



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Southlands School And The Wing Centre

### CONTENTS

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#### [Introduction and summary](#)

[Purpose and scope of the inspection](#)

[Information about the school](#)

[Summary of main findings](#)

[What the school and post - 16 centre do well:](#)

[What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations](#)

#### [Compliance with the regulations for registration](#)

[1. The quality of education provided by the school](#)

[The quality of the curriculum](#)

[The quality of the teaching and assessment](#)

[2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils](#)

[3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils](#)

[4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff](#)

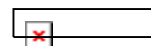
[5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation](#)

[6. The quality of information for parents and other partners](#)

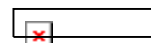
[7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints](#)

#### [School details](#)

## Introduction and summary

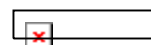


## Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school



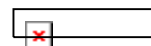
Southlands School is an independent residential special school for pupils aged between eight and sixteen and the Wing Centre provides further education programmes for students aged sixteen to nineteen. The school and centre are open for 38 weeks each year and serve a distinct group of boys and young men with autistic spectrum disorders, mainly Asperger's Syndrome and other additional complex difficulties including speech and language disorders, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (AD/HD) and moderate learning difficulties. There are boarding places for up to 42 pupils at the school with 38 currently on the roll, including two who attend daily. The Wing Centre has 21 places, all of which are taken. This includes nine students who live in a house in Bournemouth.

The school and centre are part of the Hesley Group of independent residential special schools and colleges. They occupy an attractive rural site on the outskirts of Lymington. They were established in 1996 and awarded approved status by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 1997. The pupils and students come from 25 different local authorities spread throughout the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and mainland Europe. All the pupils and students have statements of special educational need and almost all their places are funded by their home local education authorities (LEAs). However, there are a few placements which are funded jointly by the home LEA, social services department (SSD) and health authority (HA). Some are funded by their LEA, HA or SSD exclusively and one by the European Union.

Both establishments are subject to regular inspections by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) and received good reports following the most recent inspection completed in February 2004.

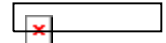
The school and centre aim to enable the pupils and students to develop self-esteem, self-advocacy, personal dignity, and confidence, and to enjoy mature positive relationships and to meet the demands of adult life through the provision of appropriate educational, social, emotional, spiritual and therapeutic programmes and support.

## Summary of main findings



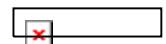
Southlands School and The Wing Centre are very effective institutions with many strengths. The headteachers and senior managers ensure that the residential, therapeutic and educational elements of the provision work collaboratively to address the pupils' and students' needs and enable them to make good progress.

#### What the school and post - 16 centre do well:



- They provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and students which includes academic study, therapy and skills for living and leisure. The curriculum is carefully constructed to meet the needs of each individual during each day and over a 24 hour period for those who board;
- a strong, caring ethos respects the pupils' and students' individual strengths and weaknesses, ensures they feel safe and secure and reinforces the contributions of the care, teaching and therapeutic staff;
- the quality of teaching is generally good and is often very good;
- all the staff work together to form an excellent team who have established very good lines of communication between departments and disciplines. They have outstanding professional relationships with each other and with the pupils and students and share high expectations;
- the residential care is of a high quality;
- the school and centre are very well managed, have a comprehensive range of clear policies to cover all eventualities and provide a structured development and training programme for all staff. They ensure that planning is effective and that all staff respond to the pupils' and students' needs in a consistent manner;
- they both advance the pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. They maintain very good links with the local community; and
- many of the pupils and students have made marked advances in their academic, social and emotional understanding since joining the school or centre, and parents are kept well informed of their progress.

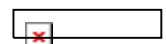
#### What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



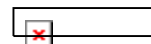
The school and centre meet all the regulations.

To further improve the provision, especially the quality of teaching, the school and centre need to continue to check that the work set can be completed with as little adult support as is necessary to enable them to become more independent and to make more reference to the pupils and students individual learning targets both during lessons and when composing termly reports.

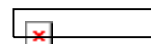
#### Compliance with the regulations for registration



## 1. The quality of education provided by the school



### The quality of the curriculum



The school and the centre provide a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of the pupils and students. In both establishments particular emphasis is placed on the development of the skills required for adult life with all pupils and students completing the Duke of Edinburgh bronze awards and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) life skills courses.

