

# Children's Home URN: 135333

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Peter Toft
Social care inspector	Anthony Kyem

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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>

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**

This is an independent special school attached to one of the children's homes owned by the Continuum Care and Education Group. It is situated in a residential suburban area and is based in a semi-detached house. The school has no religious affiliation. It was registered in 2007 for one student aged between 10 and 18 years with complex needs, including behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some students may be on roll at the school for only a few days, whereas others in the past have stayed for two years. The student currently on roll has a statement of special educational needs and is looked after by her local authority. The school aims to promote 'excellence, equality and high achievement for all through unconditionally positive regard for everyone'. It also aims to prepare students who have had troubled lives and very negative experiences of schooling to develop the confidence and skills to return to mainstream education. The school was last inspected in June 2008 and the care provision was last inspected in December 2010.

## **Evaluation of the school**

The school provides a good quality education, meets its aims well and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Students receive a broad, interesting and personalised curriculum. The consistently good teaching is finely tuned to meet students' specific and carefully assessed needs and help them overcome their previously negative attitudes to education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is good, supporting students' personal development well. The school makes outstanding provision in promoting the welfare, health and safety and the safeguarding of students. All of the regulations for continued registration as an independent school are met. The care provision was judged to be outstanding and national minimum standards were met.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

## Quality of education

A good curriculum supports the good progress made by students. The school goes to some lengths for all students, irrespective of their likely length of stay, to assess their past attainment and specific learning needs when they are admitted. It takes careful note of the requirements specified in statements of special educational needs. The resulting information is well used to develop an individual education plan and a teaching programme for each student which promotes clear progression. These programmes draw well on the content of the comprehensive curriculum developed within the company which owns the school. This ensures that students' personalised programmes of study cover basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, the subjects of the National Curriculum, and other subjects covering personal development and careers education. Students' preparation for their futures is supported by a useful 'preparation for working life' course and guidance given by specialists within the company and beyond. The curriculum policies are clear and well used by staff to create very effective schemes of work for all subjects. The school curriculum is strongly supported by the '24-hour curriculum'; much of this is led by staff in the care home. It contributes significantly to the students' social development. Students participate enthusiastically in the good range of enrichment activities provided. The company's extensive contacts with external educational, training and leisure organisations support these activities well.

Teaching, learning and assessment are good, helping students to progress well. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. This has been aided by the appointment of a senior education team which oversees and helps to develop and evaluate teaching in the company's care homes in the area. As a result, teaching is now generally carried out by subject specialists who are good at passing on their enthusiasm and knowledge to students, and motivating those who are very reluctant to participate in lessons when admitted to the school. Where teachers are not working within their first specialism, teaching is sometimes less effective. Lessons are well planned and are focused sharply on the specific needs of each student. The teaching and care staff are highly effective in adapting lesson content should the mood or willingness of a student deteriorate. This flexibility is critical in minimising disruption.

Generally, students participate well in lessons once they have become accustomed to the school. Care staff support teachers well in lessons, especially when they work alongside the student and engage in the same learning activity. This gives students role models for rigorous coverage of the work. Teaching methods are varied and usually stimulating. Lessons are often divided into different phases to help students maintain interest. At times, however, opportunities are missed to strengthen students' interest by setting contrasting activities within these phases to bring greater variety to the learning process. Relationships between staff and students are excellent. Behaviour in lessons is good and staff are very effective in motivating students to cooperate if they arrive unwilling to learn. Resources for learning are good. Specialist teachers have portable sets of equipment which they carry between

care homes within the company. This works very well to give students access to high quality resources.

Assessment is a strength of the school. When they are admitted to the school, students are given a comprehensive assessment of prior attainment. The procedure used is very effective in helping staff to diagnose gaps in students' attainment. This information is well used to plan teaching. Staff keep a careful watch on progress and give detailed feedback to students as lessons progress. Staff are well aware of each student's particular special educational needs and/or disabilities and plan their teaching to meet them. Very detailed records are kept of progress in behaviour, attitude and attainment. These are used for the very informative monthly progress reports produced for staff, parents and carers.

Students make good progress in lessons. Detailed records of attainment, success in externally accredited courses, and improvements in behaviour and attendance are kept by the school. They provide authoritative evidence of students' good progress over the longer term.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good. A well-conceived policy provides for staff a clear interpretation of these four areas and identifies a good range of content to be covered within the curriculum. Courses in religious education, citizenship and personal, social and health education are well designed and make a major contribution to the individual learning programmes devised to support each student's personal development. These courses are well supplemented by extensive provision of social and cultural activities and visits to outside organisations made within the 24-hour curriculum. Moral and spiritual issues are discussed in religious education and citizenship lessons. The school is very effective in helping students to appreciate that citizens in our country have a range of cultural backgrounds, and that we are served by a number of public institutions. Students' social development is supported by regular activities carried out in the community.

The school sets out to strengthen students' self-esteem. It does so very effectively, especially for those students who stay on roll for a significant period of time. The school's records show clear progress made by individual students in this respect. Improving behaviour is also a significant aim. This is achieved very well; staff set clear boundaries for students and have good procedures to ensure that students remain within them. Students' behaviour and attitudes in lessons and around the school are consistently good, supported by the excellent relationships between staff and students. Attendance over the last year has been low compared with mainstream schools but significantly better for each student than it was in their previous schools.

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

Provision to promote the welfare, health, safety and safeguarding of students is outstanding. A range of excellent policies have been prepared centrally within the company; each policy is modified by staff to match the specific nature of this school and care home. The policies are reviewed and updated regularly. They provide a solid foundation for the high level of consistency and vigilance evident among staff in their supervision of students on- and off-site. This consistency is supported by extensive staff training, for example, in behaviour management. Child protection procedures are robust and staff, including the designated officer, are trained at the required level. Risk assessments are sharply focused and well used by staff as they plan activities. All staff are clear about their responsibilities and carry them out diligently. The premises comply with health and safety requirements and are very well managed by staff. Procedures to promote safety in practical activities are excellent. The curriculum in the school and care home makes a major contribution to students' understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. This was made clear in accounts of significant improvements in students' eating habits and their success in planning and preparing their own nutritious weekly menus. Students are able, under clear but unobtrusive supervision, to socialise with other young people of their own age in local youth clubs. This enables them to forge good friendships. Staff go to considerable lengths to support this aspect of social development. The school has a detailed plan to improve the premises which meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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

The suitability of all staff, including those from the proprietorial group, to work with students has been checked in accordance with requirements. The necessary information is kept accurately on a single central record of checks.

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

The school is based in a semi-detached house in a suburban area. The pleasant and well-maintained accommodation provides a good environment for learning. The classroom and garden areas are well organised and diligently managed; they support academic and recreational activities well. External facilities are well used to support cultural, social and vocational activities.

## **Provision of information**

A useful school prospectus contains all of the information required. It is available to all parents and carers, and to the local authorities which place students here. A wide range of regularly-produced reports on the running of the school and the progress of students is also made available, including detailed monthly reports on students' progress.

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

The procedures for handling complaints meet requirements.

## **Leadership and management of the residential 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').

## **National minimum standards**

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:

- when dividing lessons into short sessions to improve learning, provide sufficient contrast between the activities to capture the students' interest
- help teachers to improve their expertise in their second subject specialisms.

## 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 complex needs, including behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	July 2007		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10-18 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
<b>Annual fees (education)</b>	£34,800		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 644471		
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Angela.norris-heyas@greencorns.co.uk">Angela.norris-heyas@greencorns.co.uk</a>		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Angela Norris-Heyas		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Bob Hall		

**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.**



2 December 2011

Dear Student

**Inspection of Children's Home URN: 135333**

I promised to write to you about what I thought of your school when I had finished the inspection.

- The school gives you a good education and helps you make good progress.
- The teaching is lively and the subjects and activities are very interesting. They will be very useful to you as you grow up.
- You are given lots of opportunities to take part in activities. You clearly enjoy much of your learning in the school and the home, as well as making friends at your youth club.
- The staff take excellent care of you. They go to great lengths to ensure you are safe and learn to live a healthy life. I was very impressed with the way you plan your weekly menu and prepare healthy and tasty meals.
- The staff are keen to make the school even better. I have suggested that the school helps them add more varied activities to some lessons, and also gives teachers more opportunities to improve the expertise in the subjects they teach.

I wish you and all of the staff the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Toft  
Lead Inspector