

Springboard Education Junior

Independent Special School

Inspection report

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| DCSF Registration Number | 846/6050 |
| Unique Reference Number | 135180 |
| Inspection number | 318156 |
| Inspection dates | 19-20 September 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Greg Sorrell AI |

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).

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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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Springboard Education Junior provides education for pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is located in a building that was once a church hall in a residential street not far from the centre of Brighton. A nursery uses the basement level but the entrance is not shared. The proprietors took over the premises in December 2005 and gained registration in June 2006. This is the school's first inspection.

The school is registered for up to eight pupils between the ages of 7 and 13. There are currently two pupils on roll, one of whom is looked after; both have a statement of special educational needs relating to emotional, social and behavioural difficulties or other behavioural needs. The school's stated purpose is to bridge the gap between home and school and reintegrate the pupils into a supportive learning environment.

Evaluation of the school

Springboard Junior Education provides a satisfactory quality of education. The teaching and the curriculum have significant strengths but evident weaknesses in planning for significant amounts of taught time. The school is successful in enabling the pupils to improve their behaviour, which is satisfactory. The pupils' progress and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also satisfactory. The referring local authority holds a positive view of what the school provides. The attention given to the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school meets most of the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of education is satisfactory. The school aims to address the pupils' emotional and academic needs and support integration into identified and assessed appropriate long-term provision. The focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and their improved attendance at school enable the pupils to make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics.

The satisfactory curriculum is supported by appropriate schemes of work based on the National Curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 to 3. The academic curriculum is taught in the mornings. English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology lessons are well planned and take good account of the pupils' prior attainment. Other subjects are often taught through topics and appropriate assessments are made. In the afternoons, pupils take part in a wide range of activities that include creative arts, games and visits to places of local interest. Whilst the afternoon programme provides potentially appropriate activities, their status as learning experiences within the school's full-time curriculum cannot be readily evaluated due to an absence of written planning, clear objectives and formal assessment.

The curriculum does not fully meet the requirements of some pupils' statements of special educational needs, for example, in relation to their entitlement to the National Curriculum, there is no provision for a modern foreign language at Key Stage 3, and insufficient specialist support for pupils with identified speech and language difficulties.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and it has some strong features. In response to the pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs strong emphasis is given to encouraging them to manage their own behaviour, gain self-esteem and take pride in their achievements. Staff know their pupils well, serve as excellent role models and are instrumental in ensuring strong relationships within the school community. They have a significant impact in supporting the pupils' behavioural needs. When difficulties occur teachers and assistants employ their experience, knowledge of the pupil and relevant training well to ensure that disruption to learning is kept to a minimum. The significant attention given to the pupils' emotional, social and behavioural development is effective. Staff use a range of motivational systems that reward good behaviour. These are clearly understood and strongly valued by the pupils. The pupils make good progress in their attitudes to learning and increasingly show a willingness to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Teachers mark pupils' written work and give regular verbal feedback to help the pupils to know how to improve, resulting in satisfactory progress in their learning. Assessment of individual pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is good. However, as a result of the lack of planning for afternoon lessons, assessment is weaker in those subjects.

Formalised self-evaluation procedures have not yet been developed to assist the school in judging its overall effectiveness. For example, systematic tracking of pupils' progress over time is at an early stage. Similarly, the school does not survey parents, carers and other agencies about how well they work together.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory overall. The promotion of the pupils' economic well-being, enjoyment and achievement and an emphasis on the importance of working with others are firmly embedded in the school day.

They make good progress in developing an awareness of themselves and of acceptable behaviour; their own behaviour is satisfactory. This is a result of good counselling and positive role modelling by staff. The pupils play an active role in the creation of their interval plans at PACT (Planning A Change Together) meetings. They reflect upon their behaviour and work towards targets designed to improve their attitudes to learning and relationships with peers and adults. Following incidents of unacceptable behaviour, they understand school procedures and resume learning. They enjoy being at school and this is reflected in their levels of attendance, which are good. They respond well to visits to and visitors from public institutions and services in England such as the police and fire services. Pupils' responses to the school's promotion of tolerance and harmony towards other cultures indicate some success and the staff acknowledge the need to continue these themes. For example, the pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of faiths in the wider community. The pupils express their views about the running of the school, although there is no formal council and few opportunities to take on roles of responsibility.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The small numbers on roll and the regard for their individual needs ensure that the pupils receive good levels of attention and supervision from staff. The school maintains very effective working relationships with external agencies to ensure the health and well-being of its pupils.

