

URN: 135380

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

The school is located in the premises of a children's home and opened as a special school in August 2007. It is registered for up to six boys aged from 12 to 17 years with the intention that young people resident in the home and not attending a mainstream school or college would be educated here. The premises comprise of a large detached house with a discrete area set aside for learning, and a garden that provides opportunities for leisure, recreation and education activities. Students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. They may come from anywhere in England and have diverse cultural backgrounds. There are currently two students on roll, aged between 16 and 18 years; both are looked after children. They both have a statement of special educational needs and moderate learning difficulties. The education provision had its first inspection in July 2008 and the care provision had its last full inspection in July 2011, followed by an interim inspection in February 2012. There was no inspection of the care provision at the time of this inspection.

The staff seek to create an environment which enables young people to become independent and valued members of the community.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education and meets its aims. The combination of a good and individualised curriculum and good teaching results in re-engaging students in learning and in enabling them to make good progress in their knowledge and skills. The home and school staff work as a cohesive team to create a secure environment and help students to develop good patterns of behaviour. While students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and supports their good personal development, students make outstanding progress in their social skills. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and the school makes outstanding provision for students' welfare, health and safety. The school has rectified the shortcoming identified in the last inspection and now meets all 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. It serves the needs of individual students well. Its main strengths lie in well-structured personalised education plans, well thought-out work-related learning and an excellent enrichment programme that promotes students' personal development well and their social skills extremely well. When students join the school, the curriculum is initially taught from a thematic approach that follows students' interests to engage them promptly in learning. Then students' learning is constructed around a more formal curriculum that includes both academic and vocational pathways. In addition to an appropriate emphasis on basic skills, the curriculum covers all the required areas of learning leading to GCSE examinations and/or external accreditation offered by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) or AQA award units to match the needs of all students. Detailed individual schemes of work and educational plans map each student's education, carefully filling the gaps in students' learning and gradually preparing them for independent living. Where students have a statement of special educational needs, the curriculum meets all the requirements of the statement. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively as a learning tool. Provision for physical education is good and students have access to a wide range of physical activities including fitness programmes, athletics, basketball and swimming. Students are well prepared for the world of work by a tailor-made careers education programme and work-related schemes with certification including, for example, tractor driving and gardening. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) permeates the school ethos and makes a strong contribution to students' personal development. The curriculum is enriched by a wealth of extra-curricular activities that greatly enhance students' learning and personal development.

Teaching and assessment are good and students make good progress. The staff have a thorough understanding of students' needs, aptitudes, attainment and learning styles. They share clear learning objectives with students and, in most lessons, detailed evaluation notes inform future planning. The staff build excellent working relationships based on clear expectations of mutual respect. Challenging questioning, allied to humour and consistent implementation of firm boundaries, ensure that staff enlist students' cooperation and students keep on task despite occasional reluctance. The staff give clear explanations and demonstrations, and support students skilfully to help them complete their tasks within a set time. This ensures good curriculum coverage and gives students a sense of achievement. ICT and other resources are used effectively to support students' learning and independence. However, the staff do not always use a sufficiently wide range of age-appropriate resources to support students' acquisition of early literacy and numeracy skills. While most teaching seizes every opportunity to promote students' literacy and numeracy skills and does so well, this is not always the case when lessons are led by support staff. The school has rightly identified the training of support staff as an area for further development. Most learning occurs in one-to-one sessions. However, as noted by teachers, students who have lower literacy and numeracy skills learn more effectively when paired with a peer to work on tasks.

Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection. Students gain a good understanding of what to do to improve through continuous clear learning targets, verbal feedback and marking their own work. The school now uses a system that breaks students' progress into smaller steps and so shows students' progression more clearly. Students are involved in the assessment of their learning through user-friendly ICT software. Education reports are detailed and clearly indicate what each student has achieved, finds challenging and needs to do to improve. As a result of a good curriculum and good teaching, students make at least good progress in their personal development and in their learning in relation to their varying starting points. The school demonstrates great care in helping students to move on to the next stage of their lives and ensures that the best possible options are made available to them.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and students make outstanding progress in their social development. The home and school staff work closely together to provide the stability of an extended family. Consequently, students feel secure and can develop the qualities and skills which they need to move from adolescence to adulthood. With the support of a psychologist on site, the balance between education, care and therapy ensures that students' specific learning and emotional needs are met well. Students have daily opportunities to reflect on their emotions and their actions and to develop self-knowledge, which gives them increasing self-control and sharpens their sense of right and wrong. Appropriate rewards and sanctions support them in appreciating that their actions have consequences. As a result, students' behaviour is good overall. Students visibly enjoy progressing in their learning, albeit not necessarily engaging in all educational activities. The staff remind them of their achievements at times of self-doubt or resistance, which raises their self-esteem and their self-confidence. Students are proud to show their records of achievement. Where students have a history of poor or non attendance, their willingness to attend lessons has improved significantly.

