

Marlowe Education Unit

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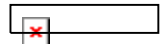
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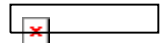
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Introduction and summary

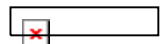


Purpose and scope of the inspection



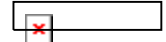
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



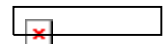
Marlowe Education Unit is a special school which provides education for up to 16 children in the care of the Marlowe Child and Family Services. There are 8 pupils on roll; 6 boys and 2 girls between the ages of eight and sixteen years. The school is located in the former primary school in Hartpury village. It caters for pupils who have emotional and/or behaviour difficulties. Pupils live in residences provided by the company and they are brought to the school each day by residential social workers (RSW). Some of these remain at the school in the role of learning support for pupils; this occurs whenever their shift pattern allows. The school provides a nurturing and containing environment for pupils who are disaffected with learning and whose behaviour is thought too disruptive for mainstream education. The school aims to provide a broad education with an emphasis on pupils achieving success. This is in keeping with the wider therapeutic philosophy of

Summary of main findings



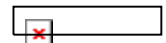
Marlowe Education Unit is a successful and improving school which provides a good standard of education for its pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory, although the provision for careers education needs further development, especially for those pupils in the final two years of their education. Teaching is good; the majority of pupils make steady progress. Pupils behave well because of the very good relationships they have with adults in the school. Their self-esteem is enhanced through good provision for their social and moral development. The school looks after its pupils well. Provision for their welfare and their health and safety is made more effective by the therapeutic approaches which are fundamental to the philosophy of Marlowe Child and Family Services.

What the school does well



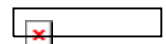
- pupils make steady progress particularly in their personal as well as social and moral development;
- the quality of teaching is good and there are well established procedures for identifying and recording pupils' academic progress;
- the leadership is good and effective management has a positive impact on the school;
- pupils show consistently good attitudes to their learning and they behave well;
- the school provides well for the health, welfare and safety of pupils; and
- positive relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to try their best.

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



- maintain an appropriate admission register and nominate a member of the school staff as child protection co-ordinator;
- prepare and implement a written policy with regard to activities outside the school, which has regard to the DfES guidance 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits';
- provide facilities for pupils who become ill during the course of the school day; and
- where pupils are funded by local authorities, provide an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred to each local authority and on request to the Secretary of State as noted in section 6.

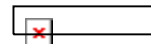
What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002



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

- draw up a three-year plan to show how it will improve accessibility over time.

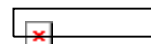
Next steps



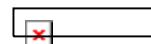
Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- provide more opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively; and
- provide for pupils a simplified version of the school's policies with regard to anti-bullying and complaints.

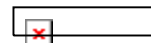
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the school



The quality of the curriculum



The curriculum at each key stage is satisfactory and has an appropriate breadth and balance which meets the needs of all pupils including those with statements of special educational need (SEN). The school teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum as well as Religious Education (RE) and provides a programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Provision is enhanced by weekly sessions of drama and art therapy. The curriculum for older pupils has previously included careers and vocational education as well as work experience. However this provision is now under-developed. Too little time is allocated to this work and links with the local Connexions career service are limited.

Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and these guide teachers in their planning for continuity of and progression in learning. Lesson plans are adapted well to meet the individual needs of all pupils. The three full-time teachers, including the headteacher, each share the co-ordination of all subjects.

Priority is given to the promotion of basic learning skills. Curricular planning ensures opportunities for pupils to acquire skills in reading and writing as well as bringing about improvement in their speaking and listening and social independence. In each of these aspects the school has had considerable success. At Key Stage 2 for example, individual reading sessions for under-achieving pupils have a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. The school also provides good opportunities for pupils to experience activities that promote good behaviour. The curriculum is

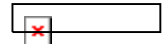
planned so that pupils have opportunities to share resources, develop respect for the views of others, and to enhance their self-esteem.

The curriculum includes the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT). The skills gained in using computers are used well at Key Stages 3 and 4 to support learning in subjects such as music, design and technology (DT) and citizenship. This could be further extended to other subjects so as to widen the learning opportunities for individual pupils, especially in Key Stage 2. Work completed by older pupils shows a good range of ICT skills. They use these skills in researching the Internet, collating data and to present their work using word processing.

A programme of sex education and drugs awareness is taught through science at Key Stage 2 and the citizenship programme at Key Stage 3. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 provides pupils with opportunities to follow courses which help prepare them for work and future study. These include modules in health education provided through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. External accreditation is available to pupils for a number of these modules.