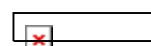
The school offers a well planned daily timetable of seven lessons each lasting between 35 and 45 minutes. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught as well as religious education, careers education, citizenship and personal, social and health education (PSHE). All the pupils are entered for the the end of Key Stage 3 tests and most take Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA) entry level examinations in a range of subjects to familiarise themselves with examination conditions. In Key Stage 4 they follow nationally accredited courses. The current Year 11 pupils are preparing for full General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in up to seven subjects, and other non-exam courses, Entry Level and the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award.

In addition to the academic studies, a proportion of the pupils and students receive therapeutic support such as anger management, the Social Use of Language programme and psychological interventions. There is also support from the consultant clinical psychiatrist and psychologist, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and other specialists from the local health authority.

The centre concentrates on ensuring that the students are as prepared as possible to take an active and independent part in society on leaving. A programme of study is constructed for each student to enable them to work for accredited qualifications at an appropriate level. These include 'A' Level, City and Guilds, General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), Duke of Edinburgh and ASDAN bronze and silver awards and vocational courses, which they can study at local colleges of further education. All students take part in work experience, receive careers advice from Connexions staff and are able to experience a wide range of suitable leisure activities including sailing and riding.

The care staff arrange a good selection of weekend and evening (and within the school, Wednesday afternoon) visits to places of interest, sport and leisure activities to meet most interests. During the inspection a group of the younger pupils enjoyed an interesting introductory golf lesson at a local driving range, another group went for a walk, a few went ten pin bowling and several learned how to repair a cycle tyre puncture. Pupils and students are encouraged to take an active role in the preparation of meals and build up their confidence and expertise in activities, such as using washing machines and microwave ovens, as well as shopping for clothes and groceries and tidying and cleaning their rooms.

### The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching in both the school and the Wing Centre was never less than satisfactory and

was good, very good or excellent in nearly all the lessons or parts of lessons observed. The work set is carefully planned and prepared to match the abilities and the needs of each of the pupils and students. In several classes a wide spread of ability makes this feature particularly important. In addition, the teachers are very skilled in presenting work for pupils and students using the strategies which best suit their learning styles. Each lesson's objectives are clearly stated during the introduction and in the best lessons, opportunities to reflect on previous work and relate the subject to familiar everyday contexts are included.

A strong feature of several of the outstanding lessons was the excellent opportunity during the final five minutes for the pupils and students to remind themselves of what they had learned, reflect on their successes and take a positive part in assessing whether they had achieved their targets. In other very good lessons the pace was brisk, there were several different activities planned to sustain pupils' and students' interest and they were able to discuss or work collaboratively with their classmates. Both the teaching and support staff know the pupils and students very well, are quick to predict potential distress and intervene effectively to reduce the young person's concerns. All staff have high expectations, particularly regarding the pupils' and students' behaviour, and they manage difficult behaviour very effectively. The partnership between teachers and teaching assistants is excellent and both use humour, praise and encouragement very effectively to sustain the pupils' and students' concentration, interest and attitudes to study. Work is carefully assessed and marking is generally thorough and often includes helpful comments. Where there are weaknesses in the teaching and pupils and students lose interest it is usually because the subject matter is too difficult for them to complete without excessive adult support.

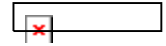
Each pupil and student has an individual education plan and personal care plan, both of which are regularly reviewed by the school, care staff and therapy team. Targets relating to these plans are carefully prepared each half term and the young people themselves often take an active part in monitoring their own progress. The school has a clear assessment policy and maintains detailed records of each pupil's progress in all subjects and aspects of their social and emotional development. Staff make effective use of this data to monitor their overall progress and set achievable goals. However, more reference to these targets during lessons and in the termly reports would make them more relevant to the pupils and students. The staff of the therapeutic services department, the school and the residences work effectively together to co-ordinate their assessments and ensure that parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress. As was evident in the school, students' work is carefully assessed, their progress monitored and targets set. The occupational therapist has prepared a useful life skills check list and development programme which is administered by the care staff. They keep a detailed record of the pupils' and students' achievements in this field ranging from learning to dress appropriately to being able to purchase food and prepare and cook a meal, monitor their progress and provide support where required.

