

The Lioncare School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	846/6043
Unique Reference Number (URN)	131356
Inspection number	386872
Inspection dates	23–24 February 2012
Reporting inspector	Mick Megee

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2012



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 Lioncare School (formerly Cornerstones School) is an independent day special school which provides education and care for girls and boys who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school is accommodated in a former printing workshop in a residential street in Hove. The school has been open since 1997 and is owned by Seafields Limited trading as the Lioncare Group, who also own the nearby children's homes in which all the pupils live. The school is registered for up to 12 pupils, aged between six and 16 years. Currently, 11 pupils attend, four girls and seven boys, aged between 11 and 15 years. Pupils have histories of severely disrupted schooling and a few have not attended education for long periods. A large majority experience difficulty with basic numeracy and literacy. All pupils except one have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils come from across England and their places are funded by their local authorities. The school aims 'to provide a facilitating learning environment following the therapeutic community approach for children who have experienced severe emotional damage and trauma in infancy and early childhood'. In September 2010, the Lioncare Group reorganised the school's curriculum and staffing, changed its name and brought in an increased emphasis on therapeutic aspects. A new headteacher (known as the 'School Manager') was appointed with effect from October 2011. All teachers in the school are recent appointments since May 2011. The school was last inspected in October 2008.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education that meets its aims and maintains the standards identified at the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is satisfactory, reflecting the satisfactory quality of the teaching and curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good and the procedures for safeguarding meet requirements. The school meets almost all of the regulations.

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

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

Quality of education

The school implements a satisfactory, broad and coherent curriculum, including access to the full National Curriculum. The curriculum is based around individual and school-wide projects that incorporate academic and therapeutic aspects. The curriculum successfully supports pupils to tackle and surmount social and emotional barriers to learning, through the provision of regular counselling and psychotherapeutic support.

The school's curriculum policies and schemes of work ensure that pupils have a continuous progression in learning as they move through the school. The school is in the process of updating its schemes in line with a new curriculum approach involving projects. The curriculum is broadly matched to each pupil's needs, capabilities and interests, providing interesting educational opportunities off the school site such as rock climbing, skiing on the nearby dry ski slope and archery. The school offers pupils in Key Stage 4 a number of good vocational options, including college and work experience. Most pupils are given good opportunities to develop their basic skills in literacy and numeracy throughout the day, although this quality is not yet consistent across all lessons. Good use is made of information and communication technology in all subjects. Pupils are able to achieve qualifications through ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). The senior staff rightly recognise that the range of accreditation is too narrow, and the school plans to include GCSE and Foundation Skills accreditation from next September.

The promotion of pupils' personal development underpins the academic curriculum. There is daily psychotherapeutic groupwork and the programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is threaded successfully into all lessons. Staff from the children's homes attend lessons and contribute well to this aspect of learning. Parents and carers feel that the curriculum is effective, although they would like more opportunities to help their children at home, for example through regular homework. The school has good curricular partnerships with local schools and colleges which enable pupils to experience mainstream education and specialist teaching where this is required. External support for pupils' career guidance has recently become more restricted and guidance is now satisfactory rather than a highlight of provision.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress; it is good where there are practical learning activities. Key strengths in teaching and learning are the small class sizes with frequent opportunities for individual work, the strong, caring relationship between all adults and pupils, and tolerance and flexibility of the adults when pupils become upset. The new staff are beginning to gain an understanding of each pupil and of how to de-escalate situations with sensitivity so that pupils can return to learning quickly.

Teachers' lesson plans make clear the activities they intend to provide, but they do not precisely state pupils' individual learning goals. This sometimes results in staff missing opportunities to promote pupils' basic skills. Pupils generally enjoy their

learning, as reflected in the frequent good-humoured verbal exchanges. Although teachers generally encourage pupils to be active and independent learners, this is not consistent in all lessons. Self-assessment in learning by pupils is at an early stage of development and sometimes worksheets do not match the literacy levels of the pupils and tasks are not sufficiently challenging. The school has recognised this and senior staff have introduced a new system to track more accurately pupils' attainment levels and progress. Staff are assessing pupils' progress regularly in the core subjects and maintaining detailed records, and senior staff are now collating the information. Although the system is still too new for it to yield very accurate data, it is beginning to improve goal-setting and challenge in lessons, and to operate effectively across the school and homes.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for decision making with respect to their behaviour and the life of the school. Pupils take responsibility within the school by tending the outside garden, checking the minibuses and tidying classrooms. In regular discussions with their key workers and within the daily community meetings, pupils are encouraged to voice their fears and concerns and to reflect on and to accept responsibility for their actions. The daily meetings are an important and powerful catalyst in the pupils' good moral and spiritual development. The school's therapeutic approach supports pupils well and helps them improve their confidence and self-esteem, often from a very low starting point. Staff provide good role models to pupils through their kindly, caring approach.

