

# Southlands School and The Wing Centre

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI
Social care inspector	Paula Lahey

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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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>

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and the government of the quality and standard of the service provided.<sup>3, 4</sup>

## Information about the school

Southlands School is an independent residential special school which is registered to provide education for boys aged between seven and 19 years. The residential school admits students aged between seven and 16 years. It occupies a rural location near the town of Lymington in Hampshire. The Wing Centre provides education programmes for males aged between 16 and 19 years. It is located in Bournemouth, approximately 18 miles away from Southlands School. All students have an autistic spectrum condition or Asperger syndrome, and several have associated complex needs including dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder and challenging behaviour. There are currently 98 on roll, 79 of whom have residential places for 38 weeks each year. All have a statement of special educational needs and almost all have their places funded by local authorities. The school opened in 1995 and came under the ownership of Cambian Education Services in 2004.

The school's aim is to 'prepare students to meet the demands of life in a positive way', supported by therapeutic and educational programmes tailored to students' individual needs. It also seeks to raise students' self-esteem by promoting their academic achievement. The last inspection of the education provision took place in May 2008 and of the residential provision in October 2010. This integrated inspection evaluated the quality of both the education and residential provision.

## Evaluation of the school

Southlands School and The Wing Centre are very successful in meeting their aims and provide an outstanding quality of education. The overall effectiveness of the

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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).

<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>4</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

boarding provision is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to developing students' independence and self-esteem. The outstanding curriculum includes a very broad range of therapeutic support and, together with good teaching, enables students to thrive and to make outstanding progress in their academic and personal development. Arrangements for safeguarding and provision for their welfare, health and safety are outstanding, both in the school and in the residential accommodation. Students' behaviour is outstanding. The excellent relationships between staff and students in the education and residential settings underpin students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Since the last inspection, several aspects of the school's work have been strengthened, although changes in some key teaching positions have had an impact on the overall quality of teaching which has fallen slightly. The school meets all except one of the regulatory requirements for independent schools and all of the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

## **Quality of education**

The curriculum is outstanding. It is supported by a very clear set of aims, covers all of the required areas of learning and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. A broad range of courses is matched well to students' individual capabilities and interests. It includes: several subjects at GCSE and entry level; A-level courses in mathematics, science, psychology, history and sociology; vocational courses in construction, mechanical engineering, music and media; and an award for developing independent living and personal skills. Physical exercise is provided on site at Southlands and by visits to a local leisure centre at The Wing Centre. Provision helps keep students fit and ensures that they get sufficient exercise. The primary curriculum includes a rolling programme of relevant and worthwhile topics which ensures very good progression in skills and knowledge for students of different ages. Following a recommendation in the last inspection report, the range of vocational courses provided for students to follow at Key Stage 4 has been extended. The school recognises that links between Key Stage 4 and post-16 provision are not developed fully to maximise continuity in planning for the 14 to 19 age range.

Provision for post-16 students at The Wing Centre is of an extremely high standard. Excellent use is made of links with local colleges and providers of vocational courses to ensure students receive a programme tailored to their individual needs and to prepare them for life beyond school. Students on both sites receive very good careers advice and they are closely involved in planning for their careful transition at each stage as they progress through the school.

The personal, social and health education programme is a particular strength. It contains topics which are very relevant to students with an autistic spectrum condition, for example, personal safety and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The school nurse and an outside specialist provide regular sessions on sex and relationships education. An extremely broad range of therapies, which include speech and language, occupational, holistic and psychotherapy, together with psychological

support for students' emotional development, ensures the requirements outlined in students' statements of special educational needs are met in full. The 24-hour curriculum is supported very well by activities in the residential houses. It has a very strong independence programme which includes daily living skills, cooking, laundry, budgeting, and the use of public transport. An extensive planned programme of evening activities includes swimming, cinema club, art and craft, cooking, a range of sports and trips out.

The quality of teaching and assessment ranges from satisfactory to outstanding and is good overall. Teachers demonstrate a thorough understanding of the needs of students with an autistic spectrum condition and manage any anxious or challenging behaviour skilfully. As a result, a positive climate for learning prevails in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants draw attention to students' successes at every opportunity and praise students for their effort and achievement. This successfully boosts students' self-confidence and self-worth. In the best lessons, teachers encourage students to develop their communication skills and to listen to each other, and there is a good balance between individual and group work. Teachers generally display good subject knowledge of the subjects they teach and use a satisfactory range of resources to support learning. The assessment of students' progress is completed each term and the information is shared with parents and carers and used to set targets for improvement. Most students are aware of the level at which they are working and of their target grades. However, in a few lessons, assessment information is not used effectively to set sharp targets and to plan work that is matched closely to each student's individual level of ability.

