

Wings School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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}

The inspection of the care provision is carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for children's homes. This inspection took place at a different time and 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

Wings School is a residential special school for boys and girls aged from 11 to 17 years with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school, part of Wings Educational Limited, is located in Whasset, Cumbria on a spacious 24-acre site. The school opened in April 2003 and has been developed to include residential units, bungalows and houses, arranged around a new indoor sports hall and a courtyard with classrooms and offices. Registered for 59 students, there are currently 53 students on roll, 42 of whom have a statement of special educational needs and 48 are in the care of local authorities. The school currently provides full-time 52-week residential care for 45 of its students. The school's educational provision was previously inspected in September 2008 and the care provision was inspected in November 2011.

The school aims to create a centre of excellence for the education, care and personal development of young people with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.

Evaluation of the school

Wings School successfully meets its aims and continues to provide a good quality of education for its students. Outstanding provision has been maintained for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of the students have improved and are now outstanding. Other aspects continue to be good. The good curriculum, which has particular strengths in the arrangements for promoting students' personal development, along with good teaching, provides a good all-round education. Consequently, students make outstanding progress at improving their behaviour, attitudes to learning and their engagement with education. All of the requirements to safeguard students are in place. The school meets all of the regulations for independent schools.

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

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

Quality of education

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features, notably the provision for improving students' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Based on the National Curriculum, it is broad and balanced with a clear focus on developing students' English and mathematics skills. Citizenship and personal and social development lessons sensitively and very effectively tackle a wide range of topics that are particularly relevant to the students such as managing emotions and relationships. All students are able to pursue courses to GCSE examination level in English, mathematics, science, physical education, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and art. Courses include a good amount of practical work. The curriculum is very effectively enhanced using study visits to places of interest. For example, a Year 11 group visited the theatre to see a production of *An Inspector Calls* and, as a consequence, were able to critically compare the text to the theatre production. Assemblies, at the start and end of each day, are used very well to remind students of the school's high expectations and to share home and school successes. The good links between care and education staff ensure that high expectations of students' work and behaviour are a consistent feature of the school's work. Arrangements to provide older students with work experience placements are good and many students talk positively about these, including how work placements have helped them to secure offers of future employment. All Year 11 students receive good guidance and support and there are good transition plans to help them secure college places.

Students make good progress overall. Particularly impressive is the progress that all students make in improving their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Although there are occasional transgressions, and some students state that behaviour is not always good, students themselves identify that they have made the greatest gains in improving their behaviour. Across the school the progress that students make in English, notably their reading, is particularly strong, in part because of the consistently good teaching in this subject. However, progress in mathematics is more modest because the quality of teaching is not as well established.

Teaching and assessment are good. Staff have very good relationships with students, who are usually respectful and polite. Staff are skilled at spotting potential disruption and effectively defusing these situations. A key feature of the school's success is the excellent staff-to-student ratios in lessons so that staff are able to give students much individual attention, which helps them to remain engaged in their learning. However, on some occasions, this at the expense of promoting independence and limited use is made of collaborative work between students. Lesson planning has improved and is now consistent throughout the school. Typically it ensures that lessons have clear learning intentions, identify key vocabulary and are well structured with interesting activities for students. For example, in an art lesson students used clay to produce three-dimensional models of flowers and fossils. Tasks are generally matched to the needs of students within a class and are particularly effective where they are carefully tailored to each individual's abilities. For example, in one mathematics lesson tasks were pitched at just at the right level for each of

the students, which challenged all including the most able. However, although planning is sound, in a few lessons tasks are not always planned using teachers' knowledge of each individual's particular needs and some students complete work quickly and have to wait for other students to catch up. Teachers demonstrate their good subject knowledge and use questioning well to check on students' understanding.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school provides a vibrant and welcoming environment for students in which they feel safe. During their time at the school students make exceptional progress in improving their behaviour because teachers use skilful and consistent approaches with them. Students feel valued and cared for and this supports them in developing positive self-esteem and a positive self-image. This can be seen clearly in the pride with which students wear their impeccable uniforms.

The school provides frequent, high-quality opportunities for students to reflect on current and global issues through assemblies. They are also successful in developing a moral compass and an excellent understanding of their responsibilities within the community. For example, an excellent assembly with the theme of 'laughter as medicine' helped students reflect on how their own mood can affect others and the need to practise self-discipline. Students say their views are taken into account and work to further develop this aspect has been strengthened by the recent introduction of the school council.

