

Castle Homes Upper Forge

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	894/6005
Unique Reference Number (URN)	133371
Inspection number	397627
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2012
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI

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

Castle Homes Upper Forge School provides full-time education for boys and girls aged from 11 to 17 years. All of the students have severe and specific emotional and behavioural difficulties and are at risk of offending. The school is registered for up to five students. There are currently five boys on roll, three of whom have a statement of special educational needs. The school was first registered in May 2003 and was last inspected in June 2009.

The school aims to, 're-engage students with education, enable the young people to develop cooperative and interpersonal skills, acquire the study skills necessary to realise their potential and to become receptive and willing to challenge themselves in educational targets'.

Evaluation of the school

Castle Homes Upper Forge School provides a good quality of education for its students. It successfully meets its aim to re-engage students with education and to develop worthwhile skills for their future lives. It has maintained the good quality of work from the previous inspection and meets all but one of the regulations for registration as an independent school. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are good.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is not outstanding because students do not always have the opportunity to achieve as well as they could. For example, more capable students are not always challenged enough by their work. Teachers do not always plan sufficient opportunities for students to develop their basic skills, such as literacy or mathematics, across a range of topics and subjects in order to enable them to make exceptional progress.

The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and courses which lead to recognised qualifications. There is an appropriately strong focus on developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology. The school has planned suitably detailed schemes of work to cover all areas of the curriculum. Students have individual programmes of work which are based on their

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

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

specific needs and, for those students that have one, the requirements of their statements of special educational needs. Where appropriate, students are able to study for a range of entry level certificate courses, GCSEs and functional skills examinations at levels appropriate to their ability. All students participate in a programme of physical education.

Students are helped to prepare for their future lives through a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. The PSHE scheme of work leads to the AQA level 1 award. It is based around a series of booklets designed specifically to meet the students' needs. The topics covered include drugs education, alcohol, smoking, emotional well-being, bullying, human rights, racism and healthy lifestyles.

The school helps to prepare students for their future careers through work with Future Choices as well as visits to college open days and exhibitions. Older students are able to participate in work experience in a range of settings. Strong links with key workers and social workers complement this work, ensuring that students are clear about their career aspirations.

The curriculum is enriched with a range of educational visits to places such as art galleries and museums. Visits are tailored to students' specific course needs.

Teaching and assessment are good. They are not outstanding because lesson time is not consistently used efficiently enough to enable students to make outstanding progress. The activities for the most capable students are occasionally too easy. Consequently, students make good rather than outstanding progress.

It is clear what the students should learn in each lesson because plans are detailed. However, in a few lessons a small minority of time is lost as students complete tasks which add little to their learning, such as copying out tables or diagrams.

Teachers are very enthusiastic and have developed excellent working relationships with the students. They use their good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching and an appropriate range of strategies to engage students in interesting learning activities. Most activities are short and sharply focused to ensure that students remain on task. However, lessons are occasionally too long and students' learning slows during the latter part of the lesson.

Teachers check how well students are learning as lessons progress and provides additional support, adapting their planning as necessary to ensure that students gain a secure understanding of their work. Occasionally, teachers focus too much on those students who are finding the learning difficult and this leads to the minority of more capable students not being challenged sufficiently to achieve as much as they could.

The marking of students' work provides a meaningful evaluation of how well the students have done and how they can improve their learning. Students use this feedback well to help them improve their future work.

The school uses a wide range of tests to gain an understanding of what they know when they join the school and to check how well they are doing.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is not outstanding because students' social skills are not developed as well as they could be. Students' behaviour is good. Staff manage the occasional incidents between students in lessons well. They calm situations effectively and students receive sensitive and professional support. Students' attendance is good.

Incidents of bullying are few and are swiftly addressed with students during class meetings. A carefully organised classroom which ensures that students have sufficient personal space in which to work has resulted in the number of incidents being reduced significantly. Students say that bullying is not an issue for them in school. The excellent interactions between students and teachers and the sensitive use of techniques to support good behaviour, promotes students' positive self-esteem. With the consistent support of teachers, students are developing a strong sense of right and wrong and an understanding of consequences related to their behaviour.