Students make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points because teaching is effective, therapeutic support is excellent and the outstanding curriculum meets students' specific needs. Many students re-engage with learning, having failed to thrive in their previous schools. All students leave school with qualifications which recognise their academic, vocational or personal development and several achieve higher grade GCSE and A-level passes. Students make particularly good progress in developing their social and independent living skills. Parents and carers hold overwhelmingly positive views of the school's work and are particularly pleased with the way the school prepares their children for life beyond school. In the words of one parent, 'Our son now has the chance of a productive and secure future.'

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

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school is very successful in developing students' self-esteem and in encouraging them to function in a wider group. Students' social and communication skills are developed very effectively through a range of activities which take place both in the school day and in the evening; for example, when older students chair and minute a group meeting, or in the popular model club when students collaborate to build robots and use information and communication technology (ICT) to help the robots move

independently. The development of these skills was recognised when students gained a national award for team spirit in 2010.

Very positive and trusting relationships are evident between students and adults, both in the education setting and in the residential houses. Staff provide appropriate role models and share a consistent and sensitive approach to managing anxious or challenging behaviour and in preparing students for change. Students are well supported to develop an understanding of their own needs and behaviour and how these may affect others, both positively and negatively. As a result, students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding; they enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They report how the reward system recognises their successes and helps them to improve their behaviour. Rewards include toys for younger students, trips out, for example to go paint balling, and shared rewards such as a new television set in one of the residential houses.

Students have good opportunities for making a contribution to the school and wider community, for example, when they keep the residential houses tidy, prepare the hall for assembly, run the school tuck shop and raise money for charities such as Children in Need. Students contribute very effectively to the review and development of residential provision and to wider school activities through the weekly house group meetings. They make their views known on such topics as menus, refurbishment, reward systems and group outings. They develop a good understanding of the institutions in wider society when they discuss topical issues. Students' understanding of their own and different cultures is supported by a range of visits and topics in the citizenship curriculum. A highlight for the school was the recent trip made by some older students to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa. Different religious festivals are celebrated at assembly and the diverse needs of individual students are respected, both in the education setting and in the residential houses. Provision promotes a tolerant and harmonious community.

Students are prepared very effectively for their future economic well-being. They learn to discuss the problems associated with an autistic spectrum condition and how to manage difficult situations they might encounter in wider society. They also complete a range of mini-enterprise and work-experience placements. In relation to their special educational needs, they leave school with a high level of independence and a broad range of academic and vocational qualifications.

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

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are outstanding. Students feel confident to approach a range of staff, including senior managers and the independent visitor, in order to seek support, to inform them of any feelings of anxiety, or to raise a concern. Staff share a positive approach to managing students' behaviour, which is based on a reward system and therapeutic support. They receive regular training in an approved method of physical intervention and incidents of challenging behaviour are managed sensitively and recorded appropriately.

Residential staff are on duty during the academic day and provide students with additional support and encouragement. The multi-disciplinary therapeutic team and residential and education staff meet regularly to ensure key information is shared and to review students' plans and targets. Daily handovers help all parties to keep up to date on students' progress and ensure there is a consistent approach to meeting their needs.

Detailed health and safety policies and risk assessments cover all aspects of the school's work, both in the teaching accommodation and in the residential houses. Good levels of staffing ensure students' safety. Fire drills are held regularly and fire-fighting equipment is routinely checked by a specialist company. Thorough arrangements are in place to safeguard students and all staff have received appropriate training in child protection. The occupational therapist and school nurse facilitate regular health promotion sessions for all boys which include nutrition, personal hygiene, drugs and alcohol and dental care. Students have a very good choice of healthy food and take part in a wide range of activities involving physical exercise. Those on special diets have their needs met very well with close oversight from the school nurse. Older students are supported to successfully complete personal safety awareness sessions and can then travel independently into the local area to meet friends and join in with community activities.

The school has produced a suitable plan to increase accessibility in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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

The school has thorough procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and others. All of the required checks on the suitability of the proprietor, and for all staff, have been completed effectively. All checks are suitably recorded in a single central register.

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

At Southlands School, the main building is a large Georgian house which provides office space, therapy rooms, assembly and dining halls and some boarding accommodation for students. Classrooms and additional boarding houses are located in adjoining buildings. Classrooms are of a suitable size for the number of students using them and include specialist art, science, design and technology and music rooms. Residential houses are comfortable, homely, and are kept in a good state of repair and cleanliness. Students have individual study bedrooms which are personalised with their belongings and favoured items. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of improvements to the residential houses, including the installation of new kitchens and bathrooms and the purchase of new furniture. The school is set in spacious grounds which provide ample opportunity for outdoor play. Recreational facilities are appropriate for the different age groups and include climbing apparatus and an all-weather sports pitch.

The Wing Centre is located in a large detached Edwardian house in a suburb of Bournemouth. Being on a bus route, it provides easy access to local facilities which supports the development of students' independence. The accommodation has been refurbished recently to a high standard. It includes a number of classrooms, therapy and individual study rooms, an ICT suite and a dining/common room. A small area with tables and benches provides adequate space for outdoor recreation.

