

# Blue Mountain Education

Independent school progress monitoring 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.<sup>1,2</sup>

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

## **Information about the school**

Blue Mountain Education is an independent special school which opened in April 2006. Its aims are to develop students' personal, vocational, and academic skills so that they become sociable, active and valuable members of society. The school is located on the site of one of the children's homes owned by Blue Mountain Homes, which has four further children's homes in the region. The school provides for up to five young people from the homes, aged 12 to 16 years, who are not attending mainstream secondary schools. At present, there are three students on the roll of the school. A teacher-in-charge was appointed in January 2011. An education consultant was appointed in December 2012 to develop the curriculum and to contribute to the provision for specific students.

## **Context of the inspection**

When the school was inspected, in January 2011, it failed to meet a number of regulations relating to curriculum; teaching and assessment; welfare, health and safety of students; checking the suitability of staff; provision of information and complaints procedures. An action plan was submitted in May 2011. This was judged unsatisfactory.

A progress monitoring inspection in October 2011 evaluated the progress that the school had made in implementing the action plan. It judged that previously failed regulations related to the welfare, health and safety of students, checks on staff, the provision of information, and the complaints policy were now met. However, insufficient progress had been made and a number of regulations relating to the curriculum, teaching and assessment remained unmet.

A further progress monitoring inspection took place in February 2012 to evaluate progress made with the implementation of the action plan with regard to the remaining unmet regulations. Satisfactory progress had been made in some areas and a number of the previously-failed regulations had been met. Insufficient progress had been made with planning of the curriculum and its implementation in

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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).

teaching and learning. It was recommended that a further progress monitoring visit should take place in the second half of the summer term. No further action plan was required of the school.

This visit, on 15 June 2012, was made to check the extent of further progress with the implementation of the outstanding regulations in the school's original action plan.

## **Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan**

At the time of the last inspection visit in February 2012, planning and schemes of work were underdeveloped; as a result the curriculum was not implemented effectively. In addition, there was insufficient planning for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Some progress had been made with the development of a revised curriculum. This was partly in place but insufficient progress had been made. The original action plan stated that a new curriculum was in place and on-going development continued. It was not clear and specific about how the curriculum provision had been improved. The school has made progress since the inspection in February 2012, with the completion of the half-termly units which form the structure of the curriculum. Planning documentation has been produced for each theme, setting out the medium-term plans for each area of learning. Personal, social and health education /citizenship is now included as one of the subject elements within each of the planned themes in the curriculum. The planned provision for PSHE/citizenship, as a discrete subject and across the curriculum is now coherent and appropriate. The medium-term plans are further developed into themes and appropriate individual lesson plans. The content and skills developed in selected themes are clearly targeted to meet the needs and interests of individual students. Work-related learning forms a strong element of the selected themes, including practical vocational activities. The regulations related to the planning and implementation of the curriculum, including PSHE, are now met.

At the time of the last inspection visit in February 2012, the curriculum did not provide sufficient opportunities for students to make appropriate progress. The school's action plan stated that the revised curriculum, if implemented effectively, would enable students to learn and make progress. The improved curriculum and the associated planning now ensure that suitable experiences and activities are provided to enable students to learn and make progress. Students with regular attendance have benefitted from the improvements in the quality of the curriculum and teaching, and are making progress as a result.

At the time of the last inspection visit in February 2012, there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the quality of teaching had improved sufficiently. The school's action plan stated that the revised curriculum would introduce new subjects and experiences; teaching methods would be reviewed regularly and that all lessons would be planned to an appropriate structure. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now satisfactory. Lessons are now derived from the curriculum plans and effective planning is in place for individual lessons. Appropriate account is

taken of students' individual learning needs and lesson objectives are clear. The range of content and teaching strategies has broadened and now interests and engages students. Lessons now proceed at a suitable pace and students demonstrate concentration and perseverance in completing tasks. Evidence from progress tracking records and from students' folders of work demonstrate that, those students with regular attendance are applying intellectual, physical and creative effort. The regulations related to the quality of teaching are now met.

At the time of the last inspection visit in February 2012, insufficient progress had been made with the implementation of revised approaches to assessment and recording of students' progress. The school's action plan stated that assessment was in place but did not provide sufficient clarity about how students' work was to be assessed and used to plan teaching so that students could make appropriate progress. National Curriculum level descriptors are now used to assess work in English, mathematics and science. Students' work is marked regularly and contains mostly positive, summative comments. Formative comments provide guidance on how work may be improved. The data is recorded on a data tracking sheet at the end of each half-term, leading to an end-of-key-stage assessment. This provides an appropriate overview of progress in the core subjects. Assessment in the remaining subjects is based satisfactorily on the marking of students' work and observation of their learning. Written reports provide evidence of progress in all subjects studied. The school now meets the regulatory requirements for the assessment and recording of students' progress.

The regulatory requirements which were unmet at the time of the previous inspection in February 2012 are now met. Students who attend regularly are benefitting from improved arrangements for teaching and learning. However, the attendance of some students is not supported effectively; it is too low and this inhibits the extent of learning and progress for those who do not attend regularly. Current arrangements to support the learning of some students provided with education off-site on account of their reluctance to attend are not sufficiently rigorous and are not monitored and enforced effectively.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

As a result of this inspection, the school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010<sup>3</sup> ('the Regulations'), as follows.

The school must improve attendance by:

- encouraging students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and understand how they can contribute to community life (paragraph 5(c)).

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made).

## 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>	April 2006		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	12–16 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 2	Girls: 1	Total: 3
<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: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 1	Girls: 2	Total: 3
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£11,400 to £19,000		
<b>Address of school</b>	Willow Farm Off Newton Lane Cossall NG16 2SD		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9321153		
<b>Email address</b>	bluemountaineducation@btconnet.com		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Robert Fleming		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Blue Mountain Homes Ltd		