



The Grange Therapeutic School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number 855/6010
Unique Reference Number 120330
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Reporting inspector Mrs Pauline Allison HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 4-15	Published 22 March 2007	Reference no. 296884
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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 Grange School is an approved, residential special school, established in 1976 for up to 85 boys aged between eight and 16 years of age. There are currently 77 pupils on the roll of the school, including, with permission, one Year 3 pupil. All the pupils have a statement of special educational need to address their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many pupils have additional learning difficulties. Acorn Care and Education acquired the school in January 2005 and, among other reforms, has managed a programme of significant staff changes since December 2006. Most of the school's facilities are at Knossington, a rural setting in Leicestershire. There are also residential facilities, and teaching of life skills, for Key Stage 4 students in Oakham. The school aims to promote the healthy physical and emotional development of all pupils through a balanced, progressive and responsive approach to education, care and therapy. The school was last inspected in 2001.

Evaluation of the school

The Grange School provides a satisfactory quality of education, with some good features. It largely meets its aims. The school takes good care of its pupils and has their academic and emotional welfare at heart. It is currently in a period of considerable change. However, the committed school staff and the proprietors are aware of what needs to be done, both to meet the regulations for inspection, and to embed and further develop the good work currently in place. The school meets many of the requirements for the quality of education and care of the pupils.

Quality of education

The quality of education is satisfactory. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which is reasonably broad and balanced, supported by a curriculum statement and a range of schemes of work, which are currently being redrafted. The school is considering how to further develop the curriculum in all key stages. Although a modern foreign language used to be taught, there is at present no provision for this. The school does not provide access to the speech therapy which is required in some pupils' statements. Prior to their placement at the school many pupils have had long periods of non attendance, and the

curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on the development of basic skills, including literacy and numeracy. The older students benefit from careers education with well planned opportunities for work experience. A growing number of older students also have access to local college places, particularly for vocational courses such as construction, engineering and animal care. The wider curriculum, which is linked well to the residential settings, includes good opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting and outward-bound experiences.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some that is good. Most teachers plan activities carefully. In the better lessons teachers make good use of key words, and demonstrate their clear subject knowledge, for example when teaching specific skills in physical education (PE). There is good pace and variety in presentation in these lessons, and pupils' interest is sustained, for example when pupils examine the heart and lungs of a pig with a mixture of fascination and horror. Most teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and are calm and consistent in their approach. Teaching assistants, many of whom have been very recently appointed, provide good support for pupils, although this is not often clearly set out in lesson plans. Where teaching is less effective this is because work is insufficiently planned to meet the age and learning needs of the pupils or does not extend their knowledge. Examples of this are when pupils are copying or colouring, or when students are inappropriately placed in a lesson. There is too much dependence on work sheets in some classes. In some cases there is insufficient appropriate computer hardware and software to sustain pupils' interest and, as a result, behaviour deteriorates. Work is marked regularly with encouraging comments but there is little marking which tells pupils what they need to do next to improve. The school does not have a clear policy regarding homework and this is a concern to a number of parents.

The school does not have a system for assessment which allows staff to systematically record and track pupils' progress over time. The school is aware that, although it uses the National Curriculum levels of attainment, it does not use sub levels consistently nor does it make detailed assessments of pupils who are not yet working within these levels. Although pupils have well written individual education plans these are not reviewed frequently enough. On a day to day basis pupils feel that they know how well they are doing because staff tell them. In lessons pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work suggests progress is satisfactory but the lack of a tracking system means that the school is not able to demonstrate that it is better than this. Many pupils come into the school with low levels of basic skills. Reading tests are carried out annually and many boys record scores below their chronological age. The school provides regular additional support for these pupils and is building up its resources to meet their needs. Students who are entered for external examinations at Key Stage 4 are particularly successful in PE and a few

individual students achieve particularly well. There is no central recording or analysis of these results.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils have some opportunities to consider spiritual issues and to reflect in assemblies. The school and residential provision have recently focused on raising pupils' understanding of the spiritual and cultural dimensions of other faith groups. This is seen in some lively displays. The school's expectations for behaviour are more strongly promoted for pupils in the younger age groups, for example in classroom displays. As a result, these pupils are clear about their role in meeting these expectations. The well managed meal times provide good opportunities to develop pupils' social skills and there is a varied programme of activities, as well as time to relax, in the residences. Pupils engage in some activities connected to the local village and church. They also undertake fund raising events, for example for Comic Relief. The pupils are appreciative of the good range of activities provided, including opportunities to take part in a range of sports and trips, including residential trips.

