

Gable End 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}

Information about the school

Gable End is a small independent special school owned by Care Focus Limited. The school opened in the autumn term of 2005. It is registered to admit boys and girls in the age range 11 to 16 years. All students live in residential accommodation provided by the company and all are looked after. Most of the students' learning needs relate to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. At the time of the inspection there were four students on roll, two in Year 8, one in Year 10 and one in Year 11. Currently one has a statement of special educational needs. The school was last inspected in May 2009.

The cornerstones of the school's beliefs are 'positivity and respect'. The school aims 'to enable young people to become: successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve; confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives; and responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.'

Evaluation of the school

Gable End School provides a satisfactory quality of education and is largely successful in fulfilling its aims. The school provides a good curriculum and good teaching and assessment, however, students make only satisfactory progress due to their inconsistent, poor attendance. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good, as are arrangements for their safeguarding. The school meets all the regulatory requirements but students' attendance has declined since the time of the last inspection.

Quality of education

The school provides a good curriculum with suitable variety in the subjects studied and in the learning activities in lessons. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills with older students demonstrating success in preparation for Entry Level qualifications and GCSE accreditation. Students have experience of the full range of the required areas of learning and schemes of work are derived from National Curriculum guidance. Where a student has a statement of special educational needs, great care is taken to ensure

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

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

that its requirements are reflected in the student's individual education plan and in classroom learning. Students typically enter the school with attainment below age-related expectations. As a result, provision for each individual is effectively designed to cover significant gaps in their personal learning while also ensuring that a rich curriculum is experienced. Students enjoy practical activities, including well-planned art and physical education lessons, and their personal strengths and achievements are celebrated. Students in Key Stage 4 are provided with good opportunities for work experience in areas of personal interest, for example, a beauty salon or a farm nursery. These, together with other life skills experiences, enable students to achieve appropriate accreditation in Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) bronze, silver and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) awards. Students also have the opportunity to gain a qualification in first aid and to take part in the 'nurture time' programme which encompasses all aspects of parenthood in a realistic, practical way, including a week's work experience at a nursery. The local environment and community are used effectively to extend learning and personal development, for example in art and mathematics, or through visits to a wildlife reserve. The extension of the curriculum is integrated effectively with activities organised for individuals through their residences, including joining local dance or football clubs, and taking up horse riding.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. The quality of provision is not outstanding because students' progress is not outstanding; target setting is inconsistent and the tracking of students' progress requires improvement. The curriculum is planned effectively through a series of cross-curricular themes and these form the basis for suitable lesson planning. Individual subjects are taught separately or integrated within the themes, and planned in a way which provides individual students with learning experiences suitable to their age and attainment. Weekly targets are agreed with students for each subject and are regularly reviewed to assess progress with the planned learning objectives. The quality and effectiveness of the targets is variable; the best consist of precise knowledge and skills to be learned while others consist of activities to be undertaken without clarity about the specific intended learning outcomes. Students engage in their learning and work very effectively with teachers and learning support assistants. An effective approach is used in which learning assistants model good practice, working alongside students on similar tasks, for example; designing a poster about Queen Elizabeth I; producing an effective still life painting; learning the skills of a variety of 'bowling' games; or understanding the characters in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In the most effective practice, learning assistants use these opportunities to support, challenge and guide students on how to improve their work. Lessons maintain a good pace and provide progressive learning experiences in which students move through a variety of appropriately timed activities. Behaviour in lessons is good, characterised by cooperation, good humour and a willing response to appropriate expectations.

Teachers assess students' progress in their classwork effectively, particularly in English, mathematics and science where National Curriculum levels, based on appropriate descriptors, result in a continuous record of students' attainment. Students, typically, are placed in the school for relatively short periods of time and

details of their previous attainment are not always readily available. In response to this, arrangements for the early identification of students' starting points are being implemented and extended. The records of assessment data are not currently maintained in a way which makes it easy to measure the extent of students' progress over time. However, the analysis of progress indicates that students make satisfactory progress over time. While progress in individual lessons is mostly good, the impact of the good curriculum and good teaching is restricted by variable, and often poor attendance by students. For this reason, overall progress is satisfactory rather than good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is satisfactory. In many respects students make good progress in their personal development. Their relationships with staff and the quality of their moral and social development are good. Students make mostly good progress in managing their challenging behaviour and personal anger. The effective integration of staff between the school and students' residences makes a strong contribution to their personal development. Students sometimes find it difficult to manage their emotional reactions to disappointment and uncertainty and staff are effective in helping them work through such concerns. Behaviour throughout the day is mostly good and this has a positive impact on their learning. However, students have not developed a consistent commitment to regular and continuous attendance at school. This weakness results in the satisfactory, rather than good, judgement about their personal development as it has a significant negative impact on the extent of their progress with their learning.

