

## **Inspection report**

# **Conductive Education Centre (The Hornsey Trust)**

**Independent special school**

**DfES ref no: 309/6070**

**Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002**

**Dates of inspection: 20 - 23 February 2006**

## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

### **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A 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**

The Conductive Education Centre is part of the Hornsey Trust, a charity founded in 1963. The Centre is based in North London and was registered as an independent school in 1991. It provides education based on the principles of Conductive Education for up to 20 pupils aged three to seven years who have significant difficulties associated with cerebral palsy. Currently, there are nine full-time and four part-time pupils on roll. Of these, 12 have a statement of special educational need and are funded by their local authority; one pupil is funded from a bursary through the Trust.

Conductive Education is a specialist educational system for children with motor disabilities which aims to address all aspects of children's development through a structured and multi-sensory curriculum. Conductors, who are specialist staff for pupils with motor disorders, work with teachers to provide specific Conductive Education programmes.

In addition to its school setting, the Centre offers training for parents and professionals and outreach support to older children attending schools in Haringey and other local authorities. The Centre provides advice and support for parents of children under the age of two years. The Parent and Child Group, which is part of SCOPE's 'Schools for Parents' network, enables parents with young children to work with a conductor in a small group setting. In addition, some parents, whose children are in mainstream nursery and school settings, attend the Centre on Saturday mornings to follow Conductive Education programmes.

Using both Conductive Education and the National Curriculum, the school aims to develop each child's full physical, social and academic potential. It promotes greater independence, increased self-confidence and self-awareness and it encourages children to participate actively in their own learning. The Centre believes the use of a wide range of communication methods is central to achieving its aims, as are good working relationships with parents and professionals.

### **Summary of main findings**

The Conductive Education Centre is a good school which meets its aims. It provides an excellent curriculum and very good teaching for its pupils. Work is extremely well matched to pupils' individual needs as it is based on a comprehensive system of assessment and review. The school is particularly successful in bringing together the principles of Conductive Education with the requirements of the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. This provides a consistent approach to meeting

pupils' physical, cognitive, communication and social and emotional needs. Staff make full use of the school day as a learning opportunity. Pupils work very hard and have impressive levels of concentration. All staff work well with parents to keep them informed and to maximise the opportunities to improve the outcomes for their children. The physical environment is well adapted to meet the needs of the pupils.

However, there are a few areas where the school does not meet the regulations. These include some important aspects of welfare and safety which the school is aware it must address as a matter of urgency.

**What the school does well:**

- it provides an extremely good curriculum which successfully integrates Conductive Education and the Foundation Stage and National Curriculum;
- it is particularly successful at developing pupils' communication and physical skills;
- teaching is of a very high quality and is planned carefully to meet the needs of the pupils;
- well qualified and committed staff work together effectively to make use of all learning opportunities;
- there are very good assessment processes;
- staff take children's views into account throughout the day and offer them excellent opportunities to develop personally and socially; and
- there is close and effective work with parents who have great confidence in the school.

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

- implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- implement all aspects of the written policy on First Aid to ensure that there are sufficient trained staff;
- ensure that all staff have been subject to a check with the Criminal Records Bureau;
- make appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely; and
- prepare and submit to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school for each pupil who is wholly or partly funded by the local authority.

## **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 point for development:

- clarify the role of the head of education; and
- make explicit how the five outcomes of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda are incorporated into the curriculum.

# **COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

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

### **The quality of the curriculum**

The school's curriculum is extremely successful. This is because it meets the needs of its pupils so well and, together with the teaching, helps them to make exceptional progress. The hours for teaching and learning are in excess of those recommended nationally. This enables outstanding integration of the Conductive Education approaches with the provision of a Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the nursery and with the National Curriculum for older pupils.

There is a clear curriculum policy and its aims are met very well indeed. There is very good emphasis on pupils' physical development and communication skills, which are key priorities. Very good account is taken of pupils' emerging literacy and numeracy skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) is of prime importance, not only to improve pupils' skills and learning but also to support their communication. Other areas of learning are covered through topic work or as separate subjects. Every effort is made to ensure that each pupil's activities and opportunities are well balanced and that they work vigorously towards their very well written personal targets or objectives which are clearly stated in the planning.

Staff work exceptionally hard to ensure that all needs are successfully met and that the curriculum meets the requirements set out in the pupils' statements of special educational need. The way the staff work together in teams and plan together and the significant contribution made by the speech and language therapist, ensure that programmes are exceptionally well tailored to pupils' needs.

