

Fell House School

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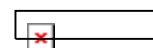
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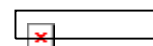
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School details

Introduction and summary

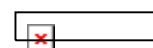


Purpose and scope of the inspection



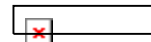
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



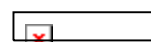
Fell House School is a registered children's home and residential special school for up to eight pupils with emotional, social, behavioural and learning difficulties who are between the ages of six and eleven years. The school is seeking to raise the upper age limit to twelve. The attainment levels of pupils when they first attend the school are extremely low relative to those expected nationally. The school describes itself as a nurture unit for its sister school Apple Tree which is located in Kendal. It is registered and approved by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). At the time of the inspection there were five full-time pupils on roll, all from white British backgrounds. Most of the pupils who attend the school are funded by their local authorities and come from all parts of England. Some are the subject of care orders and board at the school either on a weekly basis or all year round. The average length of stay is two years. All have a statement of special educational need (SEN) and some have complex learning difficulties, for which they receive therapeutic support to help them manage their behaviour and emotions. No girls currently attend the school.

Summary of main findings



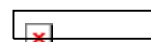
Fell House School is an improving school with significant strengths. It aims to meet the academic, personal, emotional and social needs of its pupils. At the heart of the school's work is a commitment to help pupils to learn more socially acceptable behaviour, by improving their social and communication skills and raising their confidence and self-esteem. The staff work well as a team, supporting each other and sharing a common approach as they seek to identify the most effective ways of helping pupils to learn, to grow in maturity and become more independent. The quality of relationships between the pupils and staff is very good and this contributes to a positive ethos. The school provides a modified curriculum, based on the National Curriculum (NC), which is appropriate and relevant to the ages and aptitude of the pupils. It enables pupils to make steady progress across a range of subjects. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with examples of very good teaching and a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. However, teachers do not make enough use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons to promote learning. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good overall but there is less evidence of how the school prepares pupils for life in a multicultural society. The senior managers have a good insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses, and, through self-evaluation, have a clear understanding of the areas for development.

What the school does well



- it provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is matched effectively to pupil's individual needs;
- it places a strong emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills and the promotion of self-confidence, self-esteem, and personal and social development;
- it makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development;
- its staff work very hard to support pupils in developing appropriate behaviour and as a result the pupils' behaviour improves;
- its assessment of pupils' academic achievement and social and personal development is very good, and the information is used well to set targets for pupils; and
- it has appropriate procedures in place for the induction, training, and appraisal of staff.

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



- assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of their own and other cultures;
- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public services and institutions in England;
- insert in the school prospectus particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language; and
- include in its complaints procedures the additional requirements as outlined in section 7 of this report.

What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002

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In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

Next steps

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Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- develop effective monitoring systems to ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory; and
- further develop the use of ICT in teaching and learning.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

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1. The quality of education provided by the school

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The quality of the curriculum

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The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is based on the NC with an emphasis on the Foundation Stage curriculum and is planned carefully to reflect the needs of the pupils. There is a clear policy statement which explains why and how the school breaks up the curriculum into a flexible 'small steps' approach. The school successfully combines a whole school curriculum framework with detailed planning for individual pupils.

There are broad schemes of work for religious education (RE) and all NC subjects except for ICT. These are supported by topic based themes and useful checklists of Foundation Stage skills in all subjects. Long term planning is clearly structured to provide breadth and balance over time, and is referenced to NC programmes of study. Medium term planning is appropriately structured with clear statements of what the pupils will be expected to learn together with guidance on assessment methods, and suggested teaching activities. These plans are regularly reviewed alongside the highly structured individualised pupil plans and the outcome of ongoing assessment, to create workable short-term plans. The best practice includes daily plans that note specific teaching

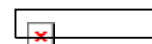
methods and desired learning outcomes. These are prominently displayed for the use of all support staff.

The school rightly encourages the pupils to become more involved in self-chosen learning and play activities, and the staff generally provide a good range of opportunities for this to take place. These together with the numerous and varied extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum available for pupils.

The timetable provides sufficient taught time. However, too many lengthy literacy, numeracy and basis skills lessons are timetabled close together in the mornings. As a result pupils frequently do not experience a sufficient variety of teaching and learning experiences. They are often expected to maintain concentration on one subject for too long. This reduces the pupils' interest and ability to engage in their work. There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning. All pupils have a statement of SEN, and the provision made for them meets the requirements of their statements.

