

Rugeley Horizon School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	860/6024
Unique Reference Number (URN)	132735
URN for social care	SC391860
Inspection number	397649
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2012
Reporting inspector	David Muir

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

Rugeley Horizon School is a dually-registered independent residential special school and children's home for pupils aged from five to 19 years. It admits pupils who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and associated conditions. Many pupils also have other diagnoses of special educational needs, such as moderate to severe learning difficulties. As a result, pupils display associated behaviours. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and they often have had disrupted educational backgrounds. There are 42 pupils currently on the school roll. The school opened in 2000.

All pupils are taught on the school site, although some in post-16 also attend for some of their timetable in a local college. Altogether, 24 local authorities fund pupils currently on roll. The school's approach to education draws on Daily Life Therapy, and its aim is that 'pupils will achieve an enhanced degree of emotional stability through an active approach to learning, which reduces anxiety levels and enables them to access the curriculum. They are able to engage in daily life with increased confidence, self-esteem, dignity and independence'.

The school's education provision was last inspected in June 2009. An inspection of the care provision took place at the same time as this inspection and is reported separately. The previous full-time head of school left in December 2011 and the newly appointed replacement will take up her post in January 2013.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is good and all of the regulations for independent schools are met. The school is successful in meeting its aims of developing pupils so that they leave the school better equipped to be confident about engaging in daily life in the wider community. As a result of the good teaching and assessment, together with the outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils increasingly become re-engaged in their education, make good progress overall and develop personal and social skills outstandingly well. The school uses a range of highly skilled inter-disciplinary staff effectively, including therapists and those who work in the boarding provision, so that all areas of pupils' development are very successfully targeted in a coordinated, cohesive way. Since the

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

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

previous inspection, the school has tackled the areas for improvement effectively. The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety are outstanding, and the arrangements for safeguarding are robust and rigorous.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It meets all requirements and links aspects of care, education and therapy extremely effectively to support pupils' 24 hour learning. In Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 it is based on the National Curriculum. However, not all subjects have full and up-to-date schemes of work in place and the school is currently developing these. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' social and personal skills and re-engaging them in education by enabling them to more effectively manage their own behaviour. As a result, pupils make good progress overall, although some make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development.

Particularly strong progress is made in developing pupils' readiness to learn and participate in lessons and in their independence, as well as their ability to work with others. This is the result of an extremely impressive focus on the development of communication and social skills, with substantial input from the speech and language therapists. Several examples were seen of pupils working together and supporting each other well in lessons and around the site. Staff know pupils extremely well and plans to meet their needs are very effective. In all key stages, there is a wide range of enrichment opportunities available, including forest school activities, regular visits to the local community and visits to places such as the Think Tank in Birmingham and Walsall Art Gallery. This helps pupils to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in an integrated, meaningful and coherent manner. Pupils are able to gain accreditations using the 'Towards Independence' Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualification. The school is currently reviewing this as they are seeking to provide more varied opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications. The post-16 curriculum is mainly delivered in school with some pupils attending courses at a local mainstream college for subjects such as horticulture and construction. Pupils enjoy this off-site provision and make good progress in their courses. High quality work experience is provided, both within and outside the school, for pupils as their needs allow.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Some teaching is outstanding and none of it is less than good. Throughout the school, the better teaching results in outstanding progress in those lessons due to planned activities which are suitably matched to the levels, needs and communication preferences of all pupils. The school knows where the best teaching occurs and has a very clear idea of where improvements are needed to make more lessons outstanding. In lessons observed, support staff worked extremely well with pupils to contribute well to their learning and development, especially with regard to reinforcing a consistent approach to behaviour management. Teachers consistently reinforce previous learning and link current learning with what is to be learnt next.

Plans for individual pupils cover a wide range of aspects of their development, including behaviour, academic progress and other areas where they need support, through various therapies. The quality of provision is monitored well. There is good collaborative working between the boarding and school provision so that targets are worked towards during the school day and during pupils' time in the residence. Strong procedures are in place for the handover of pupils at the start and the end of the day. This allows a continuity of approach which benefits the pupils as staff are made aware of any particular circumstances around the pupils' experiences.