The school makes good use of the locality to enhance its curriculum. Pupils use the facilities at a local sports centre for physical education and recreational purposes and there are regular educational visits to local and regional theatres, museums and art and craft exhibitions.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and a high proportion is good and better. All teachers are appropriately qualified and they provide a range of interesting and challenging lessons for pupils. The lessons are prepared well and planning focuses very closely on the needs of individual pupils; this also takes into account what they have already learned. As a result pupils' learning shows good continuity and the school can show clear evidence of the progress made by individual pupils since their arrival at the school.

Good lessons are characterised by manageable and individual learning objectives that are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. This means that pupils are prepared to have a stake in what they do; their learning becomes more effective and they achieve well. In the majority of lessons pupils learn new skills or gain new knowledge. Teachers make lessons interesting and challenging. Pupils concentrate and work hard. Where they are supported by teaching assistants (TA) the work is made more effective by the expertise and continuity they provide. The best examples of this were in Key Stage 2. Support is less effective where there is a regular change of TAs.

Learning is effectively consolidated through the provision of homework. This extends what pupils learn in school. Outcomes are made more effective because homework is supported by staff in the company's residences. Learning by some pupils, especially those in Years 10 and 11, could be made more effective if they had more frequent opportunities to work together.

The headteacher has put in place good procedures to monitor the progress made by pupils. These include helpful plenary sessions at the end of lessons which enable teachers to assess what has been learned. End of module tests provide a summative assessment of pupils' progress, as do the national assessments carried out by teachers at the end of each key stage. The outcomes to all assessments are recorded meticulously and the school has a secure body of evidence to show the good progress made by all pupils.

Teaching materials, books and other resources are generally satisfactory. There are insufficient books in the school library; this facility is under-resourced although there are some reference books available in classrooms and pupils have access to the local public library and the Internet for

research purposes.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

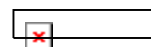
The school meets nearly all the requirements except one.

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 appropriate careers guidance for pupils of secondary age.

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



The school meets all the requirements with regard to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision for moral and social development is better than that for spiritual and cultural aspects.

The ethos of the school is one of showing concern and respect for the individual. This is in keeping with the central aims of the school. A particular strength is the good relationships which exist between pupils and all staff. The school makes them feel valued; understands why they exhibit challenging behaviour; provides them with the means to communicate their feelings and needs; and helps them to improve their developing behaviour. It creates an atmosphere of trust and care. Pupils make gains in an understanding of right and wrong and the effect of their actions on others. All staff work hard and successfully to strengthen pupils' self-esteem and sense of responsibility to the community. Skills and confidence to manage challenging situations in appropriate ways are enhanced.

The spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory though it is only encouraged incidentally. There is little specific planning in this respect. The major contributions to pupils' spiritual development come from the school's wider ethos. However, elements of the RE and PSHE programmes combine in ways that encourage pupils to reflect on wider personal issues.

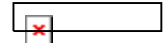
The development of pupils' cultural awareness is promoted informally through topics in art, music, humanities and French. Pupils are also encouraged to discuss the cultural backgrounds from which they come. Toleration and understanding of ethnic diversity is actively encouraged. There are some opportunities for pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of public institutions in Britain, but generally there are too few of these.

Pupils are helped in their social and moral development by guidance and support from teachers and TAs. The positive approach to behaviour management contributes well to pupils' moral development. There is a good range of social experiences for pupils to take part in away from the school. The curriculum includes a helpful emphasis on access to the community. This provides pupils with opportunities to learn and to demonstrate their social skills, and to acquire an understanding of the expectations of behaviour in the wider community.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good though there remain some aspects of this which the school could develop.

The school has a range of appropriate policies. These are implemented consistently and this ensures the care of pupils and their physical and emotional development. The behaviour policy is clear and is readily understood by all, including the pupils. They know what they need to do in order to improve their behaviour and gain the rewards on offer. For their part, staff apply the policy consistently, and this results in common and high expectations of good behaviour by pupils.

The child protection policy provides good guidance for staff on the action to be taken should they suspect any abuse of the children in their care. The policy applies to the whole company, covering residential and educational provision. In order to comply fully with the requirement there should be a locally nominated member of the school staff with overall responsibility for this. This person should also undertake relevant training for this rôle.

Although the school has satisfactory procedures relating to educational visits away from the school, these do not fully reflect the guidance given in the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) document, 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits'. The existing policy would be further strengthened if this advice was incorporated.