The curriculum is well linked to the school's very detailed assessment framework, and is delivered mainly through pupils' individual plans. This is strength of the school.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



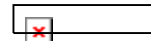
The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some examples of very good teaching and a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. The best teaching occurs where the teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, and use a range of teaching strategies to interest and motivate the pupils. They communicate their enthusiasm for the subject, give clear instructions to pupils about what they are expected to learn and use the teaching assistants effectively to support pupils' learning. In these lessons the pupils participate sensibly in any initial discussion or activity and then settle quickly to a written or practical task. For example, in a music lesson the teacher explained to the class what they were going to learn and establish clear ground rules about the handling of the percussion instruments. He then demonstrated how music can be used to create an atmosphere for a story or to express different feelings before setting tasks for the pupils. In this lesson, the pupils participated well at all stages and made clear gains in their learning. In a few sessions where the work did not catch pupils' interest, they quickly became unsettled and disruptive or readily made negative comments and tried to leave the room. The teamwork between all adults who work in the classroom is generally very good. Learning support assistants are prepared effectively and make a valuable contribution to both the quality of teaching and to pupils' learning. They have very good relationships with the pupils. They know them well so that they can assist with the delivery of individual education programmes and the management of challenging behaviour.

Assessment is very good and the procedures enable the staff to set accurate targets and monitor progress. The school carries out detailed assessment of pupils' behaviour during the first few weeks that a pupil is in school. This is used in conjunction with any information received prior to admission to set specific behaviour targets and measure individual progress over time. Curriculum targets, based on NC levels, are set and reviewed termly. Records are extremely detailed and organised systematically to provide staff with a complete overview of pupils' achievements and progress. There are good systems to record pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons, and work books show the work tasks that they complete each week.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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



The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. It is satisfactory for their spiritual development, but provision for their cultural development is limited. The school works very hard to help pupils develop their self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem together with better communication and social skills. These areas are at the heart of the school's approach to resolving pupils' emotional difficulties. There is a strong whole school ethos based on enabling pupils to develop trusting relationships with staff. Throughout the school day, staff encourage and model positive social interaction. Assemblies and end of day discussions provide valuable opportunities for pupils to communicate in a wider group. Pupils demonstrate clear progress in this area, as detailed in their termly assessments. For example, they develop good social skills and care for others. They frequently use local facilities such as play parks and the sports centre and so have opportunities to develop social skills and relationships in the wider community.

The school's consistent and comprehensive behaviour policy supports pupils' moral development well. The system of tokens and the use of sanctions where necessary, encourages pupils to think about the consequences of their actions. Staff take care to introduce elements of personal, social and health education (PSHE) wherever possible, in addition to the taught PSHE curriculum. This contributes to the pupils' sense of community and care for others.

Pupils' spiritual development is fostered through the religious education curriculum and the PSHE programme. The RE scheme of work introduces major world religions in a positive way which fosters tolerance. However, there is little evidence of wider multi-cultural teaching or incidental learning. The school does not adequately provide pupils with a general knowledge of public institutions and services.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

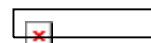
The school meets most but not all of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- provide its pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2(d)); and
- assist its pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions (paragraph 2(e)).

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school takes very good care to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. All policy documents meet the regulatory requirements.

There is a written policy to prevent bullying, with a good quality risk assessment of both school routines and premises. All staff are trained in child protection procedures and the Crises and Aggression limitation and Management (CALM) restraint techniques is used by the school. A positive approach to managing pupils' behaviour is central to the school's ethos. There is a clear

and comprehensive behaviour policy which is implemented consistently by staff. Incidents involving the use of restraint are recorded appropriately and monitored regularly to analyse any emerging patterns.

Staff are deployed carefully to ensure that pupils are safe and engaged in positive work or play. There is clear written guidance and a good understanding between staff that ensures there is always an adult in a supervisory capacity, however much children's play or behaviour alters the planned division of responsibility.

On admission each pupil is allocated a house tutor who liaises with school staff, other professionals and outside agencies to ensure that education and care plans are implemented effectively and complement each other. There is a high level of co-operation between the education and care staff at all levels to the benefit of the pupils. The end of day handover meeting between teachers, care staff and pupils is used well to inform care staff about issues from the school day and to acknowledge individual's achievement. The new head of care is hoping to use activities from the twenty four curriculum to help pupils achieve their literacy and numeracy targets.

The school employs a qualified nurse who takes responsibility for the storage and administration of medicines, and for the routine health needs of the pupils. Staff with First Aid qualifications are on site at all times. The school also employs a clinical psychologist, who contributes to pupils' assessment and acts as a consultant on a range of related issues. Admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with regulations. Attendance is good and pupils are eager to come to school. The school has commissioned an independent company to assess the school in terms of the Disability Discrimination Act and to draw up an access plan to meet its requirements. The company has visited the site but has not yet produced any documentation.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

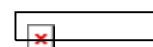
Yes.