The school provides a very good programme of personal, social and health education which is reinforced through all activities. Pupils' independence, choice, and decision-making are very important parts of all the activities that they undertake. This develops their personal autonomy. The staff focus well on pupils' health, well-being, safety, enjoyment, and contributions in lessons and this underpins all that they do. However, these aspects are not always explicitly planned for and more attention to these would enhance the curriculum even further.

The curriculum is supported effectively by a range of enrichment experiences and off-site activities, including 'Halliwick' swimming at a local pool, which provide pupils with opportunities to develop their learning in practical ways. However, the school is sometimes disadvantaged in the range of activities it can undertake because of the lack of a minibuss and difficulties over hiring specialised transport.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching is very good and some is outstanding. Teachers, conductors and other staff work together very well as teams to ensure that pupils make at least good, and often exceptional progress, in all areas of the curriculum. All staff understand the value of integrating Conductive Education with the Foundation Stage or National Curriculum to gain maximum benefit from these elements. They plan

lessons thoroughly so as to meet the wide range of individual needs within each class and to build on prior learning. Staff have a very good understanding of pupils' needs and this enables them to prepare tasks, using a wide range of multi-sensory approaches, which enable pupils' access and consistently engage their interest.

All pupils use communication approaches appropriate to their needs including pictures, switches, gesture and spoken language. In some lessons ICT is used very effectively to promote learning. Staff pay particularly close attention to the posture and positioning of pupils. They have high expectations which are made clear to the children. The evaluation of progress at the end of lessons, which involves pupils, is extremely good. The transitions made between activities are another significant strength. No time is wasted; every bit of time is used to support learning. Pupils show enjoyment and appreciation of all activities and maintain a very high level of concentration and motivation.

The assessment of pupils is very effective. Staff keep informal notes of progress which contribute to half-termly reviews of pupils' Individual Education Plans. These build into termly reviews and annual reviews of progress. Pupils' files contain a comprehensive range of assessments including those carried out by external professionals. The speech and language therapist also keeps detailed records of pupils' development. Progress is recorded particularly well for physical development, supported by photographic evidence. Pupils' targets are set using the nationally recognised 'P levels' and the school collects examples of pupils' work which enable them to track progress accurately.

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

Yes.

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

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Each class has a daily assembly which provides the opportunity for reflection. The policy for religious education aims to teach pupils to reflect on and consider religious and spiritual feelings, experiences and concepts. Pupils learn about religious festivals such as Christmas, Eid and Diwali and efforts are made to focus on the main faith groups represented at the school. There are good opportunities for children to appreciate the wonders of nature, for example when they make visits to Kew Gardens or to a local park.

Teaching places a strong emphasis on enabling pupils to make good choices and to take responsibility throughout the school day. All adults present very good moral and social role models for children. They promote positive relationships and are affirming of pupils' rights to disagree assertively. All pupils have targets each term for self-care and personal, social and emotional development. These are evaluated and form part of the annual review.

Pupils have good opportunities to work co-operatively with their peers and some children are able to work collaboratively. Staff make good use of the many opportunities in the school day to promote good communication and social

interaction. Pupils are friendly, are pleased to see visitors and readily engage in communication with them. Their behaviour is excellent.

Music and art are used well to encourage cultural development. Staff make excellent use of rhythmic, tuneful singing to reinforce activities. In addition there have been visits from musicians from different traditions. The school has links with a local primary school which performed its Christmas production for the pupils. The youngest children use role play to experience community activities such as shopping and the school arranges visits to local amenities such as the library and the Post Office.

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

Yes.

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

The personal care and support for pupils is excellent. They are exceptionally well supervised. Great attention is given to aiding pupils physically with their positioning and mobility, and with their learning, to ensuring they know right from wrong and to helping them to understand the consequences of their actions. Risk assessments on all aspects of activities are thorough. There are adequate policies for health and safety, child protection and other aspects of welfare. Fire drills and checks on fire-fighting equipment are regularly carried out. Admission and attendance registers are adequately kept, although staff should ensure they consistently keep a record of the total number of pupils attending each day.

However, the school is less thorough in ensuring that what it says in some of its policies is carried out in day-to-day work. Some practices are too informal and are not helped by the lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the head of education. Staff have had informal training on child protection, although the co-ordinator has not had formal training in line with the requirements of the Area Child Protection Team. Keeping children safe from harm is not part of the school's formal programme of induction of new staff. The designated First Aider has not yet had the required training, although training for this is imminent. All staff have undertaken a one day course in the past two years.

