

# Provident House School

Independent school standard 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 purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Provident House School caters for up to six students aged eight to sixteen years of age who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It opened in December 2007 and is owned by the CastleCare Group. The school occupies its own premises and provides education for young people who live in the company's nearby residences and who are not yet in mainstream schooling. There are five students currently on roll, all of whom have been referred and funded by their local authorities. One student was taking part in an off-site vocational 'taster' course during the period of the inspection. Two students have a statement of special educational needs. Placements in the school are often short term and at short notice. The school aims to support students' reintegration into mainstream schooling whenever possible. The school was last inspected in October 2008.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Provident House provides a good quality of education and is largely successful in meeting its aims. Students are prepared appropriately for return to mainstream schools and when they remain in the locality for a sufficient length of time, placements are successful. The good curriculum, teaching and assessment ensure that students make good progress in their learning. Arrangements for safeguarding are comprehensive and implemented systematically with excellent cooperation between the school and students' homes. The school has improved steadily since the last inspection and now meets all the regulations for registration.

## **Quality of education**

The quality of the curriculum is good. There is a suitable balance between academic and practical learning and all the required areas of learning are included. The curriculum for all students has a good emphasis on the development of basic skills and daily lessons in English and mathematics cover appropriate topics at the required levels. The Key Stage 3 curriculum reflects the expectations of the National Curriculum and meets the requirements of students' statements of special educational needs. The content and structure of the curriculum are derived from national programmes of study and are clearly set out in the school's own long- and

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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).

medium-term subject plans. A major challenge for the school, which is handled successfully, is the relatively short-term placement of students as the majority of students move to new residences outside the area within a matter of weeks or months of enrolment. A key strength of the curriculum is in the thorough baseline assessment of students' previous attainment and the identification of significant gaps in their learning. As a result, the lessons planned by teachers are individualised very well to meet the personal learning needs of each student. In Key Stage 4, students are entered for suitable external awards, including GCSE, in a variety of subjects, depending on their progress. They are also provided with the opportunity to focus on courses with a more vocational emphasis such as business studies, horticulture and sports studies, accredited through the unit award scheme and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Key Stage 4 students are appropriately prepared for life after school. They have access to placements with external providers, suited to their future career aspirations, such as training at a military college or placement on an accredited sports award scheme. Work experience is provided on an individual basis to complement the subjects studied in school, and a range of careers guidance activities are built into the curriculum and supported by the local Connexions service. Although all students have access to regular physical education, there are limited opportunities for them to experience physically-challenging outdoor pursuits designed to develop independence and team work. The daily tutorial period starts the day with engaging and challenging thinking-skills activities which students enjoy and which contribute to a suitable atmosphere for the day's learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Lesson content and skills are carefully chosen to address gaps in students' learning and to enable students to build appropriately on previous learning. The teacher and teaching assistants work well as a team, sharing their personal expertise, with each contributing to planning. The activities provided generally engage the interest of students and enable them to tackle new learning while also reinforcing understanding and skills, particularly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The learning resources are varied and well chosen to provide visual appeal and interest. The staff provide excellent support to students, ensuring they understand their responsibilities and using effective questioning to challenge their thinking. At times, staff are inclined to do too much for students or to focus for too long on a specific skill; as a result, the lesson loses pace and the lesson objectives are not completed. Students' literacy skills are mostly well below expectations for their age and staff ensure that good opportunities for reading and writing in a variety of forms are included in all lessons. Overall, students make good progress over time. Good use is made of National Curriculum levels and descriptors to continuously assess students' progress in all subjects studied. The information gained from assessment is used well as the basis for lesson planning, ensuring that the curriculum in each subject is presented at an appropriate level of challenge. However, assessment data are not currently recorded in a manner which allow staff to evaluate readily the extent of progress of individual students over time. Although most students attend the school for a limited period in their education, most achieve external accreditation, and those who progress to

