

# Freyburg School (Keys Child Care)

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	891/6022
Unique Reference Number	134649
Inspection number	320740
Inspection dates	21-22 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Trevor Watts 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).

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## 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

Freyburg School is situated at two units in north Nottinghamshire. These are 'Poppies' at Babworth and 'Duncan Wood' at Carburton. Each admits a maximum of four boys aged from 11 to 16 who are in local authority (LA) care because of their severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are all White British, and may come from any part of England. Each school unit shares its site with a residential home in which the pupils live. Through social, educational and work-related activities, the school aims to help pupils to become active, sociable and valuable members of society.

The school has not been inspected since February 2005, when it opened and the initial registration visit was made. Recent changes in proprietor resulted in staff changes, loss of teaching expertise and documentation, and closure of some premises. The new proprietary company has very recently begun to make changes, such as the introduction of a new curriculum, three new teaching assistants and a new prospectus. Many documents, however, are common to the group, and have not yet been adapted to this particular school and the specific needs of its pupils.

## Evaluation of the school

The quality of the educational provision at Freyburg School is satisfactory, with a curriculum that is appropriate for the needs of the pupils, despite the many recent changes. The teaching and assessment are satisfactory, although there is only one teacher in each unit. The provision for pupils' welfare and safeguarding is good. Pupils' social development is satisfactorily provided for, and their behaviour is satisfactory. Most, but not all, of the regulations are met.

## Quality of education

The overall quality of the educational provision is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory because the selection and balance of subjects is appropriate for the overall needs of the pupils. It is, however, undergoing significant adjustment. This is partly because of the major staff changes, and consequent loss of expertise in areas such as English, mathematics and physical education. It is also because of the introduction of a new curriculum policy with several new schemes of work, which teachers have not had time to implement and work from. There is a sound emphasis on English and mathematics, and this is reinforced effectively in the other subjects

that are often taught as multi-subject topics or projects. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is good, as is that for citizenship. Work-related learning is also planned and taught well, including visits away from school to, for instance, a job centre, reference library and the Connexions service. Pupils also have 'enrichment' activities that vary each term, such as climbing or kayaking. Several pupils work towards nationally recognised qualifications, including GCSE English, mathematics and Preparation for Work, and the Assessment and Qualifications Authority Unit Awards. Previously, pupils were able to study for awards through the Award Scheme Development and Assessment Network, but these ended with the loss of staff. There is scope to extend the range of nationally recognised courses as staff expertise increases and broadens, whether through the planned expansion of staffing or through training. The statement of special educational need for one pupil is not up to date, and thus it is not possible to judge if the curriculum meets any specific or different needs the pupil may have. In all other respects, the curriculum is appropriate for the needs of all pupils.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory because teachers base their lesson planning solidly on their assessment of pupils' continuing progress. They have positive relationships with their pupils, but the range and level of subject expertise is limited, with only one teacher in each unit. Lessons run at a good and challenging pace when teachers are confident of their subject knowledge. When they are not so confident, the pace of lessons tends to decline, as does pupils' behaviour. This has been made worse until very recently by the lack of classroom support staff. Teachers mark work and talk with pupils in a positive way that helps to guide their future learning. However, the targets that pupils have in their academic work are too broad to be useful in day-to-day learning. Lessons at the beginning of each day often start late, as pupils do not always arrive punctually, or are very unsettled when they come in. Teachers are generally good at managing pupils' behaviour, but sometimes there is a lack of consistency in the level of poor behaviour they tolerate. School leaders are aware of this, and of areas in which greater staff subject knowledge is desirable. There are advanced plans for increased staff training and recruitment. Three classroom support staff began during the week of the inspection, but it is too soon to judge their roles or their effect on behaviour and learning.