There are a number of recent initiatives to promote pupils' personal development. The school offers counselling for individual pupils, and work is in progress to create an environment that broadens and more clearly promotes the therapeutic aspects of the school's work. The recently introduced reward system is showing positive outcomes in motivating pupils in their behaviour and personal development. The positive relationships between staff and pupils help to maintain the good behaviour of the pupils. There is a good system for supervising and supporting pupils who are unable to cope in lessons. However, the attendance of older students is not good enough and the school is introducing a system to monitor this more carefully. There is a school council but pupils do not have many other opportunities to take responsibility in school, and many say they would like to be more involved in decision making. There are better opportunities in the residences for pupils to undertake tasks and self care.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is good. Staff take good care of the pupils and the handover between school and residential staff is thorough.

Where there are incidents, these are thoroughly recorded, including those involving physical intervention. The new staff group have all had recent training on child protection and pupils feel safe and are confident to speak to an adult if

they have concerns. A large number of staff hold First Aid qualifications and there is a school nurse. The good quality food provided promotes making healthy choices, and there are good opportunities for exercise. Pupils learn about drugs awareness and wider safeguarding issues in their personal, social and health education lessons. Although the school plans carefully for trips and undertakes thorough risk assessments, these procedures are not written in one policy which makes these arrangements clear. The school completes an admissions register except that it does not refer to pupils' previous placements. The school has given consideration to the Disability Discrimination Act (2002) but it has not yet drawn up a three year accessibility plan.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school carries out most checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. However it does not always ensure medical suitability or take up all references when appointing staff.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is located in a delightful rural setting with impressive grounds. Five separate buildings are used for residential purposes, and two of these also have additional teaching accommodation. The Grange provides the main school accommodation and the White Gables site houses the classroom block for the younger pupils. The residential accommodation is of a particularly good standard. School buildings are well maintained and the classrooms are adequate to meet the needs of the education provided. The gymnasium is satisfactory but in need of some refurbishment. There are insufficient washrooms and toilets for both pupils and staff at the White Gables school site.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Although the newly designed school brochure contains extensive information about the ethos and work of the school, the detail generally fails to ensure that parents, prospective parents and local authorities are provided with all the information required by the regulations, as well as that which should be made available upon request. Parents are provided with an annual report on their child's progress as part of pupils' annual reviews. However, the structure and presentation of these reports does not help easy reading and understanding.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a written complaints policy but this fails to meet almost all of the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure where pupils have a statement of special educational need, that the education provided fulfils its requirements (paragraph 1(2)(e))
- put in place a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from such assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DfES guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (reference HSPV2) (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- maintain an admission register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff carry out appropriate checks to confirm their medical fitness and verify their references (paragraph 4(c) and 4(d)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

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- provide particulars of the school's address and telephone number and the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6(2)(a))
 - provide the address and telephone number of registered or principal office of the proprietor (paragraph 6(2)(b))
 - provide particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
 - provide particulars of the educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of SEN (paragraph 6(2)(f))
 - make clear to parents and prospective parents that they can request the following information:
 - particulars of the curriculum (paragraph 6(2)(g))
 - particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
 - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
 - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
 - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).
 - 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 in respect of pupils who are wholly or partly funded by the local authority (paragraph 6(7)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that:
 - the complaints procedure is available on request to parents of pupils and prospective pupils (paragraph 7(b))
 - the complaints procedure sets out clear timescales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 7(c))
 - the complaints procedure provides for a formal complaint to be made in writing if parents are not satisfied with the response to an informal complaint (paragraph 7(e))

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- if the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f))
 - where there is a panel hearing of a complaint there is provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g))
 - the procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
 - the complaints procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and the procedure stipulates that the complainant, proprietors and headteachers, and, where relevant, the person complained about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i))
 - the procedure provides for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))
 - the procedure provides that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development:

- provide an opportunity for pupils of secondary age to learn a modern foreign language.

School details

Name of school	The Grange Therapeutic School
DfES number	855/6010
Unique reference number	120330
Type of school	Special
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1976
Age range of pupils	8-16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 77
Number of boarders	Boys: 76
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 77
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 14
Annual fees (day pupil)	£46,170
Annual fees (boarders)	£61,560
Address of school	Knossington Oakham Leicestershire LE15 8LY
Telephone number	01664454264
Fax number	01664454234
Email address	office@knossington.rutland.sch.uk
Headteacher	Mr Bob Batten
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education
Reporting inspector	Mrs Pauline Allison HMI
Dates of inspection	27-28 February 2007