

Farrow House Education Centre, Scarborough

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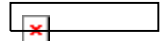
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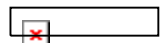
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School details

Introduction and summary

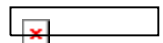


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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



Farrow House Education Centre, Scarborough is part of Farrow House Limited which owns and operates eleven residential children's homes and four associated schools nationwide. The school opened in September 2003, with the intention to provide full-time education for children and young people living in the nearby children's home. However, as the school has developed, it has also begun to offer placements to non- resident pupils who are funded by their local education authority (LEA).

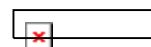
The school is registered for fifteen pupils between eight and seventeen years of age. Thirteen pupils

have been admitted since the school opened. However, nearly half of these pupils left after short stays, often of only a few days or weeks. This was due to circumstances beyond the school's control, usually connected with changes required in pupils' living arrangements. At the time of the inspection three boys were attending full-time and two girls were attending part-time. All but one of the pupils joined the school during this academic year, and the majority of pupils were admitted in the last month. Two of the pupils are resident at Farrow House children's home, and the remaining three are funded by their LEA as an interim measure until longer term placements are arranged. Most of the pupils are looked-after children. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN), but statutory assessment procedures have been initiated or requested for three pupils.

All pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Each has difficulty attending school, and in accepting school routines and expectations. Some have experienced considerable disruption in both their personal lives and their education, and as a result have missed a significant amount of school. These pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Others, however, have entered Farrow House Education Centre straight from a placement in a mainstream school. These pupils were either permanently excluded from their previous school or were judged to be at risk of it. They have the knowledge and understanding to work successfully in all areas of the curriculum, but their attainment levels, particularly in literacy, are sometimes lower than would be expected for their age.

Farrow House Education Centre aims to offer 'a secure, positive atmosphere in which all can be happy, learn and achieve'. It emphasises the need to establish good attendance, to develop pupils' self-esteem and motivation to learn, and to improve their social skills and behaviour.

Summary of main findings



Farrow House Education Centre, Scarborough is a school which is establishing itself successfully. It has a number of strengths, and is well placed to continue developing. The staff form a strong and effective team.

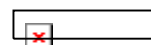
The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, including a range of accredited courses, which is very well tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils. However, schemes of work are incomplete. The school does not provide effectively for pupils' spiritual development.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and is often good. There is a friendly, welcoming atmosphere, and staff know pupils very well. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and staff work hard to help the pupils develop their social and emotional skills. On occasion, staff are not assertive enough when pupils are very noisy and they do not always provide sufficient structure and direction at transitional times of the school day.

The school has a good system of lesson planning and assessment, particularly through recording the outcomes of each lesson for each pupil. The school has an effective behaviour management policy, linked to individual targets, which the pupils understand and accept. Planning and recording to improve individual pupils' behaviour over the longer term is more limited.

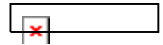
The school meets most of the regulations, and is well placed to address those few regulations that it currently does not meet.

What the school does well



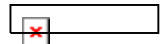
- it encourages good attendance, often where pupils have a history of refusing to attend school;
- it establishes very good relationships between staff and pupils which support the development of pupils' social and emotional skills;
- its staff strive hard to make activities relevant and interesting for pupils;
- its use of accredited courses and the practice of sharing lesson objectives and evaluations with the pupils increases their motivation;
- its daily assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is very thorough and is well used to motivate pupils and plan individual targets; and
- it provides good careers education and effective support for pupils' transition to adult life.

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



- complete schemes of work for all subjects;
- enable pupils to acquire an appreciation of their own and other cultures;
- install a separate hand-wash basin in the kitchen area; and
- provide a breakdown of income and expenditure for each pupil to their LEAs on an annual basis.

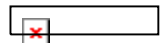
What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002



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.

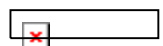
Next steps



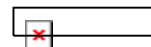
Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- develop more detailed assessment and a wider range of strategies for improving individual pupils' behaviour and improve the management of pupils' behaviour;
- plan opportunities for pupils' spiritual development; and
- improve the management of pupils' behaviour at transitional and less structured times of the day.