What does the school need to do to comply with the DDA?

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The school has employed an appropriate number of staff who have relevant expertise in the education of pupils with emotional, social and complex learning difficulties, including autism. The company recently appointed an acting head teacher and a full-time class teacher both of whom have made a significant contribution to the educational provision for the pupils. The teaching staff are well supported by three teaching assistants and a team of other professionals including a child psychotherapist, a clinical psychologist, a nurse and a play therapist. These provide good support for the educational, therapeutic and medical needs of the pupils. The three teaching staff are well qualified. The school's management structure includes a Principal, and an Advisory Body which acts as a critical friend to the school on behalf of the proprietors. The day-to-day organisation and management of Fell House is the responsibility of the head teacher and the head of care.

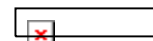
The arrangement for the induction of new staff is good. All staff receive a good level of training which prepares them well for handling difficult and potentially harmful situations. Care staff receive specific training on the administration of drugs. The company's appraisal procedures are implemented appropriately. The recruitment of staff is in line with company policy, with attention

being paid to references, medical history, and personal qualities. There are well established procedures for ensuring that all staff are checked with the appropriate authority for their suitability to work with young people.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



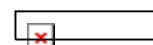
The original accommodation has been suitably modified and fully meets the needs of a small group of primary aged pupils. The new extension enhances the teaching accommodation and increases the number of individual bedrooms. The two new classrooms which are also used for storing educational resources provide a sufficient degree of flexibility for delivering individual and group educational programmes, including, practical subjects. Overall the accommodation is in a satisfactory state of repair and decorative order. One of the older bathrooms has been refurbished in response to comments made in the Commission for Social Care Inspection report of May 2004, and there are plans to refurbish the other one.

Some use is made of the two lounges which separate the classrooms from residential accommodation for education and recreational activities. There are no specialist rooms and no library within the school. However, appropriate use is made of facilities at the public library which is adjacent to the school. Due to the small size of the building it is not possible for staff to deliver indoor activities in physical education although they make good use of the local play areas and leisure facilities. The grounds surrounding the school are too steep and unsuitable for team games but they offer some scope for unstructured play and recreation activities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The information provided for parents, carers and other professionals involved with the pupils is detailed and comprehensive. It covers all aspects of the pupils' development. Detailed information, concerning each pupil, is gathered before admission and this is added to during the initial settling in and assessment period. This continues to be built on as the pupil becomes more established in the school. The individual education and behaviour targets are reviewed, and the information presented at reviews. Reports are of good quality. They reflect what pupils know, understand and can do, and how they have improved. This information is shared with all who work or are connected with the pupils. The school provides on request a statement of income received and expenditure incurred for all of the pupils who are funded by their local authority.

Its prospectus gives a general overview of the provision of both this school and the other schools in the group. Although it contains information concerning how it meets the needs of pupils with SEN it does not include information concerning the provision it makes for pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- insert particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language in its prospectus (paragraph 6(2)(f)).

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

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The school has a written complaints policy which is clear, comprehensive and well presented. It specifies the actions to be taken in a variety of situations, for example where a child makes a complaint about another child or against an adult. It provides clear guidance and timescales to address each instance. However, the policy omits to ensure the confidentiality of documentation relating to a complaint. It does not specify that parents may attend the panel hearing, and does not explain that the panel can make findings and set recommendations. Pupils are given a simplified version of the policy.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- allow for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h));
- provide for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulate that the complainant, proprietors and headteacher, and, where relevant, the person complained about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i)); and
- provide that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (7(k))

School details

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Name of school:	Fell House School		
DfES ref number:	909/6051		
Type of school:	Primary Special		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	6 - 11years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 5,	Girls 0,	Total 5

Number of boarders:	Boys 5,	Girls 0,	Total 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 5,	Girls 0,	Total 5
Termly & Annual fees (boarders):	£65,000 to £150,000		
Address of school:	Grange Fell Road Grange-over-Sands Cumbria LA11 6AS		
E-mail address:	fellhouse@connectfree.co.uk		
Telephone number:	01539 535926		
Fax number:	01539 534847		
Headteacher:	Mr Rob Davies		
Proprietor:	Appletree Treatment Centre Ltd		
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Sheila Boyle		
Dates of inspection:	24 - 27 January 2005		

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