Pupils make satisfactory progress. It is better than their previous rate of learning, as most pupils did not attend schools for long periods prior to their admission at Freyburg School. The attendance of a minority of pupils continues to be poor, however, and their progress is inadequate. Pupils who attend regularly make satisfactory progress in the basic academic subjects and in their behaviour and attitude to learning. They develop a satisfactory attitude to each other and the adults around them. They are prepared to work towards qualifications and work-related skills, and the progress made by a minority of pupils is good in these respects.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory because the teaching and curriculum are sharply focused on developing this area, but the recent upheavals in staffing, accommodation and the curriculum have led to a diminished impact in terms of pupils' responses. This is seen particularly in pupils' attendance, which has fallen from 88 per cent to 58 per cent since September 2007, and is currently poor. Pupils derive satisfactory enjoyment from their education, especially in lessons that are practical, active or work-related. They make good progress in learning work-related skills, such as taking part in an interview, dressing appropriately and being realistic about job choices, all of which helps prepare for their future lives and economic well-being. The school builds up pupils' self-esteem and confidence well, and encourages them to recognise right from wrong and to behave responsibly. The school satisfactorily helps pupils understand their own culture, and to appreciate differences in other cultures through lessons in art, geography, and food technology, for example, and through visits to places of interest such as a mosque. Pupils' behaviour overall is satisfactory, although it varies according to the subject of a lesson, or what has happened the previous evening, for instance. Although the school provides good guidance and information on public services and institutions, there are too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility or to contribute positively to their own community, or the wider community. Plans to develop this aspect by starting a school council, helping at an old people's home and volunteering at a wildlife centre have been delayed by the continuing changes in the school.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Strategies to safeguard pupils are effective and this aspect of the school's work is good. There are thorough procedures and policies that staff are well aware of. During recent times of change, it has been necessary to use staff from the residential homes as extra classroom support. This need is now diminishing as new staff have been employed to ensure full supervision at all times by education personnel. The school encourages a healthy lifestyle and diet. Smoking by pupils is discouraged, and there are regular opportunities for a good range of physical exercises and activities, although pupils are not always willing as they find the early rises difficult.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff are checked for their suitability to work with children according to the most recent regulations, and good records are maintained in a single central register. Hitherto, the school has relied on checks made by an agency to verify the status of supply staff, and has not previously checked their identity on arrival at the school. These matters are now in hand to render checks more secure.

## School's premises and accommodation

The premises are satisfactory. They enable pupils to learn safely and effectively in two pleasant environments that are located in rural areas. Rooms are well decorated, lit and heated, and there are adequate facilities to support learning. Although outdoor play areas on site are limited, good use is made of four leisure and sports centres in the neighbourhood for different activities. The residential homes also have leisure facilities for pupils to use in their free time at midday or in the evenings.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

This provision is satisfactory. Parents and LAs are kept informed about pupils' progress, although on rare occasions, annual reviews of statements of special educational need have not been kept up to date. The school has recently begun to publish a newsletter for parents, carers and other involved parties. Two omissions from the prospectus are being tackled, concerning information about pupils' attainment and details of staff.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has thorough procedures that are fully compliant with all of the regulations.

## 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 that all pupils with a statement of special educational need have their statements reviewed annually, in order to ensure that their specific needs are fulfilled by the curriculum (paragraph 1(2)(e)).

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

- obtain written Criminal Records Bureau clearance for supply staff prior to their arrival at the school, and check their identity when they first begin at the school (paragraph 4A(1-8)).

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

- provide particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- provide particulars of the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

## 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:

- strengthen the curriculum by extending opportunities for pupils both to gain external qualifications and to make a positive contribution to the community as part of their personal development.

## School details

Name of school	Freyburg School (Keys Child Care)		
DCSF number	891/6022		
Unique reference number	134649		
Type of school	Special School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	February 2005		
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 4	Girls: 0	Total: 4
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,000		
Address of school	Poppies Education Unit Greenmile Lane Babworth Nottinghamshire DN22 8JM		
Telephone number	01777 709061		
Fax number	01302 718210		
Email address	poppiesschool@sedgemoor.net		
Headteacher	Mr John McGill		
Proprietor	Keys Child Care		
Reporting inspector	Trevor Watts AI		
Dates of inspection	21-22 February 2008		