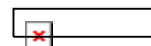
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the school



The quality of the curriculum



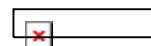
The curriculum is planned carefully to meet pupils' special needs and it fulfils most of the regulations. An over-arching statement sets out a flexible strategy to provide for pupils who may have missed a great deal of schooling and whose attainments are accordingly lower than expected. It commits the school to providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This is achieved in practice so that pupils experience a good range of subjects and activities. The technology curriculum does not offer a full programme of study, but the work undertaken is relevant to pupils' interests. There are curriculum overviews for the content of all subjects except music. Detailed schemes of work are being compiled as teachers' planning progresses. Those for most subjects are developing well, but work on the music scheme has not yet begun. The scheme for religious education (RE) is at an early stage of development and does not support teachers' planning.

The existing schemes reflect the relevant subject overviews. They include detail of the content and the learning objectives for small units of work, many of which are taught as individual lessons. The planning presents objective and measurable learning outcomes in the form of 'challenges' and includes provision for the review of each pupil's response.

Joint planning and working between the children's home and the school is enabling an older pupil to extend the range of her accreditation for home management skills. This recently included a meal preparation task managed and recorded by the staff at the home, and accredited by the school.

There is good provision for careers education. The school works well with the local Connexions and North Yorkshire Business and Enterprise organisations to provide careers advice and work experience. The school has a small careers resource area open to pupils, and makes use of a specialist careers pack for 'reluctant job-seekers'. Pupils have the opportunity to gain accreditation in careers awareness and career planning.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and is often good.

In the best lessons, teachers review pupils' previous learning, push the lesson forward at a brisk pace, and make timely interventions. These deal specifically and explicitly with any challenging behaviour. Teachers also provide a range of well-structured activities which engage pupils' interest and break up the lesson into manageable short periods. For example, an English lesson started with a word association game, moved on to analyse a poem in terms of simile and metaphor, and finished with the production of original poems on the same model. Pupils produced good work of which they were proud. Staff maintain a successful balance between the need to build pupils' confidence through success and yet challenge them to try more difficult activities.

Where lessons are less good, teachers' responses to specific instances of inappropriate behaviour

are consistent but too general. They do not make clear to the pupil why the behaviour is wrong and what needs to be done. As a result unacceptable behaviours tend to escalate.

In all lessons, staff share the plans and targets with the pupils, and evaluate the outcome with each pupil individually. This is very good practice. All lessons clearly demonstrate staff's detailed knowledge of pupils' emotional, behavioural, social and academic needs. Staff intervene quickly when pupils are experiencing difficulties with a task and give clear instruction or work co-operatively to find a solution. Pupils appreciate the level of support they receive, and feel it makes a real difference to their experience of learning.

The school is still in the process of developing resources to support teaching. Existing resources are of good quality, relevant to the curriculum and pupils' needs, and sufficient to support the number of pupils currently on roll. An information and communication technology (ICT) room has a number of computers, all with internet access. These are used effectively to support and extend pupils' learning, particularly through research for individual projects and courses. The school has established good links with a local maintained secondary school, which loans more specialised resources, for example for science projects, on request. The school also makes good use of the local schools' library loan service.

Assessment is generally good. There is a brief Farrow House policy setting out general principles, and a policy specific to the school is in the process of review. Pupils are assessed as soon after joining the school as is compatible with the process of settling in. This assessment covers National Curriculum levels in all subjects, together with standardised tests for reading and spelling, and descriptions of behaviour. However, there is no standardised assessment or recording of the type and level of pupils' behavioural difficulties. This hinders the school in assessing pupils' progress accurately over time.

Additional information received by the school at admission is combined with the school's own assessment to draw up individual education plans (IEPs). These set clear and measurable targets and contain strategies to support them.

Assessment of pupils' progress on a daily basis is detailed and thorough, and is a strength of the school. Each pupil is involved in a written evaluation of his or her progress and attainment at the end of each lesson. Pupils have individual targets to meet in terms of the overall behaviour management strategy, which is based on the achievement of points. Written records of this are again produced collaboratively. Together, the lesson evaluations and points sheets provide a very clear picture of each pupils' progress on a day-by-day basis.

Much useful on-going assessment is also undertaken through the school's effective use of accredited courses, for example through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. Coursework is well documented, clearly marked and carefully presented. These and other records are often illustrated with photographs which provide a vivid picture of the progress of practical work.