There are a number of opportunities for students to reflect on their personal development, including arrangements for individual weekly therapy sessions. Themes within the personal, social and health education programme enable them to encounter issues related to healthy lifestyles, the risks associated with substance abuse, and to increase their understanding of global issues and sustainable development. Students make a positive contribution to life in their residences, including sharing the products of their successful food technology lessons. A multicultural dimension is included in the life skills programme, including opportunities to develop an awareness of differences in lifestyles and cultures within the national and global communities. Students and staff represent a range of cultural heritages and demonstrate appropriate respect and tolerance towards each other. Good opportunities are provided for students to experience local and national services and institutions through, for example, trips to the local council offices, to museums and theatres, and to a variety of leisure venues. They contribute willingly to charitable fund-raising activities.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are good. Students state that they feel safe in school and recognise that they are well supported by staff in both the school and in their residences. An appropriate child protection policy is in

place and procedures are suitably implemented. All staff are trained to the required level, including the designated person for child protection in the school. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies set out clear expectations for students and for how staff will manage behaviour. As a result, all staff work together to ensure that there is no bullying and that sanctions are applied consistently for any lapses in behaviour. Arrangements for health and safety throughout the premises and for off-site visits are supported by appropriate risk assessments, suitably trained staff and attention to the effective implementation of agreed policies. All aspects of fire safety, including regular routine checks on equipment, are managed and recorded appropriately. Good attention is given to the development of healthy lifestyles, both in the curriculum and in the arrangements for dining and for regular physical activity. All established members of staff are trained in first aid and arrangements are in place for the training of newly appointed staff. All required records of accidents, incidents, admissions and attendance are maintained and monitored appropriately. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has appropriate recruitment arrangements for ensuring the suitability of staff and proprietors to work with children. Details of all required checks on suitability are maintained in an appropriate single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school premises are appropriately designed and organised to enable at least satisfactory learning and to ensure the safety of students. Teaching rooms are relatively small but are adequate and provide a suitable learning environment for the small teaching groups. Good use is made of the outside space for games and recreation, including well organised and valued physical education. There are sufficient toilets and washrooms and appropriate arrangements are made for any student who may be ill during the school day.

Provision of information

The school provides appropriate, up-to-date information for parents and carers of students and prospective students. The school prospectus provides a suitable account of the school's purposes and policies and it is made clear that parents and carers may request copies of any of the required policy documents. Annual reports to parents and carers provide a good account of students' progress in their studies and in their personal development.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's arrangements for the management of any complaints meet statutory 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 attendance improves to an average of 90 to enable each student to make at least good progress in their learning
- ensure that targets recorded in students' individual education plans and weekly target sheets are precise and identify subject-related outcomes rather than activities to be completed
- ensure that students' levels of attainment, including on entry to the school, are recorded in a manner which enables a clear judgement to be made about the extent of 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	Special school for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.		
Date school opened	22 September 2005		
Age range of pupils	11–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 3	Total: 4
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 3	Total: 4
Annual fees (including residential)	£196,300		
Email address	ninasquires@carefocus.co.uk		
Headteacher	Claire Guernari		
Proprietor	Care Focus 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.



24 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Gable End, Hitcham, IP7 7NL

Thank you for your welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my visit, including the opportunity to see you at work and, particularly, to join in your games lesson! The inspection judged that Gable End School provides you with a satisfactory quality of education and helps you with both your academic and personal development. The school meets all government requirements. I was particularly pleased to see:

- that when you attend lessons, you take an active part and work hard
- the good relationships which you have with teachers and learning support staff
- the good opportunities provided for you to improve your English and mathematics
- the good progress which you make in lessons when you attend
- the good efforts you are making to improve your behaviour and to cooperate with each other
- the range of activities provided for you through sports, visits to places of interest and outdoor activities.

I was disappointed to see your low levels of attendance at lessons. The progress which you make with your work is satisfactory over time. Evidence from the lessons which I visited indicate that your progress could be good if you attended regularly. To bring about further improvement I have asked the proprietor and staff to aim for 94% attendance for each student each week. This will only happen if you do your part to cooperate. I have also asked staff to make sure that your weekly targets state clearly what you will know, understand and be able to do by the end of each week's lessons. I also want leaders to track your progress over time better. I wish you all the best for the future and trust that your plans and hopes will be fulfilled.

Yours sincerely

David Young
Lead Inspector