

Draycott Moor College

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	860/6026
Unique Reference Number (URN)	133989
Inspection number	397562
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2012
Reporting inspector	Martyn Groucutt

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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

This day special school for students between the ages of 11 and 16 years is situated in the village of Draycott Moor, close to Stoke-on-Trent. It was first registered as a school in 2002, originally based in the city itself before expanding to include the present site, which was formerly a village primary school, in 2008. In recent years numbers of students have declined so that the original site is now surplus to requirements and is currently for sale. The last full inspection of the school took place in 2009, when it was found to be providing an inadequate quality of education. Three progress monitoring or unannounced visits in 2010 and 2011 found continuing issues and failure to meet all the regulations. Following the appointment of a new acting headteacher and two new members of staff, a further progress monitoring visit in July 2011 found that there was compliance with all except one regulation. The school is one of three operated by Educare Adolescent Services, which also operate several children's homes. The school is currently providing education for ten students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Of these, eight have a statement of special educational needs and three are looked after by their placing authorities. Three students currently live in one of the company's children's homes, the remaining seven live with parents or carers and all have been placed by one of four authorities, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford, Dudley and Walsall. The students have all experienced previous patterns of severely disrupted education prior to joining the school, but all are expected to leave with some form of external accreditation. The vast majority move on to further education when they leave at the end of Year 11, maintaining their re-engagement with the process of learning.

Evaluation of the school

Draycott Moor College provides a good education that demonstrates effective progress and improvement since its last inspection. The curriculum is satisfactory, and students attend regularly. Detailed data demonstrates rising achievement from low baselines, indicating their successful re-engagement and good progress as the result of good teaching and learning. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good and the carefully implemented behaviour management policy is supporting good and responsible behaviour. The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are good, and procedures for

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

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

safeguarding are detailed and effective. The school is successful in meeting its aims and it meets most, but not quite all, of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and continues to develop. The introduction of new subjects means that not only are the required areas of study covered but also that there are opportunities for enrichment. Provision is not yet good because there are areas for improvement, such as increasing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support students' learning across the curriculum and developing the grounds as a learning resource.

Learning opportunities are tailored to meet students' individual needs and learning styles. A high adult-student ratio provides good opportunities to develop students' speaking and listening skills alongside those of literacy and numeracy. There is a strong focus on supporting personal and social development. Care is taken to ensure that statements of special educational needs reflect current needs, this forming an essential element of every annual review.

Effective links with Connexions support good careers education, opportunities for work experience and transition to further education or work-based learning. After years of severely disrupted education virtually all students choose to remain in some form of learning when they leave. The curriculum gives them opportunities to learn, make progress and prepare for the demands of adult life. There is now an expectation that all students will gain accreditation. Opportunities currently exist for GCSE or entry level qualifications alongside those offered by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

The quality of teaching and assessment is good, allowing students to enjoy learning. Although all students have had severely disrupted education, they are able to start the process of filling gaps in prior knowledge and acquiring new skills and knowledge. Teaching encourages students to show interest in their work and think for themselves. Planning is effective because it is detailed, looking at the needs, current achievement and preferred learning styles of every student. This focuses the efforts of staff on the needs of individuals, allowing each student to be challenged appropriately and to maximise their learning. Because they have developed very positive relationships with staff, the students gain confidence and know they will always be encouraged. Learning is supported by adequate resources which are generally used effectively, although there is currently no opportunity to share scarce or expensive resources between the company's schools. Some students say they would like more opportunities to use more ICT in lessons which would enhance learning opportunities, such as in science where the lack of a properly equipped laboratory limits practical work.

Students' behaviour can be extremely challenging, but strategies for managing it are effective and students increasingly accept responsibility for their actions as they settle into the school's routines. Students' progress in learning and in addressing their wider emotional and behavioural difficulties is carefully monitored and tracked

from an initial baseline. Staff meet daily to discuss the performance of every student and outcomes are recorded on a spread sheet that is updated weekly. This has created a clear picture of individual performance and achievement that can also be displayed graphically. It provides clear evidence that progress is good, irrespective of background, and for some it is outstanding bearing in mind their very low starting points. The measuring of individual progress, while strong in the core subjects, is still being strengthened in some curriculum areas to ensure that measurement across the whole curriculum is of equal rigour. Although the company currently organises some joint events for the staff at its three schools, there are not regular opportunities for them to work together to support skills such as moderating students' work or developing professional and specialist expertise.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students say they appreciate efforts made to help them learn and develop much more positive self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. A parent said, 'Without the support my son gets from the school, he wouldn't be where he is now.' Consequently, despite their difficulties, behaviour is good and systems to support and enhance this are applied consistently. It is supported by a strong rapport between staff and students, and a positive relationship has been developed with the local community. This was reflected when the students were asked to make all the posters for last year's village fete, in which they participated enthusiastically.

