

Grateley House School

Independent Special School

Inspection Report

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| DCSF Registration Number | 850/6058 |
| Unique Reference Number | 116588 |
| URN for Social Care | SCO12450 |
| Inspection number | 329560 |
| Inspection dates | 4–5 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Thomas Smith |
| Social care inspector | Brian M ^c Quoid |

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). The inspection of boarding was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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



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.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.

This was a light touch educational inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Grateley House School, located in the village of Grateley in Hampshire, is an independent, residential special school for students aged nine to 19 years who have Asperger's Syndrome and related autistic spectrum disorders. It is owned and managed by Cambian Education Services. Currently there are 53 students on roll, 38 boys and 15 girls, each of whom has a statement of special educational need. Of these 48 are resident. Students are placed at the school by 27 different local authorities. The school was last inspected in November 2004 and since that time has built nine new classrooms that provide specialist accommodation, including provision for science and information and communication technology (ICT). The school aims to assist students to reach their full potential by using individualised social, therapeutic and educational approaches that enable them to develop self-esteem and skills in self-advocacy and which result in a confidence to enjoy mature, positive relationships.

Evaluation of the school

In fully meeting its aims, Grateley House School provides an outstanding quality of education and boarding provision for its students. They benefit from a rich and varied curriculum, well matched to their needs, which results in them making outstanding all-round progress. The provision for students in the post-16 department is outstanding because they are enabled to fully develop their aptitudes and aspirations. This results in many going on to university or college placements. Teaching is outstanding. Where it is good these lessons also have outstanding elements. The provision and practice in behaviour management is outstanding and results in exceptionally good and improved behaviour from most students, given their original starting points. The school is led well by a very effective headteacher who brings cohesion and rigour to the practice throughout the school; in this, she is supported by an equally effective team of senior colleagues. Students are treated with respect throughout the school and by the time they leave they have matured

into young adults, well prepared to meet future challenges. Parents rightly hold the school in high regard. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and meets all the requirements for its continued registration.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. This is a similar judgement to that made by the school. All subjects of the National Curriculum are provided and within the post-16 department students benefit from a very wide choice of academic and vocational options. These are coupled with attendance at local colleges and excellent work experience opportunities, which prepare them very well for their future lives. For students up to Year 11 the curriculum is planned rigorously and is effectively matched to individual needs. The high quality of teaching further enhances this provision. The curriculum is also supplemented by unlimited access to therapy support, which includes occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and the services of a clinical psychologist. The integration of the therapy provision with the educational activities within the school and the benefit this brings to students is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

The provision for academic and social education is very well integrated, with all staff working in complementary ways that benefit students. Throughout the waking day students are fully supported. In their education as well as their social development they are sustained and challenged in equal measure and at levels appropriate to their needs. The formal curriculum is rich in diverse experiences, which add to the students' knowledge and understanding of the world and which generate their enthusiasm for learning. Visits to places of interest, such as the London Science Museum, are selected in order to supplement and extend the learning within the curriculum.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding; this has improved since the last inspection. The quality is consistently high and is further enhanced by the assistance of therapy professionals. Teaching assistants are also prominent in their support and their expertise adds to the quality of what is achieved by students in each classroom. In all lessons students are challenged in ways that stretch their levels of understanding. All teachers plan interesting and challenging lessons which take account of the individual needs of each student; because of this students' progress is outstanding. One parent wrote 'We cannot praise the school highly enough. Through the staff's expertise, our daughter has made outstanding progress.' This echoed the contributions made by other parents. The inspection endorses this view.

By the time they have completed their formal education at the school, students have achieved outcomes that, on entry, appeared unlikely. A significant number of students go on to university placements or enter prestigious colleges for the performing arts. Students' behaviour and attitudes within lessons are outstanding because they find the varied range of teaching methods to be stimulating, interesting and engaging. This leads to students achieving very well and their consequent outstanding progress. Instances of challenging behaviour are confronted consistently and sympathetically. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Excellent

resources, including sophisticated ICT provision, are used effectively and imaginatively. These add to the quality of learning achieved by students. The addition of nine new classrooms, including those for ICT, science and food technology has further enhanced the quality of teaching.

