

# Queenswood 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Queenswood School is a day school for students aged 13 to 18 years, owned by the Priory Group. It opened in 2000 and now educates up to 25 students. There were 17 students on roll at the time of the inspection. The young people who currently attend the school have severe social, emotional and behaviour difficulties and have often experienced disrupted education. All students have a statement of special educational needs. The school's aim is to 'enable its students to acknowledge and cope with their specific difficulties and, through the provision of appropriate full-time education assist them in fulfilling their potential in the adult world and workplace'. The school was last inspected in May 2008. Since then it has recently expanded with the erection of two new classrooms. The school shares a site with a residential children's home which is also owned by the Priory Group. The home is registered separately and was last inspected by Ofsted in May 2011.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Queenswood School provides a good quality of education for its students. The curriculum, teaching and assessment, the welfare, health and safety of students and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The school meets all safeguarding requirements. It provides a calm and purposeful atmosphere, which students value. It has made good progress since the last inspection with significant improvements to all aspects of its work. The school achieves its aims well and makes a marked difference to the lives of its students who gain in self-esteem and confidence. The school meets all of the regulations.

## **Quality of education**

The school provides a good curriculum to meet the needs of individual students effectively. The strength of the curriculum lies in the ability to provide a highly personalised programme to begin re-engaging students in learning through a wide range of vocational activities which are appropriately accredited. There are good curriculum subject policies, which are supported by comprehensive schemes of work and subject development plans. The core curriculum ensures that students can cover basic skills and this is supplemented with extensive vocational courses, which provide good levels of enjoyment and help to prepare students well for their next phase of

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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).

life. The majority of students go on to some form of education or training when they leave school.

There is a good emphasis on outdoor education, where students participate in activities such as camping and hill walking. Their impact on the students' self-esteem, social skills and enjoyment is good. In some cases it is transformational, for instance, some students who lacked self-confidence and were previously reluctant to attend or join in school life have triumphed at climbing or canoeing and have started to see themselves in a new light and have improved their attendance at school.

Students make good progress. Most students achieve higher entry level awards and some achieve lower GCSE grades by the end of Year 11. This for most students represents good progress over a relatively short period of time, as their previous education has often been fragmented and consequently many have had significant gaps in their learning. The school recognises that the development of more challenging qualifications, to bridge the gap between entry level awards and GCSE is an area for development. The high level of personalisation afforded by the curriculum ensures that all students regardless of background achieve equally well. There is a good focus on community-based learning and work-related learning. Students have at least two work-related experiences and have opportunities to work as volunteers with animals or in shops. Where appropriate, students attend local colleges. Students' personal development is promoted very well through the personal, social health and citizenship programme, which covers important aspects such as sex and relationship education, substance misuse, and understanding the justice system.

Teaching and assessment are good. Staff establish positive and supportive relationships with students and this helps to engage the more reluctant learners well. Students speak warmly of the strong positive relationships with staff and how much this has helped them. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of the students they teach. Medium and short-term planning is thorough and the needs of individual students are met effectively. The short regular breaks during the course of the morning ensure that lessons are long enough for students to maintain their concentration for the duration of the time. Most students take pride in their work and concentrate well. For example, in an information and communication technology lesson, students concentrated well to produce a piece of writing which they had drafted, edited and then read aloud with confidence to class members. Learning objectives do not always focus sharply enough on what students are intended to learn by the end of the lesson, and tend to describe activity. This means that questioning techniques, particularly in the plenary are not always fully exploited to gain better verbal contributions from students and to probe their understanding more extensively. Students speak with pride about their school. They enjoy the wide array of activities on offer and this has successfully developed their confidence and enjoyment. Students expressed positive views on their lessons and feel they are making good progress.

Students' achievements are carefully recorded on well-planned individual education plans. The recording of students' progress at an individual level is good, but the tracking, analysis and use of students' academic progress across all subjects at the whole school level is not yet in place. The marking of students' work is thorough and gives useful pointers as to how they can further improve their work. Effective teaching enables students to leave with a range of accredited academic and vocational qualifications.

