

Kisimul School (Woodstock House)

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

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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

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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

Kisimul School (Woodstock House) is an independent day special school for students aged from eight to 19 years of age. It is in the Surbiton suburb of Long Ditton, which is approximately four miles from Kingston-upon-Thames. It is located in extensive grounds in a quiet road. The school is owned by the Kisimul Group Limited, a company that also runs and manages care provision for young adults, another two special schools and residential accommodation. The school does not have any specific religious affiliation. A number of the school's students reside in Kisimul Group accommodation.

The school opened in 2008 and the last inspection of its education provision was in June 2009. The last social care inspection was in January 2012. This present inspection is of the education provision only. A separate inspection of residential provision took place at the same time as the education inspection and is reported in a separate report.

There are 42 students on roll, 19 of whom are beyond the age of 16 years. There are no primary-aged pupils currently on roll. All of the 31 boys and 11 girls have severe learning difficulties and very challenging behaviour, and a large majority also have autism. All students have a statement of special educational needs.

The school aims to 'offer pupils who have learning difficulties, opportunities to interact, communicate and participate in everyday life as fully as possible'. It aims to do this by providing pupils with 'the tools to manage and control their own lifestyle and behaviour'.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education and it meets its aims successfully. It has maintained the same level of effectiveness as when it was inspected last despite having almost four times as many students on roll. Students achieve well. They make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as other aspects of their personal development, such as becoming more independent. The school's provision for ensuring students' welfare, health and safety is good. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. The school meets all independent school regulations.

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

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

Quality of education

The good curriculum meets students' learning and personal needs well, and the principles that underpin it are explained in a comprehensive policy. Long-term planning ensures that students study a good range of subjects although some subject schemes of work are better than others in providing guidance for teachers.

The curriculum is designed around the core focus of developing students' communication and numeracy skills and promoting their personal development. Breadth is provided through subjects such as music, art, physical education and science as well as termly topics that incorporate further subjects, such as history and geography. Personal, social and health education is integral to the school's work and it underpins the curriculum. Staff exploit all opportunities to develop students' personal development. Students in Years 10 and 11 receive recognition for their work through studying for qualifications awarded by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). The post-16 curriculum enables students to extend their ASDAN qualifications and provides work-related learning opportunities that help to prepare them for leaving school. For example, mini-enterprise schemes, such as running a cake shop, provide rich learning opportunities.

Students of all ages benefit from well-planned, community-based learning opportunities, such as shopping for ingredients that they later cook. As well as developing students' social skills, these situations also give them the chance to practise in real-life the communication, numeracy and social skills that they have learned in school.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. The nature of students' special educational needs is such that they are averse to change and are unable to focus on activities for extended periods. Staff have detailed knowledge of students' needs and patterns of behaviour and are skilled at managing transitions from one activity to another. When students react adversely to such transfers, staff are equally adept at calming them down so that learning can begin again. They use a variety of techniques that include encouragement, praise and rewards to retain students' attention or to refocus it when they lose concentration. Relationships between students and adults are very positive. Literacy and numeracy are taught particularly well because planning is precise. Teachers identify clearly what each student is expected to learn and provide the personalised resources that accelerate learning. In the few less effective lessons, planning does not consider each individual student's capabilities in sufficient detail and so anticipated learning outcomes for each student are not clearly stated. As a result, the activities in these lessons are not always well tailored to individual students and so teachers tend to spend too long on whole-class activities rather than moving students on to individual activities, when they can learn at a quicker rate. Staff are good communicators and use a variety of communication systems to meet individual students' preferred approach.

Students make good progress in lessons and some of them work with reducing levels of adult support as the lesson proceeds. Staff assess students' progress routinely during lessons, maintaining an effective ongoing record of their achievement.

Photographs are used to provide evidence of students' achievements over time and these are used effectively to plan future teaching. However, the absence of supporting text means that it is not always possible for all viewers of the photographs to understand their exact significance. The school has recently purchased a commercial scheme that effectively enables staff to use and analyse assessment information by measuring students' small steps in progress. The school is now considering the development of the new scheme so that staff can analyse students' progress from their starting points and make comparisons with the progress made by students in other similar schools.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their personal development is encouraged throughout the day in all activities. The school has an unrelenting focus on promoting students' self-esteem, self-confidence and ability and willingness to do things independently. Students experience varying degrees of success, but the majority make excellent progress in some aspects, such as taking on the responsibility for moving symbols on visual timetables or activity strips once they complete an activity. A few are able to express their views at annual reviews of their statement of special educational needs.

Students' behaviour is good, despite them finding it extremely difficult to foresee the consequences of their actions or to appreciate how what they do has an impact on others. Despite this, some are able to make decisions and a few develop the maturity to recognise right from wrong. This enables them to say that they are sorry when an apology is required. As their social skills develop, students' ability to be part of a group improves. For instance, students interact with others and communicate effectively with the group in morning greetings sessions.