All the pupils and students came to the school or the centre having failed to thrive in their previous schools. Several had long periods of absence from any formal education and all had learning difficulties which, through a lack of suitable support, had led to frustration and loss of confidence. Over half had reading at levels well below what might be expected for their age and a significant proportion had developed strategies for work avoidance. Through the therapy, teaching and care provided at the school and the centre young people grow in confidence and come to demonstrate consistency and control in their behaviour and develop a positive attitude to study. While some still need to improve their literacy skills, the pupils and students are making at least steady and often good progress in all subjects, particularly life skills. They are proud of their achievements. In almost all lessons the pupils and students take an interest in the work, respond positively to questions and take an active part in the lesson. Most concentrate well and make very good use of previously learned facts and skills. Many have made marked advances in their academic, social and emotional understanding since joining the school or centre and their improvements are carefully monitored and supported by the combined attention and intervention of all the staff.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The school successfully meets its aim to provide a nurturing environment which encourages pupils to flourish academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. The provision for pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. There is a strong ethos, relationships between staff and young people are very good and staff act as good role models. The key workers are effective in ensuring their welfare and in reinforcing the differences between right and wrong in the school, centre and residential setting.

Both establishments enable the young people to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Staff take every opportunity to praise them; daily assemblies include celebrations of pupils' achievement. Activities in the school and residence encourage them to take responsibility and to make choices. Appropriate behaviour is consistently reinforced, and individual targets and strategies help pupils to manage and improve their own behaviour. As a result standards of behaviour are good. When disagreements occur, staff work sensitively with those involved to help them to understand the causes and effects of their behaviour and to resolve any differences.

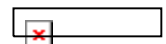
Pupils and students participate in the life of the school through the school council and student house meetings. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce the importance of listening to others and of working collaboratively, both in lessons and in other activities. The life skills and personal, social and health education programmes which are carried out in the school, the centre and the residence, give pupils and students good opportunities to discuss and reflect on their own and others' actions and feelings. Staff encourage them to think about and help people, both within and outside the school community. Pupils develop an awareness of the wider community through their visits to libraries, churches, theatres and colleges, through belonging to local organisations and clubs and through their charity work. The pupils and students develop their social skills and their independence by carrying out work experience and taking part in Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.

There is a strong focus on introducing young people to traditions and beliefs which differ from their own. Within the curriculum, through assemblies and through special events, pupils and students are encouraged to understand and show respect for other cultures and faiths. They prepare and sample food from other countries, research multicultural art, listen to music from other countries and are introduced to the principles and practices of faiths other than their own. Displays within the school, the centre and home are used well to reinforce the multicultural nature of society.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The quality of care in both the residential and educational setting is very good. The education staff, care staff and the therapists provide specialist support which makes a vital contribution to the health, welfare and social development of all pupils and students. Staff work together very effectively and provide good support for pupils and students from their admission onwards. The multi-disciplinary team is involved in transition planning. This is a very thorough process which helps to ensure that pupils' transition to other schools, colleges or to employment is as smooth as possible. For the students at the Wing Centre it often involves visits to several colleges before the appropriate courses, pastoral and residential support are located. Staff know the pupils and students well and form positive relationships with them. The daily handover of information between

residential and education staff is thorough and this ensures that all staff are well informed about any difficulties and changes in behaviour. The young people's responses to the questionnaire which was given to them prior to the inspection indicate that most feel safe in the school and that any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. The telephone numbers of those adults who have volunteered themselves as independent advocates for the pupils and students are on display around the school and they make themselves available for confidential discussions during their frequent visits.

A comprehensive range of policies covering all aspects of health, welfare and care guide staff in their work and these are implemented consistently in both the school and post-16 centre. Child protection arrangements are clearly understood and staff have received the necessary training. There is positive reinforcement of good behaviour through the reward system, which is applied consistently across the school. Individual behaviour targets are established and appropriate strategies are developed which help pupils to manage and improve their own behaviour.

The systems for recording incidents are clearly understood and followed by all. The school and centre maintain an appropriate admissions register and attendance registers are completed satisfactorily.

A recent inspection of the school and Wing Centre by the NCSC identified one or two minor points for improvement which are currently being addressed. The Bournemouth house is registered as a separate provision for young adults. This was inspected recently and no issues were identified.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The Hesley Group are the proprietors of the school and the Wing Centre. They ensure that all staff are subject to satisfactory clearance with the Criminal Records Bureau. Where agency staff are used they have to provide the school with evidence of clearance. The interview process is thorough and the school checks references, qualifications and medical records.

