

The Gables

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	877/6008
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135470
Inspection number	386887
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Ramesh Kapadia

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2011



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

The school was registered as an independent school in 2007 and makes provision for students aged between 10 and 18 years with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties who are in the care of a placing local authority. The school is registered as a children's home and provides 52-week care as well as education. The length of time students stay at the school varies considerably, from a few weeks to several years. The school aims to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows students to develop their skills and abilities, underpinned by unconditional positive regard for everyone. There is one student on roll at present, and that student has a statement of special educational needs. The school's last inspection was in 2008, and the last social care inspection was in June 2011. Only the education provision was inspected on this occasion.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The curriculum, teaching and assessment, and students' progress and behaviour are all satisfactory. The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and are regularly reviewed. There are shared ways of working between the care and education provisions which enable the school to meet its aims. All regulations are met. The school has improved its systems of monitoring the curriculum and teaching and learning since the last inspection.

Quality of education

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection but remains satisfactory as it is not yet enabling students to make good progress. It has an appropriate range and reasonable balance of subjects, which cover all the required areas of learning. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and places an emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and also on information and communication technology. Planning is suitably adapted to help individual students catch up on any lost ground and to build up their self-confidence. All students study physical education, citizenship and courses on personal, social and health education (PSHE) and social skills. Aspects of these programmes are also supported by work undertaken by care staff as part of the 24-hour curriculum. Modern languages are

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

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

offered, as well options in history, geography and art at Key Stage 4. Regular use is made of entry level courses to enable students to gain externally recognised accredited qualifications; these help to build up their confidence and self-esteem. A strong feature is the availability of vocational courses, such as building construction.

Careers education is supported by appropriate links to the Connexions service; this helps students to plan for their future independent living. The curriculum is complemented by a range of external trips to places of interest such as Jodrell Bank and the Liverpool Islamic Centre. The range of extra-curricular activities undertaken can be limited because students sometimes decide not to participate.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. The teaching is undertaken by a team of teachers. Their specialist training in behaviour management helps them to cope successfully with the challenging attitudes and behaviours displayed by students on occasion. Teaching is undertaken on a one-to-one basis. These sessions are characterised by a supportive approach and discussions encourage the students to take an active part in the work. Lesson planning is related appropriately to an understanding of students' prior attainment. Literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily, including the use of literacy across other subjects. Staff strive hard to identify activities which will appeal to the students' interests. Teaching in physical education makes use of the facilities of a local leisure centre. Some experimental work is undertaken in science but the provision for practical activities to engage students more actively in their learning is limited. Resources for teaching and learning are adequate.

The school's assessment system includes checking on the amount of time a student remains engaged in a lesson. When a significant change occurs, discussions with the care staff take place to discover any underlying reasons. Initially, students' rates of engagement and participation in lessons are often quite low. However, their involvement improves over time. The school's records and checks on students' work show that progress in English and mathematics is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers seek to establish links between subjects and at the same time to promote aspects of the students' personal development.

A baseline assessment is used to plan suitable lessons to meet each student's particular needs at the outset and, when required, to address the requirements of their statements of special educational needs. Carefully devised individual education plans are created and specific personal targets are periodically reviewed. Students' work is marked regularly and targets for improvement are set. Students make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in their learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory. Records show that attendance and behaviour improve over time, usually becoming at least satisfactory after a few months: this represents considerable progress for students who have often experienced a disrupted education in the past. Behaviour improves

over time and is satisfactory. There have been no exclusions from the school in the last year.

Links between the care and education staff ensure that students' moral development is good and that it is consistently fostered via the 24-hour curriculum. There are some strengths in the provision of social and cultural education but students' responses to what the school provides are not always positive and they do not always enjoy the educational process. Social development is satisfactory. Students are given opportunities for making a positive contribution to aspects of the care and education provided and they make satisfactory responses. Self-sufficiency is promoted as far as possible through work in PSHE to develop independence skills, with specific courses which lead to entry level certificates. This also helps to develop students' economic awareness and ensure their future well-being.

The provision for promoting students' spiritual development is satisfactory. Visits are arranged to local places of worship, although sometimes students do not wish to participate. Religious education is taught over the year, although not on a regular basis. Horticulture sessions provide opportunities for quiet reflection. Visits, for example to Chinatown in Manchester and Liverpool, promote students' cultural development satisfactorily and there is good provision in the school and home to develop an awareness of equality and diversity. Students are given appropriate opportunities to develop an understanding of public institutions and services through their course on citizenship, which also deals with aspects of democracy such as people's rights and responsibilities.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place and given a high priority, with regular training for all staff, and enhanced training for the designated officer. The policies are well-written and regularly reviewed. The training in all the school's policies and procedures ensures that staff implement them with a high level of consistency within school and between the school and home. Students are well supervised at all times. The caring ethos in the home ensures that students feel safe and well cared for.

Healthy living is promoted by involving students in planning their diet on a regular basis. Students are also prompted to adopt a healthy lifestyle by care staff and are warned of the dangers of smoking. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and careful risk assessments are made prior to educational trips. There are effective policies for promoting good behaviour, though the system of rewards and sanctions is not always sufficiently flexible to respond in detail to the particular personal difficulties of students. All teachers and care staff are trained in first aid. Admission and attendance registers are kept in line with statutory requirements. The school meets the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 with a detailed and comprehensive plan, covering the next three years, to increase access.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school maintains a single central record of staff and undertakes checks prior to their appointment in line with requirements. Files show that all the necessary checks are undertaken.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is set in a modern detached building, which is also a children's home, in a quiet rural setting. The accommodation is well maintained. There is a small classroom for teaching with a computer and printer. There is a garden, with a hard-surfaced area, which is used for horticultural purposes and recreation. The school makes good use of a local park for activities such as football and cycling.

Provision of information

The school's brochure includes all the required information. There are well-established channels of communication with parents and carers and local authority placement officers. Regular progress reports are completed to support the individual education plans for all students. Reports are produced annually which provide details of students' progress in all the subjects taught.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy complies fully with the regulations.

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

What the school could do to improve further

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

- ensure more practical activities are provided to enable students to engage more effectively in their own learning
- refine further the school's system of rewards and sanctions.

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

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	Inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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		✓		
--	--	---	--	--

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Date school opened	December 2007		
Age range of pupils	10-18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,800		
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Norris-Heyes		
Proprietor	Continuum Care and Education		

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.



21 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Gables School

As you will know, I visited your school recently to look at the education you receive. I spoke to you as well as the staff. You will be interested to hear that the quality of education at the school is satisfactory and it helps you to make satisfactory progress in your studies, and good progress in your personal and social skills in a safe and secure environment.

Staff care for you well, treating you with respect. Your behaviour is usually satisfactory and you usually get on with your teachers and other staff.

In addition to learning English, mathematics, science, ICT and social skills, you have the opportunity to make some option choices in Years 10 and 11. The school plans lessons and a timetable carefully to meet your individual needs and interests. The teaching you receive is satisfactory.

I have suggested a few improvements to make the school better. I have asked the school to provide more practical activities so you can engage more effectively in lessons. I have also suggested that the use of rewards and sanctions is reviewed.

Yours sincerely

Ramesh Kapadia
Lead Inspector