Regular visits to local facilities, such as shops, the park, a pantomime and swimming pool, give students valuable experience of the wider community and provide them with some insight into British culture and public establishments. Their awareness of other cultures and beliefs is limited, although the school has good provision for extending their horizons. The local community is used effectively with visits to different places of worship, and the school celebrates many events that hold significance for different faiths and cultures. Very recently, for instance, students had an Asian meal with Diwali sweets, made a shrine and followed this with a disco that featured Asian and Bollywood music.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. All checks to ensure the safer recruitment of staff are in place. All staff are trained in child protection and those with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection have appropriate training at a higher level, and arrangements are secure. A wide range of policies and procedures, including detailed risk assessments, protect students when they are in school and out in the community. A very high level of adult supervision in classes and around the site ensures students' safety and that of others. Fire fighting

equipment is checked and maintained routinely; staff have recently undergone training on fire safety and fire drills take place regularly. The admission and attendance registers are completed diligently.

Appropriate policies and procedures for promoting good behaviour and preventing bullying are implemented effectively. Serious incidents are recorded correctly, as are sanctions and occasions when physical restraint has been used. All staff are trained in the use of a recognised physical intervention procedure and so there is a consistent approach to dealing with challenging situations.

The use of a variety of therapies makes an important contribution to students' welfare. For instance, aromatherapy and music therapy improve students' well-being and help to calm them, encouraging more productive learning, while occupational and speech and language therapies help students to access what is being taught.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of all adults who come into contact with students. Senior staff have undertaken suitable training to ensure rigorous recruitment procedures are adopted when staff are recruited. All of the required information is held in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The extensive and very well maintained school grounds enable students to play energetically and provide many opportunities for outdoor learning, such as horticulture. Teaching takes place in three bases. Two of these are new, following major reconstruction of existing buildings, and they provide clean, spacious and airy accommodation. They are decorated to a high standard and flooring and fabric are in very good condition. The buildings are well lit and insulated for sound and heat. The third teaching base is part of an older building, although it has been adapted in ways that make it entirely fit for purpose. All classrooms have robust furniture and fittings that are of appropriate size for students. Other features of the accommodation are well suited to the nature of students' special educational needs. Additional teaching areas, such as the multi-sensory room, and quiet areas are fitted out in ways that help to calm students. There are ample washroom facilities and accommodation to care for students who become unwell.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others. Parents and carers are given a very informative handbook. They receive detailed reports of their child's academic progress as well as reports from therapists who work with them. These are provided to local authorities at the same time for the purpose of conducting annual reviews of students' statements of special educational needs. Local authorities are also kept fully informed, via an annual statement, of how the school spends the money that it receives for each student that the local authority supports.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's approach to managing complaints meets all requirements. The policy and procedures enable complaints to be dealt with swiftly and thoroughly.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').³

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 all schemes of work are of the same high quality.
- Ensure that in all lessons, planning is such that there is always a sharp focus on what individual students are expected to learn.
- Annotate, in more detail, photographic evidence of students' achievements.
- Develop the new assessment scheme to measure students' progress against their starting points and to make comparisons with the progress made by students in other similar schools.

³ 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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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special		
Date school opened	15 May 2008		
Age range of pupils	8–19 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 31	Girls: 11	Total: 42
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 31	Girls: 11	Total: 42
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 18	Girls: 8	Total: 26
Annual fees (day pupils)	£80,000 – £85,000		
Address of school	Woodstock House Woodstock Lane North Long Ditton KT6 5HN		
Telephone number	020 8335 2570		
Email address	enquiries@kisimul.co.uk		
Headteacher	Chris Owen		
Proprietor	Kisimul Group Limited		

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 November 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Kisimul School (Woodstock House), Long Ditton, KT6 5HN

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed the two days that I spent with you. I am writing to tell you what I found out about your school. I found that:

- Kisimul is a good school
- lessons are good and you learn a lot
- you are given lots of interesting things to do, such as working in the garden and running your cake shop
- you really enjoy visiting places like the shops, the park and the swimming pool and these trips let you meet lots of new people
- many of you learn to do things for yourself, such as taking symbols off your charts
- you make good progress in communicating with your friends and adults
- the staff take good care of you
- you are safe in school.

All of the people who run your school want to make it even better. We have made some suggestions as to how they can do this. For example, we think that a few lessons could be better planned so as to meet your needs better and we are also supporting your school's intention to develop its new assessment recording system. In this way, teachers will know even better how well you are doing. You too can help maintain the good quality of the school by continuing to work hard and behaving well.

Thank you very much again and I wish each one of you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell
Lead inspector