Pupils make good progress in their learning. The school's systems for monitoring academic progress over time are being reviewed and revised, but the school has only recently started to establish systems to moderate this area of the school's work with other schools. As a result of this review, the systems for monitoring the progress of individual pupils over time have been found to have some inaccuracies in places. This has been due to some over-estimating of grades by individual staff members and changes to the previous scheme used. Therefore, it is not always easy to see how much progress has been made over time. However, as a result of the good and outstanding teaching in the school, the progress that pupils make in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding. Progress towards personal and social targets is largely measured through targets within individual education plans (IEP). The proprietor has recently invested in a commercial system at group level and it is planned that this will be used to monitor and moderate the progress of the pupils, around their personal development and in subjects over time. Case studies provided by the school show that progress made by individual pupils in areas of personal and social development is at least good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The development of these areas is an important focus of the school's work and there is strong evidence that during their time in the school, pupils' independence and sociability are developed outstandingly well. This was seen in lessons where pupils are given good time to process work and respond appropriately. They are also given opportunities to work with peers, such as in a science lesson when some pupils were working together to build electrical circuits. Pupils have good opportunities to express themselves through art. They have exhibited their work at the school and also at a London gallery, where they received recognition from the Royal Society of British Artists for their contributions to the exhibition.

Pupils develop their cultural understanding through themes based on such diverse events as Black History Month, Chinese New Year, Remembrance Day and the Holocaust. Work to promote pupils' awareness of other religions and human rights is explored through the wide range of curriculum activities and educational visits. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn in the local community, and some undertake work experience there. One example of this is a pupil who regularly works in a local garden centre. The school has an active pupil council, who have had a good impact on the development of school policy. However, the school is continually striving to ensure that the council is as inclusive and representative as it can be. All lessons

seen during the inspection contained elements which helped to pupils to develop their social, moral and spiritual awareness. However, opportunities for pupils to meet people from cultures different to their own are limited.

Pupil's behaviour is outstanding due to the improvements they make in managing their own behaviour. No disruption to their learning was seen during the inspection. Behaviour improves rapidly and significantly for all pupils in the school as a result of the therapies, support and interventions which are provided according to each pupil's needs. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and respond extremely positively to this. This is due to the consistent application of behaviour plans so that consequences are clear for all pupils. This clarity is also the result of significantly improved communication.

All parents and carers who contacted the inspectors agreed that the school has had a strong impact on their child's behaviour and that this has been the direct result of the school's consistent management of behaviour and their enhanced communication skills. Many also give credit to the school's work for the impact on improved behaviour at home. Another significant factor in the improvements is that pupils feel valued and consider that they are treated with the utmost respect and dignity at all times. This was evident at home time when staff, pupils, escorts and drivers all went about their business of going home with smiles on their faces and sharing jokes.

Pupils greatly enjoy their learning; all teaching meets their needs well or outstandingly well. As a result, pupils improve their attitudes to learning and work from the day they enter the school. Pupils' attendance is high overall, and this is a considerable achievement considering the legacy of their past negative experiences of schooling. Attendance improves because pupils enjoy coming to school. There is clear evidence that, during their time in the school, they re-engage in education to a good level. This shows a remarkable turnaround in attitudes for this group of pupils who have been significantly disengaged from their education prior to attending this school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. All of the required policies, including detailed guidance for child protection, are in place and are implemented extremely well. Policies are robust, comprehensive and clear, and provide all of the necessary guidance for staff. The school's behaviour policy is effectively and consistently implemented, so that it is instrumental in bringing about rapid and significant improvements in behaviour. As a result, pupils are well supported to develop independent strategies to manage their anger and to deal with their stress and anxieties. For instance, they are reminded consistently to use physical stances from Daily Life Therapy to maintain their calm and composure. This is very effectively and sensitively supported across the school and increases pupils' capacity to focus themselves and act safely. This is further strengthened by staff's very effective monitoring of their behaviour and social interaction throughout the school day and beyond. Appropriate reference is made within the e-safety policy to the use and abuse of new technologies and cyber bullying. Individual behaviour

plans are very well devised, consistently applied by all staff, and meet the needs of all pupils extremely effectively.

Robust risk assessments are in place and they accurately identify any risks associated with pupils, external visits or classroom activities. Procedures to ensure that the premises and accommodation are safe are also robust. The school carries out checks on portable electrical appliances to ensure equipment is in good condition. Very good attention is paid to fire safety, with regular fire drills and evacuations in place. Smoke alarms are tested regularly and clear records are kept of fire alarm tests and checks. All staff, including the designated people for child protection, have been trained at the appropriate level and very effective systems are in place to ensure the suitability of staff.

All pupils who were involved in discussions with the inspector confirmed that they feel safe in the school. There is no evidence of bullying and the school and residences have clear procedures in place should it occur. Pupils lead healthy lifestyles and increasingly make positive choices with regard to the food they eat. They participate in a range of sporting and physical activities, including daily jogging sessions that keep them fit and ensure that they get enough exercise. This plays a vital role in the personal, social and emotional development of the pupils and is a fundamental part of the school's ethos.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the required checks on staff and others are carried out and are recorded appropriately in the single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

There are high quality facilities and accommodation which enable pupils to learn safely and effectively. Classrooms are of a good size and are used as generic and specialist teaching areas. The buildings and grounds are secure and well maintained throughout. There is plenty of space for outdoor recreation activities as well, as a jogging path which circumvents the campus. There is also a good range of additional facilities which meet pupils' particular needs, such as a large gymnasium, a forest school classroom and a swimming pool, as well a calm room and other rooms which are used by therapists.

Provision of information

The school's prospectus provides parents, carers and others with all of the required information. It is clear, accurate, detailed and up-to-date. Parents and carers are provided with suitable regular reports about the attainment and progress made by their children, and contribute to the annual review process. They also receive an updated copy of their child's individual education plan every term.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedures meet all 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 all subjects have appropriate schemes of work in place which are regularly monitored for their relevance.
- Use the best practice in the school to model outstanding teaching so that a higher proportion of teachers teach outstanding lessons more regularly.
- Develop further opportunities for pupils to meet people from cultures different to their own.
- Implement new systems to monitor the progress made by pupils in all subjects.

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		
Date school opened	May 2000		
Age range of pupils	5–19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 36	Girls: 6	Total: 42
Number of boarders	Boys: 26	Girls: 4	Total: 30
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 36	Girls: 6	Total: 42
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 17	Girls: 2	Total: 19
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,633–£90,000		
Annual fees (boarders)	£129,899–£221,655		
Address of school	Blithbury Road, Blithbury, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS13 3JQ		
Telephone number	01889 504400		
Email address	rugeleyhorizon@priorygroup.com		
Headteacher	Joan Pearson		
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd		

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.



30 November 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rugeley Horizon School, Rugeley, WS13 3JQ

I would like to thank you very much for giving us such an enjoyable and memorable experience and sharing your views of your school on our recent visit. We found that your school provides you with a good education. All government requirements are met for the education provision. The school's leaders successfully ensure that you are well cared for at all times. We found the school to be outstanding in the areas of behaviour and welfare, health and safety. It is also outstanding in helping you to develop your understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural areas. It was clear during our visit, from your attitudes and comments, that you appreciate the staff and their hard work and that you enjoy school. Your improved behaviour and attitudes to your learning are exemplary and are clear strengths. Teaching is effective and you make good progress. Adults know how to support you and make your time at the school successful. This means that by the time you leave, you are better prepared and have developed a level of confidence and independence with which to enter the next stage of your lives.

We have asked the school to consider the following points for development.

- Ensure that all subjects have appropriate schemes of work in place which are regularly monitored for their relevance.
- Use the best teaching to model outstanding teaching so that a higher proportion of teachers teach outstanding lessons more regularly.
- Arrange for you to meet people from cultures different to your own.
- Better monitor the progress made by pupils in all subjects.

You should be very proud of yourselves and your contribution to the school. We particularly enjoyed meeting you. Thanks to you all for the time you spent with us during the visit and I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely
David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector