

iMap Centre

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

The iMap Centre is a small independent special school for students aged 11–19 years. The site includes a large manor house and a lodge, with teaching blocks, situated in 10 acres of grounds. It provides education for students who have severe autism, severe learning difficulties, and challenging behaviour; all have a statement of special educational needs, and many require 52 week placements as a result of their very complex needs. The school caters for residential students and has more boys than girls. The centre is committed to increasing the participation of young people with autism in all aspects of living and learning and helping them to make a positive contribution to society by developing their independence and decision-making skills. A new owner took over the school in December 2009, and it has been re-named in line with its rationale of 'individuals making autism positive' (iMAP). A new acting head of education took up post at the beginning of this academic year. The school was last inspected in October 2010.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of the education provided by the school is satisfactory and the school meets most of the regulations. While the quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and satisfactory teaching helps students make satisfactory progress, assessment arrangements are inadequate. The quality of education provided has not improved since the last inspection and the school only meets its aims marginally. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and behaviour is good. Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students and safeguarding are satisfactory although the school does not meet all of the requirements.

Quality of education

The quality of the education provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and provides students with experiences in all of the required areas of learning. Teaching and care staff work together to provide a 24-hour curriculum suited to the individual needs of the students that includes aspects of personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) and cross-curricular themes. The

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

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

school equips students with basic life-skills through a functional skills programme and commercially produced schemes of work. This is complemented by work experiences that take place at school, such as car valeting and horticultural activities. One student distributes leaflets in the community on behalf of the local authority and students buy ingredients for food technology lessons at local shops. Through these activities, they learn how to interact with the wider public and how to use money. The school recognises the importance of preparing older learners for their transition from school. However, the curriculum planned for these learners is not sufficiently individualised and activities are not always challenging enough. The school works with Connexions to identify career options and these are discussed with students.

The school's policy for PSICHE is integrated within all elements of the curriculum. Students are taught about appreciating themselves as individuals through 'About Me' and about personal care and sexual health, when appropriate. Physical education (PE) is an important part of the daily routine; students take part in 'Physical Start' before all learning sessions, attend the local gymnasium weekly and engage in 'Rebound Therapy' with speech and language therapists. They have access to information and communication technology (ICT) when they complete work using personal computers.

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the limited and varying aptitudes and abilities of their students. They follow appropriate schemes of work and plan their lessons satisfactorily to ensure that students make sufficient progress. Appropriate note is taken of the specific requirements outlined in students' statements of special educational needs. The school has a satisfactory range of resources to support the curriculum. These include ICT equipment and specific resources to support students with autism and special educational needs. However, resources are not always used to maximum effect; for example, interactive whiteboards are not consistently used to support lessons. While staff encourage students to learn independently, expectations are not high enough, particularly for the least able. The school has not provided teaching staff with clear guidance on how to track students' achievements. As a result, lessons are not always challenging enough and progress is not consistent. The school's systems for self-evaluation are weak. As a result, it lacks a clear focus of its weaknesses and strengths and this impedes progress in areas that need to be developed.

Assessment arrangements are inadequate because procedures for recording student's progress and using this information in their planning are inconsistent. For example, some teaching assistants record the progress made by students during individual lessons and some, but not all, teachers use this information to inform students' next steps in learning. The school administers commercially produced baseline assessments when students join the school and these are used periodically to track progress, but a consistent system is lacking. Students make satisfactory progress in their education. This is evident in their engagement during lessons, good attitudes towards learning, and the periodic assessments that take place. However, the inadequate assessment arrangements impede students' better progress and are

preventing the curriculum being broadened to better meet the interests and needs of the students.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good. Due to the severe difficulties of the students, development and progress in all areas is measured in small increments over time. The school and care staff provide students with valuable experiences and support that help them improve their sociability and communication skills markedly. Students engage in speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, music therapy, counselling and multi-sensory experiences. The school has a robust system for behaviour management. As a result, the atmosphere during lessons and around the school is calm and attendance at lessons is good. Students are engaged in their activities and get along well with their teachers, care staff and usually with their peers.