maintained schools or to further education have built on their experience to achieve further success in external examinations.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good. Students enter the school with negative experiences of school and of authority. There is good integration of actions and support between the students' care workers and the school staff; care workers are welcomed into classrooms to work alongside staff and students. As a result, the quality of relationships between adults provides a suitable model for students to emulate. Behaviour is good and students demonstrate positive attitudes to the learning activities in lessons. When students demonstrate challenging behaviour and experience difficulty with the management of their anger, staff use effective strategies to help them manage these difficulties. Students gradually learn to manage their emotions and social interactions; improvement is sometimes slow, but the environment created in the school has a positive impact. The attendance of some students is erratic and absences result from a variety of external influences. However, the school's records show that the attendance of most students improves well during their time in the school.

A variety of appropriate approaches is taken to the development of students' social and cultural awareness. Good opportunities are provided in the curriculum, for example in history and citizenship lessons, for students to consider issues of tolerance and diversity in society. Students join in activities and volunteer often thoughtful and reflective contributions to discussion. They raise funds for various charitable causes and take part in activities organised on behalf of the company's schools in the region. External speakers visit the school and make an important contribution to students' personal development through health-related topics and by, for example, developing positive relationships with community support officers.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good. There are comprehensive procedures for safeguarding students; staff are trained to the required levels and risk assessments are completed for all aspects of premises and student safety. The company's comprehensive recruitment procedures meet regulatory requirements and are applied consistently. Policies and procedures for the management of behaviour and to prevent bullying are implemented effectively, ensuring that the school is an orderly community where students are supervised appropriately. All members of staff are trained in first aid and the designated person responsible for first aid has been trained to a suitable higher level. All aspects of health and safety practice take account of government guidance. Fire safety, including an up-to-date fire risk assessment and regular checks on all fire safety equipment, is monitored and maintained to a high standard. The school complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

Arrangements to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors to work with children are comprehensive and implemented thoroughly. Details of all the required checks are recorded in a suitable single central register.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school is located in an attractive listed building. Internal refurbishment of the premises has ensured that classrooms are bright and airy and of a suitable size for safe and effective learning. The accommodation is well maintained and decorated to a good standard. There is a small rear garden which is used appropriately to extend learning, including gardening. Additional use is made of local outside areas for games and recreation.

## **Provision of information**

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others. Access is provided to all school policies on request. Parents and carers receive regular written reports on students' progress, and all required information is provided for external reviews of students' statements of special educational needs.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's policy and procedures for the management of any complaints meet regulatory 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 details of students' progress are recorded in a manner which enables a clear evaluation of the extent of their progress over time
- increase the range of outdoor and adventurous activities within the curriculum for all students
- ensure that students' attendance improves over time by eliminating unauthorised absences for all students.

## 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

<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
<b>Date school opened</b>	December 2007
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–16 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 5
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 2
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 5
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£34,746
<b>Address of school</b>	CastleCare The Manor House, Squire's Hill Rothwell Kettering Northamptonshire NN14 6BQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 711111
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:rburrows@castlehomes.co.uk">rburrows@castlehomes.co.uk</a>
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marion Paige
<b>Proprietor</b>	CastleCare 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.**



16 March 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Provident House School, Kettering NN14 6BQ**

Thank you for your welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my visit, including the opportunity to see you at work and to talk with you about your experience and your hopes for the future. The inspection judged that Provident House School provides you with a good quality of education and helps you with your academic and personal development. I was particularly pleased to see:

- that your questionnaires show that you recognise that teaching is good and that the staff help you to improve
- the way in which you show respect to the staff and work effectively together
- the good efforts you are making to improve your behaviour and to settle quickly in to school every day
- the qualifications which some of you have already achieved and your continued work towards further examinations
- the good progress you are all making, in a variety of subjects including art, English, maths and history.

To bring about further improvement I have asked the proprietor and staff to continue to develop Provident House by providing more opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities, and by making sure that your attendance improves. You can help to get the best out of Provident House by making sure that you attend school every day and continue to prepare yourselves for the future careers you have chosen for yourselves.

With all best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Young  
Lead inspector