The school maintains detailed records of incidents involving pupils within the school. Whilst the recording of these is comprehensive their administration is unsatisfactory, in that reports are kept in a loose leaf folder and these are neither numbered nor cross-referenced.

Effective leadership has resulted in a purposeful and well-managed school. Staff are deployed well and all staff are enabled to make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. TAs, particularly, provide useful support for pupils who benefit from the consistency they provide. The shift pattern for RSWs means they cannot provide this same consistency in pastoral or learning support. There are good arrangements for the professional development of all staff and the induction of new staff. In order to increase the effectiveness and impact of the school's work, joint training for teaching and care staff has been instituted.

Supervision of pupils throughout the school day is very good. Good deployment of staff ensures that at all times the whereabouts of pupils is known; this reinforces the implementation of the behaviour policy. Attendance registers are kept appropriately, but the admission register is incomplete in several details.

The school has not yet drawn up a statement outlining its position in relation to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, it has already included washroom facilities for disabled users in its building re-development.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets most but not all of the requirements.

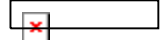
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

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

- nominate a member of the school staff as child protection co-ordinator;
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to health and safety of pupils on activities outside of the school which has full regard to the DfES guidance 'Health

- and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' (paragraph 3(2)(c)); and
- ensure the admission register is completed in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (paragraph 3 (9)).

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



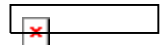
The school has an appropriate number of qualified teachers who are supported well by teaching assistants and the company's RSWs who bring the pupils to school. There are also two part-time teachers who provide sessional teaching in subjects such as art therapy. Each of the three full-time teaching staff has a responsibility of co-ordination for several different subjects of the curriculum.

The recruitment of staff complies fully with the requirements. There are established procedures for ensuring that all staff are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau regarding their suitability to work with young people. The company carries out these procedures on the school's behalf.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The accommodation is satisfactory. Despite being an old building it has been adapted imaginatively and the standard of decoration makes it a pleasant place in which pupils can learn. It is currently being extended and re-developed.

Classrooms are ample in size when compared to the number of pupils who use them at any one time. They are bright and cheerful places where pupils' work is displayed effectively. Elsewhere throughout the school, the accommodation fully supports pupils' social development. Separate break times ensure that the large play area is used at different times by younger and older pupils. The playground is separated from the vehicular access to the site so that pupils can play safely.

Specialist accommodation includes a small kitchen, an ICT suite as well as an art therapy room. The new extension will provide additional staff accommodation, a common room for younger pupils and washroom facilities for the disabled. These improvements are intended to remove pressure on other rooms in the building and enable the school management to adapt these for other purposes. Improvements are planned for the ICT facility. Other specialist accommodation to support aspects of the Key Stage 4 curriculum, such as science and design and technology are currently not provided. Sports and other facilities in the locality are used well to extend pupils' physical education as well as their social development.

There is no accommodation for pupils who may become ill during the course of the school day. The school practice is that any such pupil would immediately be returned to their residence.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

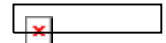
The school meets nearly all the requirements except one.

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 accommodation for pupils who may become ill during the course of the day (paragraph 5(l)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school has produced a comprehensive prospectus, which it distributes to parents who have children at the school as well as to those local authorities and prospective parents who are considering placing their children at the school. It provides essential information that all parents and others require and clearly informs them about other information that may be obtained should they request it.

The company invoices its clients for aggregated expenditure which combines residential and educational provision. In order to fully comply with the regulations the company should itemise these invoices to show the expenditure incurred separately by the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

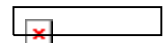
The school meets nearly all the requirements except one.

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:

- where a pupil, who is registered at the school, is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is submitted to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 6(7)).

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

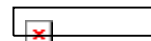


The school has a clear and effective policy for handling complaints. This sets out procedures, responsibilities and time scales. It fully meets requirements. A simplified version could usefully be provided for use by pupils.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Marlowe Education Unit		
DfES ref number:	916/6072		
Type of school:	For pupils with emotional/behavioural difficulties		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	8 -16 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 6,	Girls 2,	Total 8
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 4,	Girls 0,	Total 4
Annual fees (day pupils):	£20,000		
Address of school:			

E-mail address:	mcfs@connectfree.co.uk
Telephone number:	01452 700855
Fax number:	01452 700866
Headteacher:	Mr Gordon Andrews
Proprietor:	Ms Alison Davey
Lead Inspector:	Mr Tom Smith
Dates of inspection:	4 - 7 October 2004

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