

# Macintyre School

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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Macintyre School is an ethnically diverse special school for pupils with complex learning difficulties, including autism and challenging behaviour. It opened in 1974 and is located in Wingrave, Buckinghamshire. It was last inspected in June 2009. The school is registered to admit 40 pupils aged between 10 and 19 years, but currently there are no primary aged pupils on roll. The current number on roll is 40.

All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and 26 are looked after. Most pupils reside in accommodation provided by the proprietor. A separate inspection was carried out of the residential provision at the same time as the inspection of the school. The headteacher was appointed to her post in May 2012, having previously been head of education in the school since September 2010, and acting headteacher since January 2012. A range of other professionals work in school, including a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, clinical psychologist and an consultant psychiatrist.

The school aims to 'encourage each other to achieve all we can in a safe and healthy environment, in a way that promotes independence and effective communication in everything that we do'.

## Evaluation of the school

The school provides an outstanding quality of education. Outstanding teaching and behaviour, combined with a rich curriculum and outstanding provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enable pupils to achieve extremely well. The standard of education has improved since the last inspection and the two areas identified for development have been successfully rectified. Welfare, health and safety procedures, including safeguarding arrangements, are satisfactory but they are not as good as in June 2009. All except two regulatory requirements are met.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding. It is exceptionally broad and provides an excellent range of learning opportunities during the day and after school. Detailed curriculum

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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).

plans exist for all areas of learning and they are implemented effectively. In September 2012, the curriculum was revised, and pupils are now taught in key stage groups so that work is properly matched to individuals' capabilities. For example, sensory-based work or subject-specific activities are provided as appropriate. Provision is bespoke and learning activities are tailored very effectively to individuals' specific needs and to the objectives specified in their statement of special educational needs. The curriculum is enhanced by Award Scheme and Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses to develop pupils' personal, social and life skills further and to promote their independence. Computers and other technological aids are used effectively to support learning.

The 'My Way' initiative, which is a carefully tailored programme of skills and careers development, is very effective in ensuring the smooth transition for pupils to their adult life including further education, supported living, residential care or adult learning. Consequently, post-16 pupils are very well prepared for life after school. Good careers guidance is provided. It is enhanced by work experience in school and in outside organisations, where appropriate. An extensive range of enrichment opportunities are provided during the day and beyond. For example, pupils love horse riding, swimming, camping in the Lake District and holidaying in France and Germany. The annual 'MacFest' community event is enjoyed by all in the local village, and pupils' involvement in it helps to further develop their music, social and communication skills.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Highly effective teaching and a stimulating and individualised curriculum ensure pupils make outstanding progress over time. Lessons are very well planned and very good use is made of assessment information to ensure that work is set at just the right level. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and there is a wonderful learning climate in classrooms. Challenging behaviour is sensitively handled and pupils respond well to the methods used and adhere to the boundaries that are set.

Specialist teaching in physical education, information and communication technology and music and drama is effective and pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developing at a good or better rate in these subjects. Pupils are encouraged to be independent, but there are times when staff do things for individuals when they are quite capable of doing things for themselves, for example tying aprons or peeling vegetables when individuals should be doing such tasks. Staff use signing and communication symbols effectively to support learning; however, staff do not always get pupils to respond by signing, using gestures or by speech, which reduces the value of the educational experience. Staff are not always modelling key vocabulary and the sentence structures of English and encouraging pupils to use both when communicating with staff and each other.

Staff are very adept at assessing how well individuals are achieving and teaching approaches are modified accordingly. In June 2009, staff were not moderating the targets set or consistently annotating evidence to determine the progress made over time. This weakness has been suitably remedied.

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

Provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. The school develops pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence exceptionally well. Parents and carers say that staff have considerably improved their child's behaviour, self-worth and attitude to learning since their children joined the school. All adults treat pupils with respect and dignity at all times, and staff have formed a strong bond with the pupils that they teach. Relationships between adults and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, are excellent. It is therefore no surprise that the atmosphere in school is first rate and pupils enjoy school life and are happy there. Behaviour is outstanding given the nature of individuals' needs. Challenging behaviour is very well managed and pupils are taught right from wrong in a sensitive and individualised way. Pupils' attendance is good and the pupils have very positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils are making a difference to the school and wider community. For example, the school council is helping to improve the range of equipment used and school menus. Pupils raise money for a number of good causes and some deliver the village magazine to local households. Racial harmony is an important strength. Staff and pupils from different backgrounds mix together exceptionally well. Work in religious education, art and other subjects helps pupils gain an appreciation and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony.