There is a clear focus on 'doing the right thing' and understanding the difference between right and wrong. At the same time, staff are not judgemental and support students through occasional lapses. The students are supportive of their school because it has given them a much more positive view of themselves and their role as responsible members of their community. They increasingly enjoy school and opportunities, such as participation in outdoor education, that bring elements of excitement to learning. They are increasingly able to think about their futures in a positive way, which represents a sea-change from when they first arrive. Students' attend well and any absence is followed up immediately.

Work undertaken in lessons, such as general studies, gives students a broad understanding of society and its organisation. Opportunities to promote a better and more positive view of their own and other cultures are taken in lessons and around the school, such as the display of Aborigine art and of puppets from India that are displayed in the art room.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare, health and safety of its students are good. All the required checks on staff are made prior to their appointment. Students say they feel safe and this is in part because they trust the adults in school. Because students are potentially vulnerable there is a robust emphasis on safeguarding. Child protection policies and procedures are detailed and it is a major element in all staff induction and the annual training programme.

Partly as a consequence of the small numbers, students say that they generally get on well together. The policy to counter bullying makes clear reference to cyber bullying and to that based on race, religion, gender or sexuality. Care is taken to log all incidents of bullying, racist incidents or other serious episodes. Since students' behaviour can be very challenging, all staff are trained in de-escalation techniques and in the use of restraint as a last resort. The school's records show a dramatic reduction in incidents since the last inspection.

Fire and first aid policies and procedures are implemented effectively, health and safety policies have due regard to national guidance and students are effectively supervised on and off site. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Systems and procedures for the appointment of staff, including enhanced checks from the Criminal Records Bureau, are securely in place. These also extend to the proprietors, supply staff and contractors. The single central register is detailed and up to date, and meets requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school provides suitable accommodation that meets all the regulations. It creates a safe and suitable environment for learning. Standards of fixtures, fittings and maintenance are good. This includes the facilities for preparing and serving food and for students' recreation.

Provision of information

All the required information is made available in a clear, accurate and up-to-date manner, both as hard copy and on the company's internet site. All the regulations are met.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedure has been revised but now does not meet the regulations pertaining to the conduct of an appeal against the decision of a formal enquiry.

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 those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the manner in which complaints are to be handled (standards in part 7) and must:

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2010/1997/contents/made.

- if the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, provide for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 25(f))
- where there is a panel hearing of a complaint provide for one person on the panel to be independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 25(g))
- allow for parents to attend the panel hearing and, if they wish, be accompanied (paragraph 25(h))
- provide for the panel to make findings and recommendations and the procedure must stipulate that a copy of the findings and recommendations are:
 - sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about
 - and
 - available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher (paragraph 25(i))
- provide that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 25(k)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Further develop the curriculum through:
 - enhancing the use of information and communication technology as a tool for teaching and learning across the curriculum
 - extending opportunities for practical learning by developing the school grounds as a learning resource.
- Support teachers to further develop their expertise by creating opportunities for them to work with colleagues in other schools to:
 - moderate students' work
 - benefit from training sessions to promote subject expertise
 - share expertise and resources.
- Ensure that there are clear and equally rigorous assessment criteria established in every subject area for monitoring students' progress over time.

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	Day special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Date school opened	June 2008		
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 9	Girls: 1	Total: 10
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 7	Girls: 1	Total: 8
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,025		
Address of school	Draycott Old Road Draycott-in-the-Moors Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9AH		
Telephone number	01782 399849		
Email address	draycottoffice@educareservices.co.uk		
Headteacher	Roger Flint (acting headteacher)		
Proprietor	Educare Adolescent 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.



3 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Draycott Moor College, Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9AH

I would like to thank you for making me welcome when I recently visited your school, especially those who took time to talk to me and to complete the inspection questionnaires. I have taken your views into account in writing my report.

You go to a good school that has made good improvements since the last inspector's visit. You get on very well with the staff and it is clear that they want you to do well and be successful. They keep a close eye on the progress you are making, and use information on your behaviour and the quality of your work to try to make your learning fit your individual needs. Most of you attend very regularly and enjoy school, which I realise was not always the case in the past. Staff work hard to help you to develop your confidence and self-awareness and to help you appreciate the views, attitudes and cultures of others.

I have asked for a few things to be done to further improve the quality of your education. You asked for more use of computers in lessons and I agree, and I have also said that more educational use could be made of your very nice grounds. Because your school is so small, the teachers have few opportunities to meet with teachers from other schools. I have said that opportunities should be taken to develop better chances to compare your work with that of other students of the same ages and to keep fully up to date with their teaching.

However, overall I was pleased with the progress being made in helping you to make the most of your potential and to realise the importance of doing well at school. If you continue to work hard and do your best you will play your part in this process.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Groucutt
Lead inspector