Students are exceptionally well-prepared for the future. They understand how various public institutions and services in England operate. For example, lessons teach them about the services provided by the Citizen's Advice Bureau and a visit to the Houses of Parliament gave them a good working knowledge of how the country is governed. In personal development lessons students discuss difficult subjects such as parenting skills with sensitivity and insight.

An ethos of tolerance and harmony is integral to the school's work. While there are occasions in which tensions arise, students are helped to resolve these through talking strategies. The curriculum supports this tolerance through the study of other religions and cultures. Consequently, students develop a strong appreciation of difference and diversity.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the students are outstanding. There are particularly strong links between the care and education staff which are used effectively to ensure that students feel safe and well cared for. The high staff-to-student ratio, clear routines and excellent relationships between staff and students ensure that students are safe. Students are closely monitored and information is shared with carers to promote continuity of care between home and

school. Arrangements for safeguarding students are robust. All of the required policies are in place for child protection, anti-bullying and health and safety, including for first aid. Fire drills are held regularly and fire-fighting equipment is checked annually. The school takes excellent care of its students and keeps careful records of accidents and of incidents. There are good policies and procedures in place to minimise risks throughout the school to provide a caring and safe environment for students on a day-to-day basis.

Students state that instances of bullying are rare and the vast majority of students state that they feel safe. The school visits policy is effectively implemented and there are appropriate risk assessments in place for each visit out of the school. The school has admission and attendance registers which meet requirements. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and has prepared an access plan to improve accessibility for students with disabilities.

Students develop a very good understanding of what constitutes healthy living through the curriculum, for example, when studying for physical education qualifications. Healthy eating is encouraged by providing access to fresh fruit and salad at lunchtime. Students have been made aware of the risks associated with certain lifestyle choices, such as smoking and drug misuse.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

A single central record is kept up to date and shows clearly that all proprietors, staff and regular visitors have been subject to an enhanced check by the Criminal Records Bureau before they are allowed to work at the school.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises are very well suited to their purpose and are of good quality. The classrooms, library, offices and bistro are arranged around an open courtyard some distance from the students' residential accommodation. Specialist teaching rooms for science, ICT, art and design and technology, along with a library, are used well to support curriculum delivery. Furnishings are of a high standard. The recent addition of a sports hall provides a very well-used facility for physical education and there is a drama studio and an additional classroom. There are extensive areas of grass around the site, some allocated to games pitches, and also hard-surfaced tennis courts. These enhance the school environment and provide good sporting and recreational opportunities.

Provision of information

The school provides parents, carers and others with all of the required information through the prospectus and the recently improved website. There is a clear statement of the aims and curriculum of the school and the arrangements for discipline. The school provides parents and carers with an annual written report on the progress of their children.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a complaints policy and a set of procedures, available through its website, which meets all of 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').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- make more effective use of assessment information that teachers have about students to ensure that planned learning activities are consistently individually tailored to the learning needs of each student
- provide, where appropriate, more opportunities for students to work with greater independence and to undertake more collaborative work.

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	Secondary residential special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Date school opened	April 2003		
Age range of pupils	11-17 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 26	Girls: 27	Total: 53
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 22	Girls: 20	Total: 42
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 22	Girls: 26	Total: 48
Annual fees (Boarders)	£110,054-£162,270		
Address of school	Whassett Milnthorpe Cumbria LA7 7DN		
Telephone number	01539 562009		
Email address	info@wingsschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Michael Webster		
Proprietor	Wings Education Limited		

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.



Dear Students

Inspection of Wings School, Cumbria, LA7 7DN

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave to me and my colleague when we inspected your school recently. We found talking to you, looking at your work and observing you learning very helpful. It was also helpful to listen to your views about the school and see what you had to say in the survey we asked you to complete. I am delighted to report that Wings School is a good school and some aspects are outstanding.

- The progress you make in improving your behaviour is outstanding.
- All the staff care about you very much indeed and work hard to help you to feel safe and valued. They support you exceptionally well when you are feeling angry or upset. They are helping you to develop self-discipline and ways of coping when things go wrong.
- You make good progress in your learning because of the good teaching and the good curriculum. Teachers make sure you have interesting and practical activities to do.
- You are developing important skills to support you in the future and you have a strong appreciation of the beliefs and culture of others.

Your school does all of the things that it has to do in order to continue to operate as a school. All the staff want the school to be even better so I have suggested a couple of things that could improve things further. First, for your teachers to use what they know about how well you are doing to more carefully plan activities that meet your individual needs. Second, to help you develop independent learning skills and provide more opportunities for you to work cooperatively with other students. You can play an important part too by working hard and by continuing to improve your behaviour.

Yours sincerely,

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector