

# Clarence High School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain

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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

Clarence High School is an independent special school which provides for students in the age range of 10 to 18 years with mainly complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It is located in Formby near Liverpool and opened in December 1984. Currently, there are no students aged over 16 years. There are 30 students on roll and all have a statement of special educational needs. All of the students have had large gaps in their education caused by much absence from their previous schools. The majority of students are of White British heritage. Some students attend off-site courses run by colleges and training organisations. The school is owned by Nugent Care, a charity run by trustees operating since the 1880s, which offers a diverse range of social and educational provision. A number of students live in accommodation owned by the charity. The school aims include 'to create a secure, caring and orderly environment where students can achieve academically and personally while developing respect and concern for others'. The school has no particular religious affiliation. The school's education provision was last inspected in October 2009.

## Evaluation of the school

The school has improved in all areas of its work since the previous inspection; it provides a good quality of education and meets its aims well. The good curriculum, together with good teaching and assessment, ensure that students make good progress. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. Provision to promote the welfare, health and safety and the safeguarding of students is good. The school meets all but one of the regulations for continued registration as an independent school.

## Quality of education

The curriculum and other activities are good and meet students' needs and interests well. Students, parents and carers are rightly pleased with the quality of education provided. The curriculum is well balanced with good learning opportunities for everyone including boys, girls and students of different abilities. Every opportunity is taken to develop students' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information 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).

communication technology (ICT) skills. For example, writing opportunities are provided in nearly all lessons. The school provides for most subjects of the National Curriculum. Plans and schemes of work are detailed and enable students to make good progress over time in all the required areas of learning. Teachers carefully tailor the schemes of work to meet individual needs. The school offers a good range of opportunities to gain qualifications. This includes Entry Level, BTEC, functional skills, GCSE full- and short-course accreditation. The school provides Italian as a modern foreign language for all students. There are many opportunities for students to prepare well for their future economic well-being.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is good. Discussions with students confirm that they are developing a good awareness of issues such as the negative effects of smoking and strategies to resist peer pressure. There are good opportunities for students to learn about public institutions, good citizenship and the law. The 24-hour curriculum enables residential students to develop their independent living, personal and social skills effectively. All of these factors enable students to prepare well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Many educational visits and visitors enrich learning. For example, students enjoy trips to art galleries, theatres and museums and this supports their personal development well. An author visited the school recently and helped students to improve their literacy skills. Other regular visitors include the emergency services which helps to promote an awareness of health and safety issues, a church group and an African drumming group. The school's good community ties include sports coaches who often work with students to develop their skills.

Strong links with the Connexions service, colleges and training providers ensure that students receive good advice about careers and receive good work-related experiences. For example, a number of older students regularly attend courses in hospitality, construction skills and hair and beauty. These students are enjoying their work-related experiences and are making good progress with coursework.

Teaching and assessment are good. This ensures that the great majority of students make good progress and engage well in lessons. Basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught well and this ensures that students make good strides in these areas. Students say that they like this school because of the 'colourful personalities' of the teachers and the respectful way that they are treated. Teachers work well with their assistants who themselves provide strong leaning support in lessons. Teachers provide many practical, real-life, based learning experiences which are especially enjoyed by students. A good example of this was seen in an English lesson where students were developing their persuasive writing skills. Students did a role-play where they imagined the conditions of poverty in Victorian times. Teachers use the school's good range and quality of resources well to support learning. Their subject knowledge is good and this enables them to plan appealing activities for students. The level of challenge offered to all abilities is good as is the pace of work. Excellent behaviour management and the effective use of rewards ensures that

attitudes and behaviour in the classroom are extremely good. Lesson planning is mostly good.

Attainment on entry to the school is carefully and accurately assessed in the key areas of learning. Procedures for ongoing assessment include end of half-term checks and regular tests in all of the taught subjects. The wealth of information gathered is well used to plan teaching. Detailed records are kept of progress and attainment. Records provide convincing evidence of students' good progress over time. Students achieve well overall against challenging targets that are based on their capability and starting points. Last year's school leavers gained a good range of accreditations and every student moved on to further education.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good overall. Religious education, PSHCE and other opportunities in the curriculum help to nurture students' personal development effectively. The school is successful in helping students to develop the personal qualities that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community. Students settle into the school quickly because of the good quality of care, guidance and support offered. They develop very good attitudes towards learning. Teachers are successful in helping students to develop strategies for managing their own anger and taking responsibility for their own behaviour. Consequently, behaviour is good. It is outstanding during lessons because of good teaching and the excellent relationships promoted by adults.