For pupils who have been at the school for a longer time, this wealth of information is not always used effectively to demonstrate progress over the longer term. For example, initial assessments have not been reviewed to show any difference in achievement.

The school produces termly reports for all pupils which cover all subject areas taught. These describe clearly what the pupils have achieved in relation to the teaching and curriculum offered. However, they do not relate pupils' achievement to their own targets or to other measurements such as National Curriculum levels.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

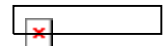
The school meets all of the requirements but one.

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:

- complete the compilation of schemes of work for all subjects (paragraph 1(2)).

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



The school does not provide effectively for pupils' spiritual development. While there is an appropriate policy for collective worship, the school has not yet provided opportunities for this. The RE curriculum is at an early stage of development, and the subject does not feature strongly on the timetable. The school does not plan in other ways to support pupils' spiritual awareness.

Pupils' moral development is supported effectively. The assessment and reward scheme for behaviour includes a score awarded in each lesson for 'respect for others'. The notion of respect includes providing support and encouragement for fellow pupils. This was expressed in a mathematics lesson when one pupil openly encouraged and supported the efforts of another. Pupils are encouraged to consider the feelings of others, and the impact of their behaviour on adults and peers. The whole school group have opportunities to work collectively to earn points for rewards. Pupils have been involved in fundraising, for example for Children in Need.

The school provides very well for pupils' social education. It bases much of its planning and practice on the premise that pupils' social development is their most significant weakness. Staff work hard to develop pupils' study skills, their attitudes to work, their attitudes towards other pupils and adults, and their general social functioning. Behaviour is analysed and scored at the end of each lesson. As a result of the pupils' difficulties and their recent admission to the school, the atmosphere in school is volatile, and often noisy. Adults manage most over-exuberant or aggressive behaviour effectively through a consistent, unruffled and professional response. Occasionally, they are insufficiently assertive, so that noisy behaviour goes unchallenged for too long. This is particularly the case at break times and at the end of the school day. Tutorial times are sensibly intended to provide opportunities to reflect on pupils' behaviour and acknowledge progress during the day. However, in practice this opportunity is missed and the session is used instead as a short lesson. Most pupils are required to make their own way to school, walking, using public transport or cycling. They respond to the challenge well and are generally on time.

Pupils' cultural development is not supported fully satisfactorily. The school makes an annual visit to the theatre. Pupils make regular use of local leisure facilities and of the local library. They attend open days at the local college of further education (FE). A project has been undertaken at the local art gallery, when pupils took photographs of local gardens which were displayed there. However, the school has no provision to develop pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

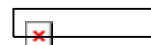
The school meets all of the requirements but one.

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:

- assist 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



Pupils' welfare is safeguarded effectively. There is a range of policies relating to health and safety, child protection, and the promotion of good behaviour. The behaviour policy is clearly explained to pupils and is fully understood and accepted by them. There is a suitable anti-bullying policy. The school has paid special attention recently to the prevention of bullying, in response to an incident in school. This has included a talk on this topic given to all of the pupils by a trained counsellor.

The school works very hard to encourage pupils' attendance, with considerable success. Although all pupils have a history of frequent non-attendance, most pupils now attend full-time. Where necessary, the school develops flexible, planned programmes, which involve a period of part-time, steadily increasing attendance. These are appropriate and effective. There is one pupil currently working on such a programme.

There is a full range of guidance and appropriate policies on the administration of medication, should this be required to be given in school. There is a detailed policy on First Aid and a trained First Aider on the staff. There are plans in place to train further staff in First Aid. Attendance and admission registers are maintained appropriately.

Although there are suitable facilities for outdoor breaks, pupils usually do not wish to use them and prefer to stay inside. This makes the school day too long and intense in terms of social relationships, and prevents pupils developing their physical and co-operative play skills. This attitude is not sufficiently challenged by staff. However, staff use the indoor break times successfully to model and develop good social relationships.

In addition to the good quality careers education, the school has established good links with a local FE college and a number of other relevant bodies, such as the Youth Offending Team. The school uses these links well to plan and prepare effectively for pupils' further education or independent adult life.

The school does not have a plan to improve the accessibility of the premises as required by the DDA.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

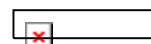
Yes.

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 meets all the regulatory requirements regarding the suitability of the proprietor and staff. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are subject to a check with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children. In addition, checks are undertaken

on previous employment history, medical fitness, references, and qualifications.

Teaching staff have appropriate general teaching qualifications and some have additional relevant qualifications, for example in the teaching of children with specific learning difficulties. However, none has an additional qualification in the teaching of children with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.

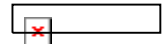
There are sufficient staff to safeguard pupils' welfare and provide a suitable level of education and support. Currently the high proportion of qualified teachers on the staff is an important factor in the quality of the lessons. This situation is shortly to change, with the replacement of one of the teaching posts by two teaching assistant posts.

Farrow House Limited arranges training on a range of general issues, and staff also undertake training specific to the needs of the school, for example, in managing accredited courses.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school's premises and accommodation are good quality, and fulfil most of the regulations. The school is situated in a large five-storey Victorian building in the centre of Scarborough. It is part of a square of mainly commercial buildings, with a large, grassed, fenced-in public area in the centre. The premises are in good repair, and are appropriately decorated. The school environment is enhanced by high quality displays, including pupils' work and posters on relevant personal, social and health education themes. Pupils were involved in choosing décor for the school, and there are a number of artefacts produced by pupils as part of their course work which help create a bright and cheerful atmosphere. The school is maintained in a clean and tidy state. Resources are carefully organised and displayed so that, where appropriate, pupils can access them independently, for example in a small self-contained careers area.

Although the school does not have its own outside play area, it has free access to the grassed area at the centre of the square. This is sufficient to allow pupils to get some fresh air and to take some moderate exercise. However, this opportunity is rarely used. The square is not suitable for extended periods of more boisterous play, and it would not support at any one time the full number of pupils for which the school is registered.

The kitchen is used for the preparation of simple meals for pupils and staff, as well as for food technology lessons. It is kept scrupulously clean and tidy. However, it does not have a separate hand-wash basin.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets all of the requirements but one.

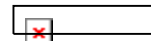
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

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

- fit a separate hand-wash basin in the kitchen to ensure adequate facilities for the

hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of food (paragraph 5(m)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



Overall, the provision of information for parents and other partners is very good. There is an overarching prospectus for Farrow House Limited, which provides details of the company's several children's homes and schools, and gives a general picture of many aspects of policy and practice. There is a supplementary prospectus which provides details specific to the Scarborough school. Together with the school's policy documents they provide a very thorough overview of how the school operates.

Information on any factors influencing pupils' behaviour and progress is shared very promptly with pupils' parents or carers by telephone contact at the beginning and end of every school day. There are termly written reports. Parents and carers report that they are happy with the information they receive about pupils' progress.

However, the school does not produce a breakdown for each funding LEA of the income received and the expenditure incurred in respect of each pupil.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

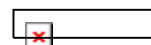
The school meets all of the requirements but one.

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 to the local authority which is wholly or partly funding a pupil an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil (paragraph 6(7)).

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



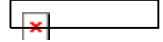
There is a very clearly written complaints procedure produced by Farrow House Limited which meets all of the regulatory requirements. It provides details of procedures for formal and informal complaints, and specifies time scales and arrangements for ensuring confidentiality. The policy also provides for, if required, the establishment of a hearing before a panel which includes a member who is independent of the management and the running of the school. This panel is empowered to recommend appropriate actions.

There is also a booklet on complaints for pupils' use, and a 'grumbles' book to air minor concerns, which was designed for and by pupils. The small number of complaints received to date have been handled well and in accordance with the policy.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Farrow House Education Centre, Scarborough		
DfES ref number:	815/6036		
Type of school:	Special school catering for pupils with educational, behavioural and social difficulties		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	8 - 17 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 3,	Girls 0,	Total 3
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 0,	Girls 2,	Total 2
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0,	Girls 0,	Total 0
Annual fees (day pupils):	£20,000 - £31,500		
Address of school:	19 Alma Square Scarborough North Yorkshire YO11 1JR		
E-mail address:	None		
Telephone number:	01723 350750		
Fax number:	01723 350750		
Headteacher:	Mrs Jacqui Macauley		
Proprietor:	Farrow House Limited		
Lead Inspector:	Ms Andrea Lyons HMI		
Dates of inspection:	21 - 24 February 2005		

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