

Copperfield School

22 Euston Road, Great Yarmouth, NR30 1DX

Inspection dates

14-16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness

Good **2**

Pupils' achievement Good 2

Pupils' behaviour and personal development Good 2

Quality of teaching Good 2

Quality of curriculum Good 2

Pupils' welfare, health and safety Outstanding 1

Leadership and management Good 2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- The quality of teaching is good and, because of this, all students make good progress from their very low starting points.
- The good curriculum is adapted daily to the meet the immediate as well as long-term needs of the students.
- Students respond positively to adults and form good relationships because of the excellent understanding of their personal, social and educational needs.
- Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are outstanding and make a major contribution to the school successfully meeting its aims.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Constant evaluation of what is provided for students ensures that teaching and students' achievement are continuously improved.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The communication between parents, carers and school staff about students' behaviour and achievements is not fully developed.
- The school does not give enough guidance to students about how to judge their success in learning new skills.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected following half a day's notice.
- Three lessons were observed taught by two teachers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, teaching assistants, students, and the directors and the chief executive of The Benjamin Foundation. A range of policy documentation was read and discussed, together with examples of students work and records of progress.
- Telephone meetings were held with a social worker and a representative of one of the placing local authorities.
- No additional information was received via staff, parent or carer questionnaires.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Copperfield School is a co-educational independent school for up to twelve students aged 11 to 16.
- The school was opened in September 2012 in Norfolk by The Benjamin Foundation, a registered charity, in response to the need for an alternative educational provision for young people with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The school was registered with the Department for Education in September 2012 and this is its first inspection by Ofsted.
- There are currently four students on roll. All have statements of special educational needs. All have experienced significant periods out of full-time education prior to starting at the school. Some students are looked after by local authorities.
- The aim of Copperfield School is to enable students to become well-rounded, articulate, confident and emotionally robust young people who are well prepared for adult life. The educational approach is individualised to each student's specific special needs. It takes full account of their background, where they are now and their aspirations for the future.
- The school works in accordance with the Nurtured Heart Approach. This is an approach that focuses on positives rather than negatives in an individuals behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the daily communication and move between home and school by having a consistent approach to:
 - how parents and carers keep the school in touch with students' behaviour and achievement at home
 - how the school informs parents and carers about students' behaviour and achievement at school.
- Make sure that students are able to judge their success in meeting the goals they set for themselves for every learning activity they take part in.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Achievement is good. Students make good progress in all the subjects they are learning about from very low starting points. There is a good focus on helping students to get better at literacy and numeracy by making activities interesting and relevant to their daily lives. For example, one student was able to read aloud from a magazine about his favourite computer game; because he is interested in the topic, it did not seem to him like learning to read. This approach results in students wanting to practise basic skills and, therefore, the large gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding, due to significant periods when they were not in school, are beginning to close. Students make good progress in lessons because they help choose the topics and the learning tasks are carefully matched to their immediate, as well as long-term learning needs. Students are very wary of formal assessment because they have failed so many tests in their school lives. The school is beginning to introduce courses that result in recognised qualifications, including Duke of Edinburgh Awards, car mechanics and ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). This is happening a little at a time so that students gain confidence in their ability to learn before they are asked to tackle formal courses of study.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good and show rapid improvement from the moment they start at the school. This is because the headteacher, supported by carefully trained teaching assistants, is very quick to assess and cater for each student's emotional and personal development needs. As a result, students trust the adults in the school and want to work with and for them. There are incidents of unacceptable behaviour, but these are managed very well within the school's clear policies and procedures. Therefore, students are beginning to understand what it means to make good, rather than bad, behaviour choices. This understanding does not always continue after school. This is because there is not an agreed system for how the school communicates and celebrates students' achievements during the school day with parents and carers or for how parents and carers do the same about the time students spend at home. The curriculum provides good opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, particularly through discussion about difference and tolerance. The school makes sure that students develop respect for each other and for different ethnic and cultural heritages. Issues of stereotyping and prejudice are confronted within these discussions. Students have a good understanding of the many types of bullying, and are helped to explore how this has affected them in the past in a sensitive and supportive way. Students have good opportunities to explore what is available in the local area and are often amazed at how much there is to choose from. One student who has lived in the area all his life said, 'I had no idea how much is going on round here.'

