

Coln House School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 115812

Local Authority Gloucestershire

Inspection number 357820

Inspection dates19–20 January 2011Reporting inspectorMichael Farrell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school Special
School category Community
Age range of pupils 9–16
Gender of pupils Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll 51

Appropriate authorityThe governing bodyChairRichard Wilkinson

Headteacher Chris Clarke

Date of previous school inspection 28 September 2007

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Age group	9–16
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Boarding provision

Social care Unique Reference Number SC040533

Social care inspector

Age group	9–16
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Some 10 lessons were observed, eight teachers were seen, and meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at lesson planning, the school development plan, safeguarding documentation and four parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- In the residential provision, the adequacy of the recruitment of staff working with children; the extent to which fire risk assessment has been kept up to date; and the sufficiency of specialist external services for children requiring particular support.
- The extent to which pupils make progress, including those with particular literacy difficulties, and the influence on pupils' economic well-being of attendance, progress in basic skills, and work-related experience.
- The impact of the monitoring role of subject coordinators, including the use of data to drive improvements; and the role of governors in challenging and supporting the school, including in interpreting data.

Information about the school

Coln House School is a residential school educating pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Some have mental health difficulties. A few have additional literacy difficulties. The great majority of pupils are boarders. Most pupils come from Gloucestershire and some from neighbouring counties. The school admits a small number of girls. A small proportion of pupils are looked after by a local authority. Many pupils are referred having missed substantial periods of schooling or following permanent exclusion from other schools. The school's awards include Arts Mark Gold, Sports Mark and an International School award. The school offers family support and parent training as extended services.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. In the boarding provision, previous issues relating to staff recruitment, fire risk assessments, and the sufficiency of external services have all been tackled vigorously and provision is now outstanding. The school offers good care, guidance and support. Pupils behave courteously and with increasing sensitivity to the needs of others. Safeguarding is good, with great care taken that procedures are followed. Attainment is low, but pupils, including those with additional literacy difficulties, achieve satisfactorily. Progress in literacy and numeracy is sound and in information and communication technology it is good. In recent months, progress is improving strongly. Despite the low attendance of a few pupils, economic well-being is satisfactory because of sound progress in literacy and numeracy, good progress in information and communication technology, and excellent workplace and related opportunities.

Sound leadership and management lead to satisfactory teaching and steady pupils' progress. Governors support and challenge the school effectively. They benefit from having members with a very wide range of skills and knowledge and contribute strongly to the deeply embedded local links. Governors do not interrogate the school as well as they should about its use of data to improve standards. Extended services, including parent training sessions, are good and highly regarded. The school knows the individual needs of its pupils well and promotes community cohesion well, especially regarding the local community, where its links are extensive and highly regarded. Data are carefully collated to provide the school with an accurate picture of pupils' progress. However, leaders and managers at all levels do not always use data comprehensively to drive up standards, for example by improving teaching.

Teaching is satisfactory for all ages. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and trusting, and behaviour well managed. Lesson pace is steady. Opportunities for hands-on practical activities are sometimes missed. While teaching assistants contribute well, teachers do not always deploy them fully, slowing progress in lessons where this occurs. Marking is satisfactory, indicating how well the pupil has done. The good curriculum contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities and the 24 hour curriculum, developed with the residential facility, enrich provision. Attendance is low, very largely owing to a small number of day pupils who in previous schools had attended poorly or not at all. There are instances of dramatic improvement in the attendance of individual pupils. Good care, guidance and support leads to pupils feeling well cared for and secure. The innovative introduction of the 'hub', a co-ordinated centre for pastoral support and therapy, is already showing signs of success, although it is too early to see its full impact. The effective support for individual children has been improved since the previous inspection and the school recognises the need to extend individual support for children with particular needs, including in boarding provision. The school often goes beyond the call of duty to try to engage pupils whose

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

attendance has been poor and is eager to evaluate more rigorously the relative success of its strategies. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Art provides rich opportunities to understand other cultures. Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory and the school knows its strengths and weaknesses. In the past year, boarding provision has improved considerably and is now outstanding. New staff have been appointed to improve literacy. The evident improvements completed so far all demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve further.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the attendance of day pupils matches or exceeds that of those in residential provision by rigorously evaluating which strategies work best with different pupils.
- Make sure teachers always deploy teaching assistants as fully as possible, maintain a good lesson pace, and extend practical, hands-on activities.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels use data effectively to drive up standards, and governors are fully appraised.
- Enhance the specialist individual support particular children require.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter the school with low attainment because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties, and missed schooling. While attainment remains low by the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 4, pupils, including those with additional literacy difficulties, enjoy their learning, and progress satisfactorily. There are few differences between the progress of boys and girls. In recent times, pupils' progress has increased due to the extra focus on literacy and improvements in systems for minimising time spent out of lessons if a pupil is distressed or disruptive. Pupils enjoy what is on offer and can cite activities they particularly like. Older pupils gain a suitable range of recognised qualifications and the school is actively planning to increase the number of vocational courses. In a literacy session which included older pupils, progress was satisfactory because the choices of books reflected their interests and were at the right level. Pupils were engaged in their reading because they were supported and encouraged adequately. Behaviour was good because it was well managed. In a satisfactory mathematics lesson, pupils were able to talk about and use negative and positive numbers, and progressed satisfactorily because the activity was explained clearly and good relationships supported pupils' good behaviour.

