

New Horizon Centre School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

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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}

Information about the school

New Horizon Centre School is a small day special school which is registered to provide education for boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 years who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are 16 students attending including one pupil aged 10 years and one student aged 17 years under exceptional circumstances. There are 15 students who have a statement of special educational needs. Approximately two thirds of the students are looked after children.

The school was established in 2001 and was last inspected in June 2008. Students who attend have a wider range of needs, and some have complex literacy, numeracy, language and communication difficulties with their places funded by their local authorities. The school moved to its present site in December 2004, an extended farmhouse with adjoining buildings set in four acres of land near Taunton in Somerset. The school came under the ownership of European Wellcare in December 2006. The company owns care homes throughout the United Kingdom and Europe and has two other special schools. Young people come from homes in the south of England and some, but not all homes, are owned by European Wellcare.

The school seeks to, 'help children toward a better future by supporting our students in the change and growth that will lead to progress and success'.

Evaluation of the school

New Horizon Centre School provides a satisfactory quality of education and meets its aims. Students' behaviour makes a good contribution to creating a calm and purposeful environment. The school meets most of the regulations. However, the school's provision for students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate because safeguarding arrangements to complete checks on the proprietors do not meet requirements. Since the last inspection the school has improved its provision and, as a result, students now make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school provides learning experiences within a secure and caring environment. Improvements in the school's provision of personal, social and health education (PSHE) ensure that students make good progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in these areas. The curriculum covers a broad range of subject areas and draws on National Curriculum guidance. Schemes of work follow the prescribed syllabi of recognised accreditation boards and these ensure students make satisfactory progress in developing their basic skills. The curriculum is appropriately matched to students' needs so that the vast majority are able to access Entry Level courses and a number attain GCSE qualifications in a range of subjects. The curriculum is enhanced by regular opportunities for all students to participate in physical education and many undertake outdoor education activities. These help students to make good progress in their social and behavioural skills. For example, students enjoy working cooperatively in small groups while building and testing rafts or in team fielding and striking games.

Students regularly prepare food and snacks during food technology lessons in a well-equipped and spacious area. This helps to develop their levels of independence and prepares them for their future lives. Students are able to access science resources to develop their knowledge and skills. Students' understanding of animals' diet and nutrition was enhanced by access to a range of skulls of small mammals. However, they have limited opportunities to participate in practical scientific experiments.

A small number of students with more complex needs and challenging behaviour are educated at a separate site. Students at this site are closely supervised and their curriculum covers a satisfactory range of subjects including physical education. Their access to a wider range of resources is satisfactory overall but there are more limited opportunities in some areas, for example in food technology.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory so that students' progress is satisfactory overall. The school places a strong emphasis on raising students' self-esteem in all lessons through a clearly understood system for rewards and sanctions. Students are encouraged to provide self-assessment marks on their behaviour in each lesson and this helps them to develop their sense of responsibility and improve their behaviour. A volunteer has begun to record and map these weekly assessments for individual students to present a helpful visual profile. However, this system is not fully embedded, making it difficult to identify fluctuations in behaviour and variations in rates of students' progress from their starting points with the school.

Staff use humour well to develop good relationships and to help students concentrate on the task in hand. Learning support assistants work well with students and provide good support and encouragement. They are quick to respond to

individual students' behaviour and help to maintain a consistent whole-school approach to rewards and sanctions. There is a clear link between the school day and the various residential settings that provide boarding, in that the rewards link across both areas and students can accumulate small financial rewards as pocket money at the end of each week in a celebration assembly.

The detail of lesson planning varies across the school. Where students' progress is satisfactory, planning lacks detail and there is an over-reliance on worksheets. In well-planned lessons, work is closely matched to students' academic needs and structured so that students are able to build on their previous learning and make good progress. In these lessons teachers' good subject knowledge helps them in their planning and delivery of lessons. The school has encouraged two members of staff to undertake postgraduate teaching qualifications and this has added to their professional knowledge and skills. High-quality art work is displayed prominently in the central areas of the school. In a Japanese lesson students made good progress, confidently speaking Japanese as they asked adults their favourite colour and their name. Teachers use assessments effectively to evaluate students' social and emotional development in each lesson and involve students in evaluating their progress. The school regularly gathers and records academic assessment data against a framework. However, opportunities are missed to make more effective use of this information in lessons to build on students' prior learning and to involve them in assessing their own level of understanding in order to develop students' academic progress more rapidly.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's caring and supportive staff place a strong emphasis on developing students' good behaviour and improving their attendance. Students go out of their way to report that they enjoy school and this is evident in their positive attitudes and contributions in the majority of lessons. Students show a strong sense of respect for staff and are developing relationships with each other. In a number of lessons students provided encouragement to each other and broke into spontaneous applause during a team game.