Although the building is adequately designed for the needs of physically disabled people, the school does not comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002. This is because it does not have an accessibility plan.

***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:*

- *ensure that the person with responsibility for child protection is known to all staff, that all are aware of procedures and that the coordinator and all staff have adequate formal training (paragraph 3(2)(b));*
- *ensure that the designated person with responsibility for First Aid has adequate up-to-date training (paragraph 3(6)).*

***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 Trust, which runs and owns the school, provides all the administration and processing of applications and appointments. It is suitably thorough in checking the identity of prospective employees, their qualifications, seeking references and obtaining information on their medical fitness. It is particularly good at ensuring that staff from overseas have additional checks as to their character, where this is possible.

Criminal Record Bureau checks are carried out on most staff and these are at an enhanced level where staff have direct contact with children. However, the Trust does not apply for, or have sight of, all those records that it should, especially for staff who are supplied by an agency and not employed directly by the school.

***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:*

- *prior to the confirmation of their appointment, ensure that staff have been subject to a check with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(b)).*

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

The school, built and opened originally as a centre for children and adults in 1966, is spacious and well-adapted for the needs of the physically disabled pupils it admits. Classrooms are designed well for flexibility and screens can be moved to divide areas. Rooms are furnished with an excellent range of equipment and resources which meet the needs of pupils exceptionally well. All this has a very positive effect on their learning. There is a small kitchen but meals are not prepared on site; all pupils have food sent in by their parents, which is heated in the kitchen.



There is a part of the upper floor set aside for the 'school for parents' and the Trust's administration which can be accessed by lift, if necessary. Access to the building is off Muswell Hill to the rear of a public house. A pathway where the public have a right of access runs across the front of the accommodation.

There is very little outside space. There is a small area with a hard surface to the rear of the building, although this is currently inadequate as an area for play. Plans by the Trust to improve this situation have not yet come to fruition.

The building is adequately maintained. It is clean and the flooring is sound. There has been a recent refurbishment of its front-facing windows and doors and work is planned for the rear of the building. There are attractive displays of the activities that pupils undertake. Levels of heating and ventilation are acceptable. However, the lighting is uneven in parts of the building because many expired fluorescent tubes have not been replaced. There is an adequate number of toilets, although the pupils' dignity at toilet time is sometimes compromised by a lack of privacy. This is something the Trust is addressing.

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

*The school meets all but one of the regulations.*

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

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

- *make appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).*

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

The school makes a wide range of information available to parents and meets all but one of the regulations. There is an attractive and informative brochure given to prospective and current parents, and additional helpful information is provided on admission. The school successfully meets its commitment to involving parents as partners in their children's education and parents are appreciative of this. All who completed the parental questionnaire at the time of the inspection felt comfortable approaching the school with any questions or concerns. A number of parents have had contact with the school because they have previously attended the 'parent and child activities' there.

Parents who bring their children to school have useful, direct contact with staff. Other ways in which school staff keep parents informed are by the use of home/school diaries, by offering the opportunity to visit classrooms and through meetings each term to discuss progress. At annual review meetings both parents and external professionals are fully informed about all aspects of children's progress and the review also forms the basis of an annual report.

The school supports parents who are seeking statutory assessment of their children. It has a policy designed to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to either mainstream or other special schools at the beginning of Key Stage 2.

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

*The school meets all but one of the regulations.*

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

*In order to comply fully 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, prepare an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil and submit it 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 complaints policy which has been recently reviewed. It is made available in the parents' handbook, in the parents' information area and in the entrance lobby to the school.

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

*Yes.*

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Conductive Education Centre
DfES Number:	309/6070
Type of school:	Special (Physical Disability)
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 6      Girls: 3      Total: 9
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys: 2      Girls: 2      Total: 4
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys: 7      Girls: 5      Total: 12
Annual fees (day pupils) – full time:	£24,804 - £37,206
Address of school:	54 Muswell Hill London N10 3ST
Telephone number:	0208 444 7242
Fax number:	0208 444 7241
Email address:	info@hornseytrust.org.uk
Headteacher:	Ms Charlotte Millward
Proprietor:	The Hornsey Trust for Children with Cerebral Palsy
Reporting Inspector:	Mrs Pauline Allison HMI
Date of inspection:	20 - 23 February 2006

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