Pupils feel safe and know they can go to staff if they have a concern. Pupils are courteous and increasingly aware of the needs of others. Questionnaires indicated that a majority of pupils did not consider behaviour good. However, pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils are aware of keeping healthy, including through sensible eating and exercise, and they understand the importance of mental and emotional health well. They contribute to the local community excellently in many practical ways such as mending or building local facilities, and selling produce. Their understanding of the contribution they can make nationally and globally is less well developed, although an international award is setting the tone for further improvement. Much of the low attendance is attributable to the placement in the school in the previous year of a small number of day pupils with long-

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term attendance problems. Consequently, although attendance figures are low, economic well-being is satisfactory because of the positive contribution of basic skills and work-related activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of the rich variety of activities promoting it.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance 1	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching, including assessment, is satisfactory. Among the strengths within teaching are warm and trusting relationships between staff and pupils, good management of behaviour, patient explanations where pupils do not understand something, and seizing regular opportunities to praise and celebrate pupils' achievements. The major reason why teaching is satisfactory rather than good is because there are weaknesses in the pace of lessons which means learning is not always as brisk as it could be. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution when working with pupils individually or in small groups, for example by explaining the activity again or by offering encouragement. However, teachers do not always deploy assistants fully in helping pupils reach their learning objectives, especially when the whole class is being taught. Where this occurs, it slows pupils' progress. The curriculum meets the diverse needs of pupils well. It provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, making full use of the local community. Personal, social and health education, acknowledged by the artsmark and the sportsmark awards, effectively supports pupils' largely good personal and social outcomes. The very strong 24

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

hour curriculum enhances opportunities for pupils, for example by providing activities for boarders that help learning such as social trips, computing and help with basic skills. Care and support build on the warm and welcoming ethos of the school and draw on careful documentation and thorough practice seeking the best for each pupil. Well- regarded guidance for future careers enables pupils to make informed choices about the future. The contribution of the 'hub' to provision and to personal worth and well- being is showing early positive signs. For example, pupils use it maturely and not as a reason to avoid lessons. Because of this provision, the amount of time pupils lose from lessons because of anxiety or disruption is reducing.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior staff embed ambition satisfactorily and the sound management of teaching and learning leads to the satisfactory teaching and learning found in the school. Self-evaluation is accurate because the school systematically reviews its performance in different areas and plans improvements. The school recognises its weaknesses and strengths unflinchingly. Suitable data on pupils' progress is gathered and helps point to where improvements are needed. For example, literacy progress was recognised as a continuing concern and the school appointed two literacy specialists to tackle this. However, the school does not always use such data as fully as it should to improve teaching and raise standards, for example to fully inform observations of teaching. Governors support and challenge the school satisfactorily but are not as fully involved in monitoring the use of data to raise standards as they should be. The school already has plans to develop more finely graded assessments for literacy so that small steps of progress can be better recognised and celebrated. Several assessments have been introduced and a start has been made in using these, although the full impact is not yet apparent. Equal opportunities are satisfactorily promoted and the school tackles any discrimination promptly. The school addresses any bullying quickly so that pupils have confidence something will be done, and conveys to pupils the importance of not stereotyping others. Parents are supportive of the school and feel well informed about their child's progress. Partners make a good contribution, especially in enhancing pupils' well-being and development, and local partnerships are very strong. Safeguarding procedures are robust, documentation is carefully prepared and staff treat this area very seriously. Community cohesion is good because it is excellently developed locally but is not as strong nationally and globally.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	

Boarding provision

The boarding provision is outstanding. The school meets the intended outcomes of all the key national minimum standards for residential special schools, and in most cases exceeds them. Boarders who completed a questionnaire expressed a very high degree of satisfaction with the boarding provision. The shortfalls identified in the last boarding inspection have been successfully addressed. The school has arranged for their fire risk assessment to be reviewed before the end of this inspection year. There is now careful selection and vetting of all staff in line with the latest guidance. The school has started to provide specialist services for those children in placement that need this. As a result, there are no outstanding recommendations.

Boarders good health is promoted by the outstanding health care and catering provision they receive. Care staff are trained to administer medication and first aid and follow guidance laid down by the schools nurse. There is strategic oversight of boarders health needs while the school is waiting for their new school nurse to start work. The physical, emotional and mental health needs of each boarder are identified and actively addressed. The schools catering supervisor and staff ensure boarders are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. Meals are well-managed social occasions as they are prepared and taken in each boarding house area. Boarders are provided with as much fresh produce as possible from the schools market garden and chickens. The school has achieved national Healthy School status.