The curriculum developments in PSHE and citizenship over the last two years have ensured that students cover a broad range of themes. Students learn about British institutions and some progress to developing a deeper understanding of the justice system and local and national government. Students are helped to develop personal action plans and gain work experience in preparation for working life. They have access to a named employment and careers advisor. Students improve their understanding of diversity, prejudice, discrimination and other religions in lessons. Regular trips and visits further help to develop students' spiritual and cultural awareness.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school's procedures to ensure students' welfare health and safety are inadequate. This is because the school does not hold records to confirm that all appropriate checks on members of the proprietorial board are complete. The school is aware and has reacted swiftly to address this issue. The school's staff recruitment procedures are thorough and include checks on identity and previous employment. Staff in the school work closely as a team to ensure that students are well supervised and are provided with appropriate support at all times. Thorough risk assessments are completed for outdoor activities and staff ensure that appropriate safety equipment and first aid are readily available. Staff are aware of the school's child protection policy and the procedures to take should they have safeguarding concerns. All staff have appropriate child protection training on induction and this is updated regularly. The school has prepared a plan to improve accessibility in line with requirements in the Equality Act 2010. The school completes checks on fire safety and equipment and regular checks are made on the safety of portable electrical appliances.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has established the suitability of staff to work with children by completing enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks. However, the school was unable to verify that all required checks had been completed on all members of the proprietorial body and as a result these do not appear on the school's single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises are clean and are suitable for the needs of its students. Many rooms are enhanced by displays which help to raise students' self-esteem and all prominently feature the school's systems of rewards and sanctions. Classrooms are appropriately resourced and there are good facilities to develop students' understanding of food technology. The school makes good use of its outdoor area to develop students' physical and social skills. The small animal farm helps to develop students' care and consideration for others.

There are some inadequate security arrangements. The school has completed a range of assessments on the safety and suitability of an additional site but has not registered these with the Department for Education (DfE). These premises are appropriate to meet the needs of students as they prepare to transfer to the main school site.

Provision of information

The school's prospectus provides parents and carers with all of the appropriate information and makes it clear that further details are available on request. The school's website is under redevelopment. Parents and carers receive annual reports and are involved in reviews of statements. Parents and carers who responded in

questionnaires expressed their support for the school. A small minority would like improvements in homework arrangements. The complaints policy included within the prospectus does not fully comply with requirements but does refer parents and carers to the full policy and further details held in the school office.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's full version of the complaints procedure meets all 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.³

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

- ensure the school's safeguarding arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for England (paragraph 7).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- verify that no member of those persons listed as members of the proprietorial body are barred from regulated activity with children (paragraph 21(6)(a))
- ensure that checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), for the right to work in the United Kingdom and clearance from criminal conviction prior to arrival in the United Kingdom are completed for all members of the proprietorial body (paragraph 21(6)(b))
- in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1 May 2007, ensure the register shows whether the appropriate checks were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained (paragraph 22(6))
- in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed before 1 May 2007, ensure the register shows whether the appropriate checks were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained (paragraph 22(7)).

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

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

- make arrangements to improve the school's security (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.

- Develop the school's assessment procedures in lessons to ensure that they include assessments of academic progress as well as social and behavioural progress.
- Develop systems to monitor more closely and track students' social and academic development from their starting points.
- Increase opportunities for students to complete practical science investigations.

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

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special school		
Date school opened	November 2001		
Age range of pupils	10–17 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 13	Girls: 3	Total: 16
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 13	Girls: 2	Total: 15
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,000		
Address of school	Bath Farm House West Hatch Taunton Somerset TA3 5RH		
Telephone number	01823 481902		
Email address	school@newhorizoncentre.co.uk		
Headteacher	Jennie Meadows		
Proprietor	European Wellcare		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Horizon Centre School, Bath Farm House, Taunton, TA3 5RH

Thank you for the friendly way you talked to me when I visited your school. I was pleased to see how well you behaved in lessons and around the school. Many of you told me that you enjoy the different things that you get to do. You enjoy being able to go on trips and visits and to learn outside of the main school. I watched you work carefully together to build rafts from ropes and barrels. I saw the photographs of some of you getting a little wet when you tested them!

The staff of the school listen to you and care for you well. Often in lessons you both smiled and laughed together while you worked. During your team games you applauded the individuals that had done well. I noticed how sensibly and honestly you gave yourself marks for your behaviour and attitude at the end of each lesson. This helps you to behave well in nearly every lesson and also helps you to get on with your studies. You are making good progress in developing your behaviour and in working together which will help you to find work and jobs later in your life. You all receive weekly personal, social and health lessons (PSHE) which help you to make good progress in developing your understanding of other cultures. I was impressed by listening to some of you speak Japanese and noticed the good art work and pictures that you have produced around the school. In lessons you do better and make more progress when teachers plan carefully and use information from assessments to set you work that is not too hard or too easy. Overall you are making satisfactory progress in your work and in gaining certificates and qualifications.

The school makes sure that they complete fire drills and regularly check the fire extinguishers and electrical equipment. They have first aid kits around the school and when you go out on Forest School activities. Staff take care to complete risk assessments to spot possible hazards or dangers. However they have not made sure that all the checks on the proprietors are in place and recorded as they should be and I have asked that they make sure this is carried out.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. I hope that you carry on working hard and manage to do well in your exams.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector