

# Kites Independent School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	882/6053
Unique Reference Number	134940
Inspection number	322269
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Karin Heap

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

The Kites Independent School is a special school for a maximum of six boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties which are related to the severe challenges they have experienced, leading to break down in schooling and family life. There are currently three boys on roll; all students are looked after and placed here currently by two local authorities. The school is located in the centre of Leigh-on-Sea and is part of Kites Children's Services Ltd., which caters for different aspects of the needs of adolescent males.

The school was last inspected in November 2005, the school has since moved to a new site which opened in January 2007.

The school aims to provide: *"a learning environment which will enable students to have a full range of educational activities, both within the school and the wider community, within a supportive framework involving encouragement, therapy, self-awareness and discipline."* This is based on the philosophy that: *"despite their difficulties all students have the potential to become fully active, productive and safe members of the wider community, with positive and meaningful roles to play."*

## Evaluation of the school

Kites Independent School is a good school where students have opportunities to build positive relationships with adults and peers. The school meets most of the regulations and the quality of the provision is good. There is consistently good teaching and focussed assessment and monitoring to ensure all students make good and often very good progress. Arrangements for the welfare of students are satisfactory because not all regulations are met with regard to health and safety policies and practice. Provision of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good; staff are fully committed to supporting students and their parents/carers. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good and offers pupils a very relevant and meaningful range of activities leading to formal qualifications whenever appropriate. The school follows a modified National Curriculum in line with its ethos and aims with a particular focus on self-reflection, therapy and practical subjects such as art, food technology and science. Good use is made of access to a flexible range of accredited courses but

some curriculum resources are basic for example in science, where additional resources would help to bring the subject matter more to life. Citizenship is not taught as a discrete subject, however basic elements are addressed through personal, social and health education (PSHE) and daily tutorials.

Opportunities for enrichment activities are restricted due to the complex social and emotional needs of students. The school gradually increases students' tolerance and ability to access outside school activities such as weekly lessons for physical education (PE) through tennis and gym sessions at the local leisure centre. Additional sporting activities are offered after school through a range of activities by the foster and/or children's homes. Visitors are gradually introduced to the school during termly social celebration afternoons which are prepared and managed by the students.

Curriculum planning is thorough and effective to meet the diverse needs of students, following the National Curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4. GCSE is taught when appropriate in English, mathematics and science. As an alternative, the school teaches to entry levels one to three in numeracy, literacy and basic skills. For lower achieving students the school teaches to Assessment and Qualifications Alliance unit awards. These are used for all subjects and students are expected to complete between 30 and 36 unit awards by the end of this academic year.

Teaching and assessment are good and all students make good progress. On entry to the school standards are below and sometimes well below that which is expected nationally. By the time students leave, their academic standards are broadly in line with what students achieve nationally. Every effort is made to re-integrate students into mainstream schools. During the past year two students achieved this after a three months placement at Kites Independent School.

The school uses a range of baseline assessment tools to identify students' abilities, including reading and spelling tests and to consider their complex social and emotional needs through detailed risk assessments. Individual learning plans are assessed and reviewed termly to closely monitor progress. Students are involved in the evaluation of their learning and performance in daily tutorials. They form very strong and trusting relationships with adults and develop a positive attitude to learning; students demonstrate outstanding progress in their personal development.

Lessons are well managed and teachers are very clear about what they expect students to learn. They know students exceptionally well and take their individual needs into consideration. They have very high expectations of students' behaviour, using a positive behaviour management approach linked to a focussed reward system which is understood and accepted by everyone. There is a good mix between formal teaching and practical hands on activities which help students to learn independently. Marking is used consistently, involving students and informing the next steps of their learning. As a consequence, students show good presentation and pride in their work.

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

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because students are well looked after and their emotional and social needs are very well met. Students have access to a range of opportunities to support cultural and spiritual development, for example during current affairs sessions in daily tutorials or in religious education and PSHE lessons. Students also learn about other people in the local and wider community when preparing for their termly celebration afternoons. Planned opportunities to acquire a broad knowledge of public institutions and services in England, is limited. The school recognises that a formalised citizenship curriculum would improve this area and teachers are currently developing this.

Students enjoy their learning which is demonstrated in their outstanding attendance which is nearly 100% and their good and courteous behaviour. Students are articulate and learn to make every day choices which positively affect their behaviour and learning.

Good transition and support for work related learning for students in year 11 resulted in an offer of apprenticeship for motor maintenance at a local garage. Students are well prepared for their future because of the strong focus on literacy and spelling across all subjects, as a consequence students have made outstanding progress in their writing skills.

Students make a positive contribution to the school through their good behaviour and attitudes. They support each other and take responsibility for their behaviour and communication between school and home. Roles and responsibilities are developing steadily as students' confidence grows.

Students would welcome more formal opportunities to reflect on their views about the school. Informally however, their views are heard during tutorials and when proprietors visit, which is on a regular basis.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Students' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory and staff ensure that students feel safe and are well looked after; they have an appropriate awareness of healthy living and keeping safe. Students are offered fruit and juice at break time and bring to school healthy lunches. Students have weekly PE lessons and they show good understanding of how to live healthily.

Procedures for health and safety have improved since the last inspection. The school has employed a health and safety consultant who oversees all policies and procedures in school, however some of the procedures for health and safety are not clearly written down and made available to staff. As a consequence, staff are unsure and implementation is therefore inconsistent. The school uses a range of risk assessments to ensure safety and security of the building. Detailed risk assessments

of students' behaviour and social and emotional well being ensure they receive appropriate support and staff can operate safely and have good pupil knowledge to safeguard everyone in school. However, the school does not meet regulations with regard to their first aid policy and staff do not fully comply with regulations to undertake regular, up-to-date risk assessments for educational visits to reflect the complexity of the students' emotional and social needs.

The school has drawn up a three year accessibility plan for disabled pupils and complies with its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has recently reviewed its procedures for the safer recruitment of staff and meets all of the regulations in this respect.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school building is located in a small detached house in the centre of Leigh-on-Sea. It provides appropriate accommodation for its purpose and is in a tidy and clean but plain state of repair. Students have commented on the school's rather 'bland' interior and the school is due to be repainted and brightened up during the summer holidays. The play and recreation area is restricted to a small yard at the back of the building. This includes a small grass area and a picnic bench. The school compensates for this and uses the park which is five minutes away and occasionally the sea front. Students access this from time to time but this is not regularly planned for.

Class and study rooms are well lit but windows are mostly kept locked restricting ventilation especially on a warm day. Students commented on this and staff responded by unlocking and opening the windows.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides opportunities to consult with parents/carers, other professionals and local authorities three times a year through a report which describes students' work and conduct of the past term and also within termly celebration afternoons. A formal review meeting which is held annually brings together all relevant parties, including the students, to reflect on their work and plan for their future. The school has recently updated its prospectus and it now fulfils all of the requirements for information for parents and others. However, the school does not submit an annual statement of income and expenditure to the relevant authorities for funded students.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school has recently updated its complaints procedure and it now fulfils 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 pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2(d)).

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 DCSF guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (reference HSPV2). (paragraph 3(2)c))
- provide a separate written policy on first aid with clear reference to the named first aider and procedures for medical emergencies and students with medical conditions (paragraph 3(6)).

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

- for students who are registered at the school and are wholly or partly funded by the local authority, provide an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred in respect of each student, to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 6(7)).

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Teach citizenship as a discrete subject to address regulation 2(d).
- Ensure that all students when entering and leaving school are recorded on a long term, permanent admissions register.





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## School details

Name of school	Kites Independent School
DCSF number	882/6053
Unique reference number	134940
Type of school	Secondary special
Status	Independent
Date school opened	3 January 2007
Age range of pupils	13–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 3
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,678.00
Address of school	820 London Road Leigh-on-Sea Essex SS9 3NH
Telephone number	01702 483999
Fax number	01702 482599
Email address	education@kitescs.com
Headteacher	Mrs Rosie Ames
Proprietor	Mrs Roz Parsons and Mr Andre Palmer
Reporting inspector	Karin Heap
Dates of inspection	17–18 June 2008