The staff model very positive relationships with each other and with students, and they fully involve students in the life of the home and school. Meal times are happy social occasions when students participate confidently in conversations on various topics and develop inter-personal skills. Students demonstrate a good understanding of boundaries when joking with adults and peers, and when they venture to exceed these limits, they readily apologise. They live in harmony with peers and staff of diverse cultural and ethnic heritages and feel free from harassment. They contribute to school and home life by sharing daily chores, cooking meals for staff and peers and growing vegetables in the garden. They develop budgeting skills when they shop in supermarkets. They successfully contribute to the wider community by organising a bonfire and fireworks night for local residents, competing in athletic, rugby, roller hockey and football teams at regional level, and raising funds for charity. They learn about public institutions through PSHE, the life skills programme and the use of local facilities.

Students' cultural development is enhanced well by the curriculum and educational visits. They learn about the beliefs and values of the major world religions, visit local churches and cook international foods. Some ambitious cultural activities enable them to develop a wide range of skills and the confidence to surpass themselves. For example, they have planned and completed a long road journey across Europe, participated in the Three Peaks Challenge and completed a survival course known as the Ironman Challenge.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for students' welfare, health and safety. Students feel safe and well cared for. Arrangements for safeguarding young people are robust. The staff's understanding of their duties and responsibilities in matters of child protection are underpinned by a detailed child protection policy and training at appropriate levels and intervals. Procedures for appointing staff and volunteers pay due regard to the latest guidance. The school staff work closely with the home staff to ensure consistency in implementing policies and procedures. The anti-bullying and behaviour policies are up to date. The school is a very inclusive community that successfully promotes students' emotional well-being. Students have full confidence in staff's ability to deal with any concerns. Risks are assessed carefully before off-site visits and there are thorough risk assessments of the premises and activities. The school complies with all fire safety regulations. All staff and students receive first aid training. Accidents and dispensing of medication are recorded carefully. The kitchen was given a five-star rating in its last hygiene inspection. Students learn to observe strict food hygiene routines when cooking. They learn how to keep safe and healthy through daily reminders, the life skills programme, PSHE and enrichment activities. Their awareness of healthy lifestyles is enhanced by growing vegetables, cooking nutritious meals and exercising vigorously at least twice a week.

The school has a three-year accessibility plan that meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the required checks on the staff and proprietors to ascertain their suitability to work with children before confirming their employment are carried out. These checks are recorded in a single central register that meets requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises provide a warm and welcoming family atmosphere in which students feel secure. Teaching accommodation enables safe and effective learning. The school makes effective use of local facilities for sports, music and some vocational programmes.

Provision of information

Parents, carers and others receive a wealth of clear, accurate and up-to-date information which meets requirements. Parents and carers feel well informed of their children's progress through informative weekly reports. The school provides the required information to placing authorities.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's procedures for dealing with complaints meet all requirements.

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.

- Ensure that students' acquisition of early literacy and numeracy skills is consistently supported by a sufficiently wide range of age-appropriate resources.
- Plan more frequent opportunities for paired work to support the weaker learners more effectively in their basic skills.
- Provide training for support staff to raise their awareness of how they can consolidate students' basic skills more consistently and so fulfil their roles more effectively.

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	Special school for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties
Date school opened	August 2007
Age range of pupils	12–17 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 2
Number of boarders	Boys: 2
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 2
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 2
Annual fees	£15,600 to £26,500
Email address	nikibrown@shelldenehouse.com
Headteacher	Nicola Brown
Proprietor	4D Care Ltd

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.



9 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of URN 135380

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly when I visited your school recently. I greatly enjoyed meeting you, seeing you learn and talking to you. You told me that you are happy at the school and that the staff care about you and help you to improve your behaviour and to develop the skills you need for your future. I agree with you.

You go to a good school where adults look after you really well and help you to learn things that interest you. You make good progress in your personal development, particularly in your social skills, which prepares you well to face future challenges. I was really impressed by your pride in your achievements and your efforts to behave well. Your attendance levels have improved. You get on very well with each other and make a good contribution to school life. You feel safe and understand the importance of good hygiene routines, eating and drinking healthily and taking exercise. You make good progress in gaining the knowledge and skills which will help you to move on to the next stage of your education. In order to make your school even better, I have asked the school to:

- offer you a wider choice of resources to help you with your literacy and numeracy
- give you more opportunities to work on tasks with another student
- provide training for support staff so that they can help you even better.

You will help your teachers to achieve this if you continue to attend regularly, work hard and maintain the highest standards of behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Michèle Messaoudi
Lead inspector