The school's policies, some of which have been subject to recent revision, are effective in promoting the pupils' health, safety and welfare in school and when on visits to the community. The supervision of pupils in school is appropriate at all times and trips out of school are supported by a comprehensive written policy and appropriate risk assessments. In food technology the pupils study the components of a healthy meal and afternoon activities often involve physical activity to encourage fitness. Arrangements for child protection are good and pupils indicate that they feel confident to talk to staff if they have problems. The school's policies for the promotion of good behaviour and administering first aid are also good. Accidents and incidents are recorded in detail, although the distinction between the two is not always clear.

Routine attention to health and safety is satisfactory. Regular fire drills have enabled the school to refine its procedures, for example, acknowledging the need to ensure

effective communication with the nursery that shares the same site. Registers of attendance and admission are well maintained. The school has drawn up an appropriate three-year plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The proprietor has appropriate safeguards to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. The staff have very relevant behavioural expertise, qualifications and experience. Staffing and recruitment procedures are informed by the most recent guidance.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are adequate. The site offers a suitable number of classrooms for its roll. The classrooms are of appropriate size for the small groups and the compact assembly area offers suitable space for the pupils to meet together. Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of all available space and display pupils' achievements and other useful information effectively. The classrooms have recently been partitioned and have no ceilings, which permits sound to travel easily across all teaching areas. Furthermore, when the newly fitted doors close, they give the impression of being slammed although this is frequently not the case.

The stage area has been converted to two rooms. One is an indoor recreation area where ball games can be played. This is adequate for small numbers of pupils although careful consideration is required when the roll is at its maximum. The other room is a small quiet area which doubles as a medical room, but is not adequate for its purpose as it lacks a wash basin. There is also a kitchen located beyond the stage. There are no outdoor play areas and pupils currently have to wait until the afternoon to go outside the school building. In support of the curriculum, good use is made of local community sports centres for games, swimming and outdoor education.

The premises are generally well maintained and are in satisfactory decorative order. The shared use of the site by the nursery is managed well and has no adverse impact on the pupils' education and welfare.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information is good. The school maintains good contact with parents and carers by regular phone calls and meetings.

The annual written progress reports provide good information about improvements in academic work as well as pupils' behaviour and personal development. Good information is also provided to external agencies.

The one response from a referring local authority to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated good levels of satisfaction with the information received. The school does not yet routinely seek the views of others about its effectiveness to assist self-evaluation.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints policy and its procedures for handling complaints are adequate.

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:

- provide and implement appropriate plans and schemes of work for all taught time (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure that the curriculum fulfils the requirements of pupils' statements of special educational need (paragraph 1(2)(e))
- provide well planned lessons to ensure that time is used effectively (paragraph 1(3)(c)).

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

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))
- improve sound insulation to allow effective teaching and communication (paragraph 5(o))
- ensure appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

School details

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| Name of school | Springboard Education Junior | | |
| DCSF number | 846/6050 | | |
| Unique reference number | 135180 | | |
| Type of school | Special | | |
| Status | Independent | | |
| Date school opened | December 2005 | | |
| Age range of pupils | 7-13 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | Boys: 2 | Girls: 0 | Total: 2 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need | Boys: 2 | Girls: 0 | Total: 2 |
| Number of pupils who are looked after | Boys: 1 | Girls: 0 | Total: 1 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £24,000 | | |
| Address of school | St Wilfred's Upper Hall 39 Wipperingham Road Brighton BN2 3PF | | |
| Telephone number | 01273 885109 | | |
| Fax number | 01273 885109 | | |
| Email address | springboard.brighton@ntlworld.com | | |
| Headteacher | Ms Elizabeth Freeman | | |
| Proprietor | Mr Jeremy Stuart Cross | | |
| Reporting inspector | Greg Sorrell AI | | |
| Dates of inspection | 19-20 September 2007 | | |