

# Benjamin College

Independent school progress monitoring 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.<sup>1,2</sup>

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

## Information about the school

Benjamin College opened in 2008. It provides secondary education for students living in its five residential homes. The college was registered in February 2009. It is registered for 20 students, aged between 12 and 18 years, to be taught within their homes (that is, four students in each home). Currently, there are four students on roll who are taught by the college's teachers in the two homes visited on this inspection. Four other residents attend local schools or off-site provision.

Students are funded by their placing local authorities, which include London boroughs and counties in the Midlands and south of England. Almost all students have a history of academic underachievement as well as behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Students' placement is often for less than half a term because they move into mainstream or other education provision or they no longer live in the college's accommodation. The college aims to 'provide a consistent and caring environment in which students can develop their full academic, personal and social potential'.

## Context of the inspection

The last full education inspection of the college was in December 2010. At the progress monitoring inspection in September 2011, the college was judged to be in breach of the regulations covering security arrangements for the premises and grounds and the ventilation in one of the classrooms. A satisfactory action plan was submitted in February 2012 and a further progress monitoring visit undertaken in July 2012 to evaluate the progress made by the college in fulfilling its action plan. The visit found that the college had made inadequate progress in implementing its action plan because it continued to fail to meet one of the regulatory requirements for independent schools identified in the full report and, additionally, failed to meet two more regulations.

The Department issued a formal Notice on 17 November 2011 and the deadline for compliance was subsequently extended to 30 November 2012. This is a further

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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).

monitoring inspection visit to the college to check the progress it has made in addressing the previously identified shortcomings.

## **Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan**

At the time of the last progress monitoring visit, the education room at one of the homes also served as the residence's laundry and was a route between the kitchen and the garden. This failed a number of regulations. This room is no longer used for education purposes. In this residence, the education room is now located in a converted single garage. With the exception of the completion of the arrangements for ventilation, the room has been appropriately fitted out and furnished but provides space for no more than two students. The proprietor intends to install a permanent air-conditioning unit that is vented through an external wall. When this is installed, all the requirements are likely to be met by this room. At a second residence, visited as part of this inspection visit, the education room is accommodated in a conservatory attached to the house. A permanent air-conditioning unit, vented through an external wall, has been installed and blinds fitted to cut down direct sunlight. This room is appropriately fitted out and furnished but is suitable for no more than two students.

The college is currently in correspondence with the Department for Education concerning the possible use of additional premises within the town. The use of these premises has not yet been formally proposed to the Department by the college.

The college has made satisfactory progress in implementing its proposals to meet all of the regulations.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

As a result of this inspection, the school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010<sup>3</sup> ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- provide evidence of the air-conditioning unit being permanently installed and vented to the outside in the education room which has been converted from a garage (paragraph 23(o)).

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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).

## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	2008		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	12–18 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 1	Girls: 3	Total: 4
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 1	Girls: 3	Total: 4
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£25 per hour		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Bond (headteacher designate)		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Claudette Deysel		