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

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Pupils are very well cared for and are extremely well supervised day to day. Very good provision is made to ensure pupils keep fit and healthy. For example, a wide variety of sports activities, including outdoor pursuits and swimming, ensures pupils get plenty of exercise. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory rather than good. This is because the child protection policy does not make sufficiently explicit what procedures are adopted in the event that an allegation is made against the designated person for child protection. In addition, the procedures for recording child protection incidents are not clearly stated in the policy. Nevertheless, despite the shortfall in the documentation, in practice pupils are appropriately safeguarded from harm. For example, all staff have been trained at the appropriate level in child protection and staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a safeguarding issue. Recruitment arrangements meet requirements.

Behaviour and anti-bullying policies clearly outline codes of conduct and guidance is closely followed by staff and pupils. As a result, pupils are free from harassment and intimidation. Suitable risk assessments are carried out for classroom activities, the premises and education visits and there is appropriate oversight of procedures by senior leaders. Physical restraints are satisfactorily recorded, although the type of restraint used is not always specified clearly enough and pupils' views of the

restraints used are not routinely sought. A satisfactory first-aid policy exists and it is suitably implemented. Accidents and the administration of medicine procedures are satisfactorily recorded and there are sufficient first aiders on site at all times. Attendance registers are kept in accordance with requirements, but the admission register does not contain all of the required information.

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

Recruitment and staff vetting procedures meet requirements. All staff, proprietors and others have been suitably checked to confirm their suitability to work with pupils. The recently updated single central register contains all of the required information.

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

The premises and accommodation are purpose built and are of high quality. Provision keeps pupils safe and secure and enables them to learn very effectively. Classrooms are spacious and their colour scheme is designed to be 'low arousal' so that individuals are not over stimulated. Specialist facilities, such as the hydro pool, gymnasium and sensory rooms are of very good quality and are used regularly. All furniture and fittings are of good quality and suitable adaptations have been made to the premises to ensure pupils' specific disability and learning needs are met. There is plenty of office space and a good number of additional rooms for training and teaching purposes. There are sufficient washrooms and toilets facilities for pupils, staff and others. Suitable arrangements are made for those who are ill. The premises are well maintained and are kept in a clean and tidy condition. The school is located in attractive grounds and there is plenty of outdoor space for play and recreation.

### **Provision of information**

All of the required information is provided, or is made available, to parents, carers and others. The school supplies detailed information to the responsible local authority for the annual review of an individual's statement. The required annual financial information is provided to local authorities for those pupils who are funded by a local authority.

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

The complaints procedure meets 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'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

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

- produce a comprehensive child protection policy that pays due regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- ensure that the admission register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).

### **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 staff always promote pupils' independence, and do not do things for pupils when they are capable of doing things for themselves.
- Ensure that all adults model the key vocabulary and the sentence structures of English and actively encourage pupils to use signs, gesture or to speak in sentences, whenever possible.
- When recording physical restraints, specify the type of restraint more clearly and ensure that pupils' views on restraints are regularly obtained.

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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).

## 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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## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for pupils with severe and complex learning needs, including autism		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1974		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10–19 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 30	Girls: 10	Total: 40
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 30	Girls: 10	Total: 40
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 18	Girls: 8	Total: 26
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£50,136		
<b>Address of school</b>	Leighton Road Wingrave Buckinghamshire HP22 4PA		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01296 681274		
<b>Email address</b>	annemari.ottridge@macintyrecharity.org		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annemari Ottridge		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Macintyre Care		

**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.**

15 November 2012

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of MacIntyre School, Wingrave, HP22 4PA**

I am the inspector that visited your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and making me feel so welcome. I enjoyed speaking to members of the school council and learning about all the things that they were doing to improve school life. I said that I would write you a letter to tell you what I found out when I visited.

- You get an outstanding education.
- You are happy and enjoy being at school.
- You are very well behaved and people from different backgrounds get on really well together.
- You are taught very well and there are lots of interesting activities for you to do during the school day and after school.
- The school council told me that it had got new go-carts, puzzles, bean bags and sports equipment for you to use, which is excellent.
- You told me that you love horse riding, camping in the Lake District, delivering the village magazine and the 'MacFest' event.
- Your school building is lovely and so are the people in it. You are so lucky to have such beautiful grounds to play and relax in.

Even the best schools can improve, so there are some things I want the headteacher and proprietor to do to make the school even better.

- I want all staff to encourage you to do things for yourself wherever possible.
- I want adults to talk to you in sentences and for you to repeat what they say if you can and if they use signs or symbols then for you to do the same back.
- I want the school to write another child protection policy and for the admission register and physical restraint records to contain all of the necessary information.

Yours sincerely

David Rzeznik  
Lead inspector