Students are highly valued as individuals. Consequently, they develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem and this empowers them to achieve well. Moral development is promoted very effectively. Students develop a very strong sense of right and wrong through the school's consistent messages about the high standards of conduct expected of them. In a discussion about capital punishment, students provided well-argued points of view around the morality of this practice. Adults in school are excellent role-models for the students' social development. There are also plenty of opportunities for students to mix with a broad cross-section of the wider community through undertaking visits in the community.

Cultural development is good. Work in history and through visits to places of cultural interest help students to develop their awareness of their own cultural heritage well. Students are also well prepared for life in a multicultural society and display much tolerance. They do much work which is centred round the rich diversity of faiths, traditions and values of people in modern Britain. In a discussion about Muslim women wearing veils, all students were resolute in saying that such religious practice is a matter of individual choice and must be respected.

All students make good improvements in their personal attendance rates as compared to their former schools. Most students attend regularly, however, a small number of students do not, despite the school's good efforts to promote better attendance. Punctuality is good.

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

The provision to promote the welfare, health and safety of students is good. The school has clear, robust policies in place for safeguarding. The designated officer for child protection and all staff are trained to the required levels. The school has a detailed first aid policy in place. Staff are well trained to administer first aid. Detailed risk assessments are carried out regularly regarding potential hazards to safety, on and off the premises. Very good attention is paid to safety in lessons. For example, safe practices were observed in a design and technology lesson. Fire risk assessments are carried out regularly and everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire. Fire drills are undertaken as required and evacuation procedures are good. However, the school does not fully comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This is because an external fire risk assessment identified the need to create a small number of additional fire doors in corridor areas. The school is addressing this matter promptly. The level and quality of supervision in and around school is excellent. Students say that they feel safe and there are always adults that they can turn to in case they have any anxieties or problems.

All students are provided with good guidance about the dangers of the wrongful use of ICT and how to avoid any form of exploitation. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy and procedures in place. An excellent assembly was observed around cyber-bullying. The behaviour policy is effective. It results in good behaviour and an orderly environment. Students are very keen to earn points for good behaviour and achievement and they value the daily and weekly rewards. The school promotes healthy living well and there is a good take-up-rate in sports such as football, horse-riding and outdoor pursuits.

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

The suitability of all staff, supply staff and the proprietor has been carefully checked in accordance with requirements. The necessary information is kept accurately on a single central record.

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

The school's accommodation is very well maintained and enables students to learn safely and effectively. There is much space for students to engage safely in learning activities. Classrooms are very spacious and students have the use of specialist facilities including for ICT, art, engineering, cooking and design and technology. The school has excellent facilities for sport in a separate building which includes a large, well-equipped sports hall and gym. Outside there is plenty of play space, including soft and hard surfaces. The school also has an excellent all-weather sports area and extensive space for grass sports.

## **Provision of information**

The school provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information for parents, carers and others. Good information is provided regarding students' progress, attainment and personal development.

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

The school's complaints procedures fully comply with the regulations.

## **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:

- fully comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13).

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Develop more effective strategies to raise the attendance of a small minority of students.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/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

<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 1984		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10–18 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 19	Girls: 11	Total: 30
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 19	Girls: 11	Total: 30
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 7	Girls: 4	Total: 11
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£59,067–£83,372		
<b>Address of school</b>	West Lane Freshfield Formby Liverpool L37 7AZ		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 872151		
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:clarence@yahoo.co.uk">clarence@yahoo.co.uk</a>		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Parkinson		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Nugent 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.**



13 December 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Clarence High School, L37 7AZ**

I really enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for allowing me to see you working and also speaking with me. I appreciated listening to your views very much. I promised to write to you about what I found out about your school when I had finished the inspection.

Your school provides a good quality of education. The curriculum and teaching are good and this ensures that you make good progress. There are many opportunities for you to gain qualifications and prepare well for the future. Teachers make sure that you develop your basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science well along with your computer skills. Relationships between everyone in your school are excellent. The adults provide you with good care, guidance and support. They help you to develop healthy lifestyles and to stay safe. The school does need to put in a few extra fire doors in corridors and I have asked that this is done as soon as possible.

Your personal development and behaviour are good. I was very pleased to see how much you respect other people including each other and members of the wider community. I was also pleased to see how much improvement you have made in your attendance since you have been at this school. A small number of you do not attend as well as others and I have asked the school to develop new ways of helping these students to attend better. You can help the school by carrying on working as hard as you do. If you are one of the students who could attend school more regularly, please make sure that you do so.

I know that everyone is very pleased with your achievements. Well done. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Saleem Hussain  
Lead Inspector