

Northleigh House School

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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Reporting inspector	David Young

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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 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

Northleigh House School, situated in a rural location in Warwickshire, is an independent day special school for students who have experienced severe bullying in their previous schools. Some students have additional needs, for example, mild autism or emotional vulnerability. Their education has been severely disrupted by their previous experiences. The school was, until 6 July 2012, part of the Red Balloon group of learning centres. The school is now managed independently by a sole proprietor. Placements are from local authorities or from maintained schools, or privately at the request of parents. The school is housed in a residential property which was previously used as a guest house. It is registered for up to 15 full-time equivalent students aged from 11 to 16 years. Currently, there are six students aged between 11 and 17 years of age on roll, including three who have a statement of special educational needs. The majority attend part-time and are in home tuition or maintained school placements for the remainder of the week. The school is in the process of applying to the Department of Education for a material change to allow students to continue their education up to the age of 17, having previously received agreement on a temporary basis. The school is a registered charity. It aims to 'support the recovery of bullied children in order that they can return to mainstream education, further education or employment.' The school was registered in May 2011 and admitted its first student in September 2011. The last full inspection of the school was in January 2012. The current headteacher was appointed to the school in February 2012.

Context of the inspection

The last full inspection of the school, in January 2012, judged that a number of the regulations for registration as an independent school were not met. An action plan to address the unmet regulations was approved by the Department for Education in August 2012. This progress monitoring visit was conducted on 14 September 2012 to check the extent of the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

At the time of the last inspection in January 2012, planning for teaching was weak and there were no full schemes of work in place for all the subjects taught. The school planned to revise all the schemes of work; as a result, satisfactory schemes of

work have been produced for the majority of subjects. These provide a suitable basis for teachers' planning for individual lessons for each year group taught. However, schemes of work for history, religious education and modern foreign languages are insufficiently developed and do not provide a clear summary of the content and sequence of work in these subjects, so that this requirement is not met.

At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum was only partially meeting the requirements of students' with a statement of special educational needs. The school planned to produce a standard format for individual education plans, to improve the recording of progress and to provide training for staff in meeting students' needs. In addition, the school has recently appointed a co-ordinator for special educational needs who has devised procedures to ensure that the requirements of students' statements are met in full. Requirements are being written into individual education plans. As a result of these initiatives, the school now ensures that the curriculum and other aspects of provision meet all the requirements of the students' statements.

At the time of the last inspection in January 2012, there was no appropriate programme of careers education matched to individual students' needs and aspirations. To remedy the situation, the school planned to follow national guidance for careers education. As a result of implementing the plan, students are now assisted with the identification of future careers and targeted support is provided to enable students to prepare for their chosen careers. A careers area has been created in the school and activities are planned to assist students with their preparation for the future. Individual students are accompanied on visits to colleges or to employers as they prepare to move on from the school at the age of 16 years. Work is planned within English and the life skills programme to assist students with activities such as preparing letters of application and preparing for interviews.

At the time of the last inspection, there was a lack of clarity in teachers' planning about lesson objectives and what students were expected to learn. Their planning was not using information about what students already knew and could do as their starting points for new learning. As a result, lessons were often not sufficiently challenging. The school planned to produce a standard format for lesson planning and to improve the flow of assessment information to staff. The plan has been implemented effectively, and good information from assessment is now provided for staff. The school's requirements for lesson planning and evaluation of progress ensure that staff are taking appropriate account of students' prior attainment. Lessons are well planned and suitable methods are used by teachers to ensure that students make progress in their learning. Clarity of purpose and progress in learning is evident in students' recorded work.

The January 2012 inspection found that there were insufficient resources for science, physical education, and creative and aesthetic experiences. The school planned to purchase further resources. Evidence from students' work and completed projects now demonstrates their access to a wide range of resources across all subjects. Computer software is used particularly imaginatively and students have produced

high quality work as a result. The quantity and range of resources is now being continuously updated in response to developments in the planned curriculum.

In January 2012, there was little use of assessment. Staff were unaware of how well students were progressing academically and did not maintain suitable records of achievement. There was no systematic framework in place by which students' performance could be evaluated. The school planned to produce a new framework for tracking progress. As a result, National Curriculum levels are now used to assess students' progress. Progress tracking sheets have been introduced which are used to record outcomes of baseline assessment when a student joins the school and a cumulative record of assessment outcomes in each subject. Staff now have a clear picture of students' starting points and the extent of their progress over time. This information is being effectively used to plan suitable learning activities.

At the time of the inspection in January 2012, opportunities for students' spiritual and cultural development were few and students' knowledge of public institutions and services was not developed effectively through the curriculum. The school planned to produce a citizenship programme and to appoint a specialist teacher. The citizenship programme is being implemented in a manner which introduces students effectively to public institutions and services. Students have pen friends in various European countries and these opportunities are used to provide international links and improve students' understanding of diverse cultures. The January inspection found that there were no visits into the local and wider community to experience locations of interest or places of worship. The students now make a range of visits into the community, including to places of worship. The religious education and life skills courses, including multi-faith themes, are being implemented appropriately so as to develop students' insights into their own and other cultures and beliefs.

At the time of the last inspection in January 2012, there was no designated person for child protection on the school site. The headteacher completed training, in July 2012, to the level required, so this requirement is now met.

At the time of the last inspection, the school was required to ensure that there were effective procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety on educational visits. Procedures have been revised and are now effective. Examples of risk assessments for educational visits were viewed during this inspection visit and are appropriate.

The January 2012 inspection found that there had been no emergency evacuations of the premises to ensure procedures were clear for all. Fire safety logs are now maintained regularly and these include records of the regular fire evacuations which are now undertaken.

At the time of the last inspection, there was no named qualified first aider on site. All members of staff have now completed basic first aid training and a named member of staff has been trained to the level required to act as the registered first aider.

In January 2012, the school shared the domestic kitchen of the residents and meals were all prepared by volunteers, none of whom had received food hygiene training. Lunch is no longer provided and students bring their own packed lunches. The school has exclusive use of the kitchen and dining room during the school day. A member of staff has been trained in basic food hygiene.

At the time of the last inspection in January 2012, the school did not make available to parents and carers information on those who teach and their qualifications. Details of teachers and their qualifications have now been posted on the school's website.

The school has made satisfactory progress in meeting the regulatory requirements. All but one of the regulations are now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010¹ ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- ensure the curriculum policy is set out in writing and is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and implement them effectively (paragraph 2(1)).

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made.

School details

School status	Independent day school		
Type of school	Special school for students who have experienced severe bullying		
Date school opened	September 2011		
Age range of pupils	11-16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 1	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 2	Girls: 1	Total: 3
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,000		
Address of school	Northleigh House Five Ways Road Hatton Warwick CV35 7HZ		
Telephone number	01926 484203		
Email address	jill.cornfield@northleigh.co.uk		
Headteacher	Jill Cornfield		
Proprietor	Vivienne Morgan		