Behaviour observed in lessons and around the school was consistently good. Students have good attitudes towards learning and enjoy school. As a result, they react well to the environment and improve their social skills. One parent commented: 'The organisation has been very resourceful towards my son, adapting his routine and environment to help him succeed as best as he can. I cannot speak highly enough of them.'

Students grow spiritually through elements of art, music, horticulture and time spent outdoors in the spacious grounds of the school. They learn about morality through the firm but caring interventions and guidance of staff. They gain an understanding of the world around them through walking in populated areas, shopping with their key workers, visits to the library and through running a stall at the local summer fete. Students learn about public services, such as the police and fire services, and about respecting the law through PSICHE. They learn about other cultures through events such as Chinese New Year celebrations when they partake of Chinese food and practise Chinese dance. Those that attend church share their experiences with their peers. As a result, students learn about respecting people with different beliefs.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of the students is satisfactory. School and care staff work together closely to ensure that students are well cared for and supervised at all times. The school follows the required procedures to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. There is a satisfactory policy in place for child protection, but it includes some incorrect detail and lacks a date for review. Staff have received the required level of training in child protection procedures. The recently appointed designated person for safeguarding demonstrates a clear understanding of child protection issues and procedures. However, she was unable to produce written confirmation of the completion of the higher level of training required for this post. A

suitable course has been arranged during February 2013 and the local authority's safeguarding board is providing support during the interim period.

The school has a written policy to promote good behaviour that is adhered to and is effective. Procedures to prevent bullying and high levels of supervision ensure that bullying is rare. The school conducts risk assessments for all activities in and out of school in keeping with its established policies. It complies with fire regulations and conducts termly fire drills that are duly recorded. The school has an appropriate policy for first aid. It keeps a record of sanctions imposed on students. Admission and attendance registers meet regulations.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has conducted all of the necessary checks to confirm the suitability of proprietors and staff. These are recorded in a single central register as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and grounds are suitably secure and there is appropriate access in the case of an emergency. Classrooms are appropriate in size, well-ventilated and furnished, and all are suited to support the curriculum. All classrooms are maintained well and levels of decoration are satisfactory. There are sufficient, suitably equipped washrooms and appropriate arrangements to look after students who are unwell. The outdoor areas include plenty of room to relax and play and are equipped with swings, a trampoline and balancing apparatus. The grounds also host a greenhouse, vegetable patches and an orchard.

Provision of information

The school prospectus includes all of the required details. The school values the input of parents and carers and hosts parents' forums and coffee mornings at least once a term. Parents and carers are sent yearly reports that keep them informed about their child's progress.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy meets 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'), with the exception of those listed below.³

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

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- establish a framework to assess students' work regularly and thoroughly and ensure that information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that students can make progress (paragraph 3(g))
- establish a framework by which student performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents, and/or by national norms (paragraph 4).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the school and ensure that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Establish regular self-evaluation to inform the development of the curriculum and to improve teaching.
- Establish a rigorous system of continuous professional development for staff to help them improve their planning and teaching.
- Improve the curriculum for older learners and broaden the general curriculum to reflect and compliment the progress that students make.

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	Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)		
Date school opened	17 December 2009		
Age range of pupils	11–19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 9	Girls: 2	Total: 11
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 9	Girls: 2	Total: 11
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 7	Girls: 1	Total: 8
Annual fees	£55,000		
Headteacher	Sharon Beddow (Acting head of education)		
Proprietor	Martin McKeivitt		

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.



22 October 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of iMAP Centre

I thoroughly enjoyed inspecting your school. Thank you for making me feel most welcome. I spent my time at school observing lessons, speaking to staff and looking through documents. You told me that you enjoy school and appreciate your teacher's hard work.

I found that your school provides you with a satisfactory level of education and is especially good in the ways that it promotes your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. I was impressed by your good behaviour.

The school needs to improve in the ways that it checks and tracks your progress in order to improve the education that you receive. It also needs to be more rigorous in making sure that staff have been trained in making sure you are safe and well looked after.

I have also suggested that the school improve the ways that it assesses its strengths and weaknesses and the ways that it supports your teachers' development.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chanan Tomlin
Lead inspector