The staff are well qualified and have a good range of experience. They are deployed effectively and form a highly cohesive team. There is an induction programme and a probationary period for new appointments. The implementation of the Hesley Group's Code of Practice for staff is monitored through staff supervision and appraisal. As part of development planning, the school provides very good training opportunities for all staff.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**

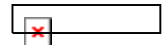
The premises and grounds are very well maintained and provide good quality facilities for all pupils and students. The school has well equipped specialist rooms for art, pottery, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), science, games, soft play and fitness training.

The centre has an ICT suite, food technology room and laundry. The pupils and students make good use of the grounds. Attractive and informative displays include the pupils' and students' art work and decorate corridors, classrooms and shared spaces. All the residential accommodation was commended in the NCSC reports and care staff work hard to ensure that the pupils and students are safe, secure and happy in their term-time homes. The Wing Centre has 11 single bedrooms each with a washbasin, one with en-suite facilities. The house in Bournemouth has nine single bedrooms. The residential accommodation at the school is organised into seven houses with the pupils broadly organised by age, but also taking social factors into account. All pupils have their own bedrooms. The premises are clean and very well furnished. The pupils and students generally respect their surroundings.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**



The school and the Wing Centre publish a detailed prospectus which provides a wide range of helpful information for parents and other interested parties. Both have been revised recently to meet the requirements of the current regulations. Both versions of the prospectus are welcoming to new parents, give clear information about Asperger's Syndrome and explain how the philosophy, curriculum and therapeutic environment of the provision can meet the needs of pupils and students. The school prospectus uses a question and answer format to describe the school and how it works. Quotations from pupils and students provide helpful insights into life at the school. There is a separate Therapeutic Services Handbook which describes assessment and referral processes and sets out how communication with parents will be maintained.

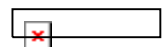
The school operates an 'open door' policy for parents and places a strong emphasis on communication with families. Home-school books are used, and twice-termly newsletters enable parents to keep in touch with school life. Almost all parents feel well informed about their child's progress.

The school and Wing Centre provide regular reports to parents and make detailed assessments prior to annual reviews. Pupils' annual reports are comprehensive and contain details of curriculum content for each subject, grades for effort and an indication of pupils' attitudes and organisational skills. The school carries out an annual audit to ascertain parents' views on both the education and care of the pupils and students, evaluates the outcomes and makes changes where needed in order to improve the provision.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**



The school and the Wing Centre use the complaints policy of The Hesley Group. This is clear and complies fully with the requirements. Copies of the procedure are available to all relevant parties on



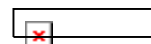
admission to the school.

A pupil-friendly version of the policy is widely displayed in the school, the centre and the residential accommodation. A booklet "An Introduction to Southlands School", designed for pupils, contains a page suggesting a range of people within and external to the school to whom they could complain. Pupils can complete a complaint form and send it to the proprietor if they wish.

**Does the school meet the requirements for registration?**

Yes.

**School details**



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Name of school:	Southlands School And The Wing Centre		
DfES ref number:	850/6030		
Type of school:	Residential special school and post-16 centre		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	8 - 19		
Gender of pupils:	Male		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 59,	Girls 0,	Total 59
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 0,	Girls 0,	Total 0
Number of boarders:	Boys 56,	Girls 0,	Total 56
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 59,	Girls 0,	Total 59
Annual fees (day pupils):	from £46,000 to £51,000		
Annual fees (boarders):	from £92,055 to £101,260		
Address of school:	Vicars Hill Boldre Lymington Hampshire SO41 5QB		
E-mail address:	southlands@hesleygroup.co.uk and wingcentre@hesleygroup.co.uk		
Telephone number:	Southlands - 01590 675350		
Fax number:	The Wing Centre - 01590 677986 01590 671891		
Headteacher:	Southlands: Ms Sue Gething		
Proprietor:	The Wing Centre: Ms Angela Nightingale Mr Stephen Lloyd		
Lead Inspector:	Mr Andrew Littlewood		
Dates of inspection:	8 - 11 March 2004		

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