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and this is why students make good progress in their learning and behaviour. Lessons are very carefully planned and supported by schemes of work based on the National Curriculum. The headteacher has an excellent understanding of how to get students hooked on learning; when and how to push them to achieve that little bit more, and when to give them a break from intense learning activities. This means that students slowly develop the ability to stick at tasks for slightly longer each time and have higher expectations for what they can do. This was evident in a riding lesson where one student did not want to ride at first but, after deciding to take part, achieved more than was expected by the tutor. Although students set sensible targets for themselves, they are not helped to come up with small steps towards these targets so that they can judge whether or not they have achieved them. The school makes excellent use of different learning opportunities outside the school, for example, at a riding school and at a garage where, as one student said, 'You learn to take a car apart and put it back together

again.' The headteacher assesses how well students have done at the end of every session and video recordings and annotated photographs are used well to illustrate key learning moments; for example when a student taught the staff how to 'bodypop', a very energetic dance routine.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good and meets the individual needs of all the students, helping them to achieve well. There is good coverage of all the required areas of learning. These are not taught in subjects but as themes. The headteacher checks the content that has been covered over a number of lessons and makes sure that any gaps in planned learning activities are filled in the next topic. Lesson plans are constantly adjusted so that students stay interested in the learning objective for the session. This means that students remain in class and are beginning to be able to give their full attention to what the teacher asks them to think, talk and write about. This is a huge step forward for all the students in the school who have rejected any form of adult-led learning for a considerable time. Students have good access to computers to help them research different topics and record their learning. For example, they recently found out about places across the world that they would like to visit and calculated the distance and how long it would take to get there. The school makes excellent use of the local environment and facilities, like a nearby sports centre, for swimming and fitness activities. Students are given good informal advice about their future lives and formal careers guidance is available from Year 10 onwards. Good attention is paid to developing students' understanding of healthy living and in raising their awareness of dangers through the programme for personal, social and health education. The school is fully committed to helping students to be able to cope with adult life and make a positive contribution to society.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are outstanding. Students enjoy a safe environment in which teaching and support staff work together to make sure that the well-being of students is the main priority. All the regulatory requirements for independent schools are met. Systems to safeguard students are implemented meticulously. All staff are trained to the required levels, and their knowledge and skills are regularly updated. There are detailed and thorough risk assessments in place for every student and every activity the school organises. Regular fire drills and checks on electrical equipment make sure the building and equipment are as safe as possible. The school has suitable procedures to address bullying and there have been no incidents recorded since the school opened. Senior staff have completed safer recruitment training and the school uses the most rigorous interview approach with prospective staff. Students are also involved in the recruitment process and are able to contribute to selecting the adults who will work with them in class. The school's central register of checks on staff is up to date and thorough. Staff told the inspector that they feel very safe working with the students. It is clear that students feel safe and enjoy school because they arrive on time every morning keen to learn and co-operate with staff.

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of leadership and management is good and all the regulatory requirements are met. The headteacher has an unrelenting focus on the personal development and academic progress of all students. The chief executive and directors make sure that students are safe, have good quality teaching and that the curriculum is relevant and interesting. They recognise that this is how to get students, who have previously opted out of all types of formal education, back into learning. The school has a good system in place for recording students' behaviour and attitudes to learning, their learning achievements, and their confidence and relationships with others. This helps the staff, chief executive and directors to evaluate the impact of what the school does in helping students' make the best progress they can. One local authority who places students at the school said that the school gives good value for money because: 'They find the young person's interests and skills and work on these to build their confidence. They get the positives back and then bring back the

learning.' The premises provide a suitable setting for learning with bright, airy classrooms and carefully thought-out furnishings. It is clear that this helps students to settle down to learning because they feel relaxed and comfortable. Students are in the process of decorating the walls with interesting graffiti, based on the famous street artist Banksy. The school's prospectus provides prospective parents, carers and local authorities with the required information about the school, including the school's suitable arrangements for the management of complaints. The school's leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas for further development. These are set out in a development plan which is used as a working document to secure further improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	138779
Inspection number	420270
DfE registration number	999/1136

This inspection was carried out 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.

Type of school	Special school
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	11–16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Benjamin Foundation
Chair	Diana Clarke
Headteacher	Sally Alden
Date of previous school inspection	n/a
Annual fees (day pupils)	£31,198
Telephone number	01493 849499
Fax number	01692 502159
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