Behaviour and attendance are good and most pupils show a growing self-awareness of the need to behave well in order to learn, and of the effect of their actions on others. In lessons, no racist language is in evidence. Staff across the homes and school have been undertaking the same training in how to manage difficult behaviour, so that there is an increasingly consistent approach. Staff monitor and record pupils' behaviour and response on a daily basis. As a result of the consistent management linked to the review of their responses, pupils show a marked improvement in their social and interactional skills, behaviour and attendance from when they join the school. During their time at the school, pupils develop much more positive attitudes to learning and older pupils become increasingly aware of the relevance of activities, such as work experience and college attendance, designed to enhance their future prospects.

Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to develop a broad knowledge of public institutions and services in England through the PSHE and citizenship programme, involving visits to and from the police and other community groups. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to acquire a respect for their own and other peoples' cultures through the whole-school projects and celebrations of events such as Diwali.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The quality of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. All the essential policies are in place and effectively implemented with respect to health and safety, preventing bullying, behaviour, first aid, recruitment and child protection. Staff are appropriately appointed and trained with respect to child protection and first aid, as well as in physical intervention should it be necessary. The school benefits from the very good guidance and supervision provided by a specialist member of staff who has responsibility for ensuring that all matters relating to health and fire safety are appropriately undertaken and records maintained. The school ensures that pupils are very carefully supervised throughout the school day and suitable risk assessments are prepared for educational trips out of school. Appropriate records are maintained relating to incidents, as are registers relating to admission and daily attendance. The school is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and has planned well to increase accessibility. Through the PSHE programme, pupils gain a good understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives, including the dangers of drugs, drinking and smoking. However, a few pupils still take the opportunity to go off the site and smoke during break times.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school undertakes all the required checks on staff and others. A single central register of the checks undertaken is maintained appropriately.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The accommodation is well maintained, clean and suitably decorated throughout, and it ensures that pupils can learn effectively and safely. Classrooms are spacious and well furnished. There are good displays of pupils' work throughout the school that celebrate pupils' achievements and support learning. There is a small outside area suitable for ball games and other outdoor play which is supplemented by supervised visits to the park just around the corner.

Provision of information

Parents and carers receive regular reports on pupils' personal and academic progress. The school provides nearly all the required information to parents, carers and others or details of how it may be obtained from the school in the prospectus. However, the school does not provide sufficient detail on its exclusion policy, its provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language. It does not specify the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, or a summary of their qualifications.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clear and well-written complaints policy and procedures that fully meet all 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

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- ensure that the following information is made available to parents and carers of pupils and parents and carers of prospective pupils, and on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State, or an independent inspectorate:
 - the school's policy on and arrangements for exclusions
 - particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language
 - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- develop strategies and procedures to ensure that pupils consistently receive a high standard of careers guidance
- ensure that teachers take up all the opportunities to promote pupils' basic skills
- ensure that teachers consistently promote active and independent learning.

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

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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		✓		
--	--	---	--	--

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Date school opened	1997		
Age range of pupils	6–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 7	Girls: 4	Total: 11
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 7	Girls: 3	Total: 10
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 7	Girls: 4	Total: 11
Annual fees (day pupils)	£44,408		
Address of school	87 Payne Avenue Hove East Sussex BN3 5HD		
Telephone number	01273 734164		
Email address	schoolmanager@lioncare.co.uk		
Headteacher	Sara Fletcher		
Proprietor	Seafields Ltd trading as the Lioncare Group		

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.



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Lioncare School, Hove BN3 5HD

Thank you for the help you gave me when I inspected your school recently, by talking to me and completing your questionnaires.

This letter is to let you know my judgements about the school.

- The Lioncare School provides you with a satisfactory education, with a sound curriculum, so that you make steady progress in your studies.
- Your teachers and classroom staff carry out their work satisfactorily.
- Your behaviour is good, and your attitudes to lessons have improved and are now good. Well done!
- You are all becoming much more self-confident thanks to the good personal support you receive.
- The school is good at making sure you are safe, healthy and happy.

Although the school gets many things right, I have suggested to those in charge that they consistently help you to improve your literacy and numeracy and to become more independent in your learning. It would be good for you to have more careers guidance. The school should also provide all the necessary information to your parents and carers.

Perhaps you can help out by letting your teachers know if your work is too easy or too difficult.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mick Megee
Lead inspector

