on roll longest have gained entry level certificates in English and mathematics.

The curriculum strikes a good balance between core academic work and practical, physical and adventurous activities. There is also a considerable contribution made to learning by the independence and life-skills programmes offered in the children's home. These operate hand-in-hand with the school curriculum. This contributes significantly to transforming students' attitudes to learning and improving their behaviour. Moreover, the partnership between the school and children's home supports effective transition arrangements when students move to another school or go onto college.

Most planning benefits from a good variety of published schemes which are used intelligently to match work to students' different abilities and interests. Students' enthusiasm is captured in such ways as geography topics on volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis. This leads them into some thorough research and writing, exploring the geological and social impact of these events. A good breadth of study is found in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), reflecting good teaching expertise in these subjects. Students have opportunities to use their reading and writing skills in a number of different contexts. For example, one read aloud the instructions for tackling a rock climb at the start of an outdoor education activity. However, the work planned for the majority is limited in scope to develop their reading and writing skills. If a student has a pronounced difficulty with reading or writing, he is given good support in class and through additional tuition.

The planning of personal, social, health and citizenship education is at an early stage and is improving. Recently, students have studied sex and relationships education and a topic on making laws. The children's home makes an effective contribution to improving students' personal qualities and independence.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Effective learning takes place as a result of the many well-planned lessons and the good relationship between adults and students. Relationships are mutually respectful and supportive. Teaching and learning benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge in most subjects, mathematics and information and communication technology in particular. In respect of outdoor education, expertise is of high quality. This produces many fast paced and

challenging lessons. English is less challenging as confidence in teaching the subject is not as assured as in other subjects. Lesson planning is well informed by good procedures in assessment which provide good knowledge of students' attainments, their special educational needs and/or disabilities and informs the setting of targets.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A major strength is students' outstanding behaviour which demonstrates a very substantial improvement. Students align themselves firmly with the high expectations of the school and the children's home. Students show good regard for others and urge each other to cooperate and behave well. They act within a clear moral framework and are strongly motivated to distinguish right and wrong. Students are aware of the countryside code when on outdoor activities, greeting other walkers and being conscious of protecting the environment. They enjoy school considerably, valuing all the opportunities to make progress and to experience challenge and excitement. Their opportunities within the curriculum to learn about public institutions and services are satisfactory and improving. Students learn about their own and other cultures in lessons and in activities held in the children's home, although the low number of first-hand opportunities limits students' developing awareness and appreciation of the diversity of cultures in Britain.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The arrangements made by the school and children's home for students' welfare, health and safety are outstanding. Students are exceptionally well cared for as a result of highly effective implementation of care plans and policies for keeping them safe and healthy. Behaviour, rewards and sanctions are managed by staff very effectively and consistently across the school and home. The safeguarding procedures shared by the school and home are robust, up-to-date and rigorously reviewed. All staff are appropriately trained in child protection and links with agencies are firmly established. Work and activities for students across the school and home are highly geared to promote a healthy lifestyle and to keeping safe. The school gives good guidance on the safe use of the internet. In addition, an anti-bullying project has helped to set the standard for how students respect and treat each other. Trips away from school are planned and supervised thoroughly. The school has drawn up and implemented a three-year disability access plan which fulfils 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 former classroom, which was suitable for three students, has been replaced with a new larger building on the site of the children's home. It meets requirements as a classroom for five students. It is equipped with five individual work stations, each of which has a computer linked to the internet. In the centre of the classroom are tables set in a semi-circle for five students for when class teaching takes place. The classroom has a multimedia projector and whiteboard. Resources and students work folders are systematically organised on shelves. There are good displays on walls completing the picture of a stimulating and business-like classroom. Fire and other safety arrangements meet requirements.

Provision of information

The children's home's statement of purpose provides parents, carers and others with comprehensive and detailed information. In addition, parents, carers and local authorities receive annually written reports on their children's progress. The school also provides detailed written reports for the reviews of looked after students, their care plans and statements of special educational needs.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets requirements. It is set out clearly and can be easily followed 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:

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

- improve the teaching of English to develop further students' literacy skills and their enjoyment of reading and writing
- develop the curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education and, in particular, the opportunities for students to learn about institutions and services in England and to develop their awareness and appreciation of the diversity of cultures in Britain.

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 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 5
Number of boarders	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 5
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 5
Annual fees	£170,820		
Email address	admin@roachesschool.net		
Headteacher	Matt Wilson		
Proprietor	Dr Sean Fitzpatrick		