

# My Choice School – Maple House

C/O My Choice Children's Homes Ltd, Unit 3a Mill Green Business Estate, Haywards Heath, RH16 1XQ

## Inspection dates

19 November 2013

## Context of the inspection

The school was first inspected in February 2013. At that time, there were a number of regulations that were not met. This is the first monitoring inspection to check on the progress that has been made to meet the regulations previously failed.

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

## Regulations not met

The headteacher is addressing all matters that were raised at the last inspection. There have been some improvements in all the areas previously judged inadequate. Despite these improvements, most of the regulations previously identified are still not met because actions are not consolidated or having sufficient impact on students' all-round academic achievements. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the remaining weaknesses.

The curriculum policy was judged as inadequate because it was not providing relevant experiences for students and this was limiting their achievements. The policy has now been revised and there is an expectation that teachers will vary the curriculum and adapt it to meet the needs of the students who are placed at the school.

The headteacher often has little prior information about the educational background of students, including the requirements of any statement of special educational needs. Therefore it is not always certain, before a placement, that the school has the resources necessary to meet a student's needs. The headteacher has had difficulties in speedily gathering enough information from the placing local authorities in order to quickly put in place a suitable programme of study to meet students' specific needs.

The school uses national examination syllabuses as the core of its curriculum and this work is supported by a commercial computer application to assess how well students are achieving in different subjects. While this provides a 'backbone' from which to plan a programme of work for students, an appropriate day-to-day curriculum is not yet firmly in place and is not adequately meeting the specific needs of individual students.

Previously the school failed the regulation about the provision of careers guidance. Students now use a computer program to help them consider their skills, achievements and interests in order to help 'narrow down' a range of possible careers. In the previous academic year, the school liaised with a wide range of external agencies to find a placement for a student who had very significant educational and emotional needs. The personal, social and health education syllabus also supports students' development of life skills through a programme of activities that involves care staff. The school now meets the

regulation concerning careers advice.

Teachers use the examination syllabuses to plan individual lessons. Increasingly, additional information about students' achievement is provided through the computerised assessment scheme. However, there is still not a strong enough link between a student's statement of special educational needs, their individual education plans and the level of tasks organised in lessons. There is not enough attention paid to developing meaningful academic targets and identifying the small steps that are required to reach particular learning goals, especially in the key areas of English and mathematics.

Although there are some improvements in the way that lessons are planned, there are missed opportunities to personalise the curriculum even more and to make better links between the subjects studied. The daily programme of activities is not clearly linking students' personal development with time-constrained academic targets. The activities organised are not effective in helping students to complete enough formal written work in the subjects they study, especially in English and mathematics.

The school has been successful in increasing the attendance of students but it remains low and this hinders academic progress.

A suitable range of outside visits helps to stimulate students' interest but this is not yet having a strong positive impact on raising achievement. The use of practical resources in the classroom to 'liven up' lessons remains too limited.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

### **The school requires improvement and must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), and associated requirements**

Ensure that the curriculum policy and schemes of work are fully meeting the needs of students, especially their academic needs.	Paragraph 2(1)
Ensure that the subject matter is appropriate to the ages and aptitudes of students, including those with a statement of special educational needs.	Paragraph 2(2)(b)
Ensure that where pupils have a statement of special educational needs, the education provided fulfils its requirements.	Paragraph 2(2)(e)
Ensure that the curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress, especially academic progress.	Paragraph 2(2)i
Ensure that the curriculum provides adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life.	Paragraph 2(2)(j)
Ensure that teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught.	Paragraph 3(a)
Ensure that teaching encourages pupils to apply intellectual, physical or creative effort and to show interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves.	Paragraph 3(c)
Ensure that teachers use information from prior attainment to plan very	Paragraph

specific tasks to meet clear learning targets for individual pupils.

3(d)

Make better use classroom resources and use them effectively to aid more rapid improvement in pupils' achievements.

Paragraph  
3(f)

Ensure that the framework to assess pupils' work is regularly used and thorough in order to make sure that information is utilised to plan work to meet very specific targets, especially in the key areas of English and mathematics.

Paragraph  
3(g)

## Inspection team

Daniel Towl, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Information about this school

- Maple House is a very small independent secondary special school providing education for boys and girls from 11 to 16 years of age with a residential provision. All students have a statement of special educational needs related to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, challenging behaviours and other complex needs.
- The school was first registered in 2009, although it does not always have students on roll.
- Teachers are led and managed by a headteacher who oversees seven other schools.
- The school's aims include 'to raise self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour so that students achieve a place at a college of further education or employment and to work in partnership with parents and carers'.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136045
<b>Inspection number</b>	429411
<b>DfE registration number</b>	938/6278
<p>This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.</p>	
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School status</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	My Choice
<b>Chair</b>	Alex Hyland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annie Murphy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11–12 February 2013

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