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

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They generally come to the school lacking self-esteem, but leave with more confidence. Their ability to reflect on their own lives and the needs of others is good because staff constantly reinforce these perspectives. Students learn to identify their own successes and the school makes much of celebrating these through certificates and praise. They develop positive attitudes to learning and their attendance at school improves vastly. Sport and outdoor activities play an important part in helping students to respect people and the world around them. Understanding of public institutions is promoted very effectively through the personal, social and health education programme. Some students recently visited a prison to gain a powerful understanding of the consequences of breaking the law. Their moral and social awareness improves while they are at the school and their behaviour is good. Where students lack sufficient self-discipline, staff manage them well. Students are encouraged to work cooperatively in pairs and groups, for example in team games. The school tracks improvements of students' behaviour at an individual level but does not track this information at the whole school level.

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

The welfare, health and safety of students are good. Students reported that they feel safe at school. The supportive relationships with staff are an important factor in promoting the welfare of students. One student commented 'They know me as me'.

Pupils are closely supervised through high levels of staffing. There are instances of bullying but the school is diligent in tackling these issues quickly and effectively and students are confident to confide in staff and know that their concerns are listened to and acted upon. Staff treat students with care and respect. The behaviour policy has clear expectations to promote positive behaviour and to manage poor behaviour effectively, and these are implemented consistently resulting in improved behaviour by students.

Policies and procedures ensure that health and safety issues are fully considered and that risk assessments are effective. As a result, quite ambitious provision is made for challenging outdoor activities, which boost self-esteem and confidence, with the assurance that safety will not be compromised. The range of physical activities on offer, provide good opportunities to promote healthier lifestyles. The school has devised and implemented a range of comprehensive policies, which are reviewed regularly. These include good policies on health and safety, anti-bullying and

safeguarding. Procedures to ensure students are protected are good. The two members of staff responsible for safeguarding and child protection have attended the required training and all staff have regular awareness training. The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to learn how to keep safe on the internet. The school complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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

The school complies fully with the regulations in respect of the checks it makes on prospective employees and proprietors with regard to their identity and suitability to work with young people.

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

The school is set in safe, attractive grounds. The grounds are used to support aspects of students' learning such as horticulture. A multi-purpose hard standing area has recently been developed to provide students with a good outdoor area for games. Two newly purpose built classrooms have been added to the accommodation since the time of the last inspection. These are of good quality and further enhance the educational facilities at the site. Overall classrooms are well decorated and meet the needs of the students and the curriculum, although specialist facilities for teaching science are limited.

### **Provision of information**

An attractive prospectus contains all relevant and essential information for new and prospective parents and carers. This information is also supplemented by the school's own website. Parents and carers are kept well informed of the progress of their child, through an annual report and of any concerns the school may have. Parents have positive views of the school. Responses from placing authorities were generally positive.

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

The school has a comprehensive complaints policy.

### **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:

- develop measures to clearly demonstrate students' academic progress and improvements in behaviour over time and use this information to bring about further improvements in learning
- increase the range of qualifications so that students can achieve at appropriate levels, between entry level awards and GCSE qualifications.

## 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 day school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	January 2000		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13-18 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 12	Girls: 5	Total: 17
<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: 12	Girls: 5	Total: 17
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 10	Girls: 3	Total: 13
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£60,000		
<b>Email address</b>	jamesimber@priorygroup.com		
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Imber		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Priory 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.**



10 February 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Queenswood School**

I enjoyed my visit to your school and talking with many of you. Thank you for contributing to the inspection through the returned questionnaires and discussions with me.

Most of you make good progress during your time at the school. You are able to follow a wide range of courses at the school and off-site and you told me how much you enjoy these experiences and feel that they help you to develop your self-confidence. You are able to gain a good range of qualifications by the time you leave the school both academically and in vocational courses. Many of you have seen big improvements in your behaviour, attitudes to learning and your work. The teaching you receive is good and you have very supportive and trusting relationships with the adults you work with, which helps you enormously. You told me that you feel safe, enjoy the school and are happy with how things are at the school.

The headteacher and staff have worked hard to improve your school. I have asked those people leading your school to do the following things to improve the school further.

- Measure more clearly how well you make progress academically and with your behaviour and use this information to bring further improvements in your learning.
- Increase the range and challenge of the qualifications you can achieve.

You can help to improve your school by attending regularly and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Frank Price  
Lead Inspector