Students benefit from the interesting and varied opportunities designed to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through environmental studies, students are developing a strong grasp of the way people have an impact on the environment such as through vehicle pollution and littering. Topics on human rights enable students to develop empathy and understanding as they explore the Civil Rights Movement and the Holocaust.

Students gain a good understanding to help prepare them for their future lives through lessons such as those on personal finance. They learn about the law and effects of crime in sociology lessons.

Students participate in a range of activities and visits which help them to gain a good understanding and tolerance of people from different backgrounds and cultures. For example, they have visited places of religious interest and participated in cultural celebrations such as Black History month. They show a good understanding of the needs of others when they raise money for charity. Students and teachers report that incidents of racism and homophobia are very rare in class, and are always challenged.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. It is not outstanding because the admissions register does not include all of the required details about the students' parents and carers, and routine tests of the fire alarm system have not been carried out as regularly as required.

The school has prepared and implemented clear and effective policies and systems to keep the students safe. The school reviews its policies regularly and ensures that they are based on the latest guidance. Procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff are very thorough. Staff are very well trained, for example in child protection

and first aid, to ensure that they have the necessary skills to look after the students well. The behaviour policy is based around 'behaviour for learning' which focuses on making the school a safe, calm and purposeful place where everyone respects one another and takes responsibility for their actions. The school keeps comprehensive records of any behavioural incidents that do occur.

Staff make careful checks to ensure that all activities are carried out with the minimum of risk. They put in place appropriate measures to minimise any potential dangers which they identify both on and away from the school site. The school carries out a suitable assessment of risk from fire each year. Routine emergency evacuations and checks of fire safety equipment are mostly carried out in line with requirements. However, records show that the fire alarm has been tested fortnightly and not weekly, as required. The school has taken immediate action to address this in order to meet the regulation in full.

The students have a good understanding about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They respect the ban on sweets and fizzy drinks in school as well as the no-smoking policy on the school site. They use equipment safely in the classroom. Access to the internet is appropriately filtered to prevent access to inappropriate materials or social networking sites.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school carries out all of the required checks on staff and members of the proprietorial body prior to their appointment and maintains a single central register in line with requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is housed within a building which includes some of Castle Care's administrative and training facilities. The school has its own discrete classroom which provides adequate accommodation for the students. An adjoining small room provides an additional storage area and teaching space. The attractive grounds provide space for sport and recreation. The school also makes use of a range of outdoor and indoor venues in the locality for physical education. The accommodation is in good decorative order.

Provision of information

The school provides all of the required information for parents, carers and others. It provides monthly reports for each student about their learning. Annual reports for parents and carers provide a good level of detail about attainment and progress in the subjects studied. They include helpful targets to guide students' future learning.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clearly written complaints procedure which meets the 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 provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that the admission register is maintained in accordance with the education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006⁴ (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.

- Enable students to make more rapid progress in lessons by ensuring that learning activities are all focused on the planned learning and lesson time is used efficiently.
- Ensure that all students, especially the most capable ones, are fully challenged throughout every lesson to achieve their potential.

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

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/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		
Date school opened	May 2003		
Age range of pupils	11–17		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,520		
Address of school	c/o Castlecare The Manor House Squires Hill Kettering NN14 6BQ		
Telephone number	01536 711111		
Email address	rburrows@castlehomes.co.uk		
Headteacher	Nigel Griffiths		
Proprietor	Castlecare		

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.



6 December 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Castle Homes Upper Forge

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome when we visited your school this week. We enjoyed talking with you, observing your lessons and looking at your work.

You get a good quality of education in your school. This is because you have opportunities to do the courses that you need to in order to achieve your plans for the future. You get on well with the staff who do a good job in helping you to learn. It was good to see you working hard in lessons, but I have suggested that some of you could work even harder at times if you were given some more challenging work. Occasionally, you are given tasks to do which are either too easy or do not help you to learn quickly enough.

You told me that you enjoy school. It was good to see that your attendance is good. Although you told me that you don't always particularly like each other, your behaviour is good and you are respectful of each other and the adults who work with you.

The school does a good job of keeping you safe.

Keep up the hard work; I wish you all very well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby
Her Majesty's Inspector