## **Provision of information**

The school's website and prospectus provide parents and carers with appropriate information about its aims and organisation. A detailed report is provided each term, and annually, on students' educational attainment and progress. Residential students have a well-planned induction. Each residence has a wide range of information displayed in an accessible format which enables students to understand routines and expectations and who to contact should they have a concern. Key workers complete a weekly written report for families detailing students' achievements and developing needs. While it provides almost all of the required information for parents, carers and others, the school does not provide a detailed annual account of expenditure incurred for each student funded by a local authority.

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

The complaints policy meets all educational and residential regulatory requirements.

## **Leadership and management of the residential provision**

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. Residential provision is seen as an integral part of the school and plays a highly successful role in meeting students' social, behavioural and educational needs. A comprehensive and up-to-date 'Statement of Principles and Practice' and a student guide to boarding identify clearly the aims and ethos of the school. There is a strong and successful emphasis on inclusion, participation and promotion of positive behaviour. The school actively upholds equality, tackles any discrimination and supports inclusion through its policy and practice. Residential students' individual needs are very well understood and practice is personalised to ensure each student receives outstanding care and support.

Senior managers demonstrate a strong commitment to continual improvement and they have further enhanced previous outstanding practice. This has included: the provision of a supernumerary duty officer, multi-disciplinary pupil reviews, extended opportunities for community activities and a short break service to meet students' needs. The residential staff are well trained and are suitably experienced in supporting pupils with complex social, behavioural and psychological needs. Staff provide excellent role models, appropriately challenging, modelling and praising behaviour. There is an effective supervision, appraisal and team meeting system which ensures staff are well supported, clearly guided and kept up to date with all



developments. There is excellent use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to the quality of care provided and this drives forward improvement. There are regular monitoring visits from an independent person and these include opportunities for students and staff to speak in private with the visitor. Senior managers scrutinise restraint records, incident reports, complaints and bullying records for trends and patterns in order to further develop proactive strategies and enhance outcomes for pupils.

Passionately committed leadership and a dedicated staff team ensure excellent outcomes for residential students. Students enjoy engaging in a wide range of activities both on site and within their local community. They are provided with well-planned opportunities to learn life and social skills, which significantly increase their self-esteem and self-confidence. The residential experience provides a highly valued preparation for independent life.

## **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 the one listed below.<sup>5</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- ensure that where a student who is registered at the school is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, it submits an account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that student to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 24(1)(h)).

## **National minimum standards**

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated regulations.

## **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- Strengthen curriculum planning for the 14 to 19 age range further by developing closer links between Key Stage 4 and post-16 provision.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by using assessment information more consistently to set targets and to plan activities which are closely matched to individual students' levels of ability.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made).

## 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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## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### Overall effectiveness of the residential experience

<b>Overall effectiveness of the residential experience</b>	✓			
Outcomes for residential pupils	✓			
Quality of residential provision and care	✓			
Residential pupils' safety	✓			
Leadership and management of the residential provision	✓			

## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special residential school for pupils with an autistic spectrum condition		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1995		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–19 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 98	Girls: 0	Total: 98
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of boarders</b>	Boys: 79	Girls: 0	Total: 79
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 98	Girls: 0	Total: 98
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£65,146		
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£130,291		
<b>Address of school</b>	Vicars Hill Boldre Lymington Hampshire SO41 5QB		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01590 675350		
<b>Email address</b>	Naomi.clarke@cambianguroup.com		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Naomi Clarke Ms Janette Morgan		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cambian Education Services		

**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 Students



### **Inspection of Southlands School and The Wing Centre, Lymington SO41 5QB**

Recently I visited your school with two other inspectors. We enjoyed our visit very much and appreciated the welcome we received. Thanks to those of you who took time to talk to us about your work and life at school and in the residential accommodation. We also talked to the staff and other adults connected with the school, visited lessons and the boarding provision, looked at your work and took account of the views of your parents and carers to find out how the school is doing.

Here are the main points.

- Your school gives you an outstanding education.
- The boarding provision is outstanding and helps you to take part in a very wide range of after-school clubs and activities.
- You enjoy coming to school, behave very well and make outstanding progress.
- Your school is very successful in helping you to do more things for yourself and to feel positive about yourself.
- Your school works with many other adults to make sure you are looked after extremely well.
- You have excellent opportunities to follow different courses and to follow your particular interests, especially those of you who attend The Wing Centre.
- Your parents and carers hold very positive views about the school.

I have asked the school to do a few things to help it become better.

- Plan more carefully the courses offered to those of you aged between 14 and 19 years.
- Check that teachers set you work which gives you the right level of challenge.

You can all help by always trying your best and talking to adults about how you might improve your work. Thank you once again for your help with the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath  
Her Majesty's Inspector