The arrangements for boarders to stay safe are outstanding. Boarders know how to complain and feel able to do so if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school. However, no boarders have used the schools complaints procedure since the last inspection. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. The head of care is the schools designated child protection officer and is appropriately trained for this role. She routinely links with other agencies concerned with safeguarding, including the Local Safeguarding

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Children Board. Boarders are protected from bullying by the schools effective anti-bullying policy and response to such instances. During National Anti-bullying Week, the school carries out a bullying survey with the children and responds positively to its findings. Boarders are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the schools encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive responses to inappropriate behaviour. Individual childrens behavioural needs are exceptionally well identified by the school, and children are set individual behaviour targets accordingly. During school and boarding times, the school operates a well-established points system that acts as a behavioural incentive for the vast majority. The school has started to operate a hub where a pastoral support team are based, during and after the school day, to effectively support children having difficulties. The school provides a safe environment as a result of the positive steps that are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Care staff recruited since the last inspection did not start work with children until the school held all of the checks required on them.

Boarders are helped to achieve well and enjoy what they do by the outstanding residential contribution to education and by the good individual support they receive. The school operates a 24 hour curriculum, where care staff actively contribute to individual childrens educational progress. They support them during the school day and after school do literacy, numeracy and social education activities with them in an informal and enjoyable way. Boarders have started to receive good individualised support to meet their particular needs. Since the last inspection, as part of the hub the school has employed a full-time emotional coach and a part-time art psychotherapist. However, this work is in its early stages and, given the complexity of some of the childrens emotional and behavioural difficulties, the school is rightly ambitious to develop it further. A recommendation is therefore made regarding this.

The provision to help boarders make a positive contribution is outstanding. There is effective consultation with boarders, both individually and collectively. Boarders opinions and those of their families are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and future. At the start of each week, boarders participate in a group meeting with staff in their house area, and the school runs a residential pupil council. Boarders experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes. Other transition times, such as moving between the boarding and teaching provisions, are also sensitively handled. Boarders have their needs comprehensively assessed, and written plans, outlining how they will be met at the school, are effectively implemented. During their four nights a week at the school, boarders are encouraged to maintain contact with their family by telephone and home visits. This is effectively overseen by the schools home liaison officer.

The provision to help boarders achieve economic well-being is good. The boarding premises are good, collectively providing sufficient space and facilities to meet boarders needs. Each house area is made as homely as possible by the boarders and care staff, and maintained to a good standard within the restrictions of the premises listed building status. The school has developed excellent links between the boarders and the local community. The organisation of the boarding provision is outstanding. The school has a clear Statement of Purpose that it achieves very effectively. Boarders are looked after by care staff that are sufficient in number and competence. Between them they are highly qualified, experienced and trained. They are very well supervised and supported by the head of care, who efficiently runs the boarding provision. Internal and external monitoring of key areas, to identify any action required, is regularly undertaken by senior managers

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

and visiting governors. The promotion of equality and diversity in boarding is outstanding. Boarders are given individualised care and support, and there is a high focus on counteracting the discrimination they have experienced, as a result of their particular difficulties and needs, and promoting their inclusion in their local communities.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

Further develop the specialist individual support that particular children in placement require. (NMS 22)

These are the grades for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	The effectiveness of the boarding provision	1
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Views of parents and carers

Only four parents returned questionnaires, a very low response, so their interpretation requires caution. The areas attracting universally strong agreement were preparation for the future, leadership and management of the school, and support for behaviour. One parent stated, 'We couldn't be more pleased', another said that the school has been 'guide, mentor and role model' for their child. Meetings with individual and small groups of parents supported the overall positive picture. Inspectors agree with the positive perspective of parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at CoIn House School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 4 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 51 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	75	0	0	1	25	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning,
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development or training.

Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and

examination results and in lessons.

Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue

improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality

of its systems to maintain improvement.

Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities,

not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

Learning: how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their

understanding, learn and practise skills and are

developing their competence as learners.

Overall effectiveness: inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall

effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness

judgement will be.

■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.

- Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.
- The quality of teaching.
- The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.
- The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.

Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and

over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key

stage with their attainment when they started.

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.



24 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coln House School, Fairford GL7 4DB

It was good to meet you when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. We were impressed by your courtesy towards us and the way you were happy to explain what you were doing in lessons and in the residential provision.

We found Coln House to be a satisfactory school. You receive good care and support and the school helps you make good decisions for the next steps for your future. Although in your questionnaires many of you said you did not think behaviour was good, we found that you behave well. You told us you felt safe. The good curriculum offers you a good range of activities and links with the local community are very strong. You make steady progress in your work because teaching is satisfactory. There are some things the school could do better so I have asked the staff to:

- ensure day pupils attend school as regularly as those of you in residential provision by checking what works best to improve their attendance
- make sure all staff are fully used in lessons, all lessons have a good pace, and you do more practical hands-on activities
- use information about how well you are progressing to help make sure you do better and governors make sure this happens
- continue to develop specialist individual support such as therapy.

You can play your part in this by really working on attendance � it is so important. I am sure that as lessons become more practical, you will enjoy them even more and take full advantage of this opportunity.

Thank you for making us so welcome. I wish you every success for your future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Farrell Lead inspector



16 of 16

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