Assessment practice is outstanding. This begins with baseline information gathered about each student when they are enrolled. Subsequent formal assessment is supplemented by simpler strategies, such as good quality plenaries or simple quizzes at the end of each lesson. The technique is used in every lesson and enables the teachers to build an accurate picture of the levels of understanding for each student. The deputy headteacher uses all the data efficiently in order to assemble a view of how well, or not, individual students are performing. Areas of weakness are quickly identified and remedial measures put in place. A further outstanding element of assessment practice is the moderation of results which is undertaken with other schools within the Cambian Group. Whilst this practice is in its early stages of development, the school already compares its performance against that of schools with similar cohorts of students.

Accreditation opportunities are wide and varied and respond to students' interests. Alongside accreditation in all National Curriculum GCSE subjects, other opportunities for post-16 students have included a National Vocational Qualification in funeral directing and GCSE in philosophy.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The school judges its provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to be outstanding; the inspection endorses this. When considering their starting points, students make outstanding progress in modifying their outlooks and developing their personal qualities. Residences are of mixed gender and this contributes to students' understanding of the differing needs of girls and boys. The supportive ethos throughout the school enables students to considerably increase their self-esteem and self-confidence. This ethos is based upon positive and supportive relationships between staff and students, which result in a relaxed, though demanding, atmosphere throughout.

Students' awareness of themselves and others is promoted effectively through a very well planned and effective programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Other opportunities include fund raising activities for various charities – most notably to financially support an individual student in Sierra Leone, with whom they correspond.

Provision to raise students' cultural and multi-cultural awareness is a prominent feature. The school provides a rich range of interesting visits within Britain as well as abroad. These occur in both the school and residential settings. A diverse range of visitors is also invited to the school in order to share with the students the customs and practices of their different cultures.

The social development of students is an effective and outstanding feature of the provision. Individual education plans include targets, for some students, which encourage them to travel independently or mix in different social settings. The impact of this is seen most notably in the post-16 department, where students travel to local colleges in order to attend courses that enhance their future prospects for employment and further study.

Since the last inspection the school has broadened the provision for personal development. It is now more firmly embedded across the academic curriculum. Assemblies and subjects of the curriculum encourage students to reflect on their place in the world as well as the contributions they can make. Students clearly enjoy being at the school and are appreciative of what it does for them; some offer spontaneous comments such as, 'lessons are fun'. Attendance at lessons is very good but, where students may occasionally absent themselves, effective procedures are used to provide appropriate support.

Safeguarding students' welfare, health and safety

The inspection team agrees with the school that its provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Students are both cared for and cared about and staff are vigilant about students' welfare at all times. General procedures to ensure students' safety, such as risk assessments and fire safety measures, are fully in place and robustly applied. The presence of a registered nurse at key times ensures that students' medical needs are fully considered. Arrangements to safeguard students are rigorous and all staff are trained to appropriate levels in order to minimise potential risks to students. The procedures for the appointment of staff are carried out rigorously and the school maintains all details of these on a single register.

The school is very alert to instances of bullying and has implemented measures that take account of individual sensitivities as well as the needs of the wider community. Anti-bullying weeks have formed part of the curriculum provision, particularly within the lessons for PSHE.

Students are encouraged to take up healthy lifestyles and are given many opportunities to undertake vigorous exercise. There is nowhere that students may play indoors during inclement weather. To a large extent this weakness is ameliorated by the extensive use of local leisure facilities. Some day students expressed the view that they would welcome the opportunity to be included in some of the activities which residential students enjoy. Nutritious meals are provided, which students enjoy, and information about healthy food choices is also given within food technology lessons.

Since the last inspection the school has compiled an appropriate response to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The quality of the boarding provision at Grateley House School is outstanding. The school meets the requirements of all of the National Minimum Standards, and is judged to be outstanding in all areas. Organisation, including internal and external monitoring is a particular strength of the school, ensuring that the school operates efficiently and students are empowered and enabled to achieve positive outcomes in their lives. Since the previous inspection the school has made improvements in a number of areas. These include the provision of therapy surgeries for care staff where individual students can be discussed and further improvements to the systems in place for the overall management of medication. There has been a reduction in challenging behaviours requiring physical interventions, and the school has opened a dedicated post-16 unit within the community.

The equality and diversity in the school is outstanding. The school provides an inclusive environment for students within which they feel safe they are suitably protected, treated with respect and valued as individuals. There is a strong sense of 'community' at Grateley, with students readily identifying with the school, and extremely positive relationships existing between students and staff. Boarding accommodation at the school is of a very high standard and is well suited to the needs of students. All students are provided with single rooms within one of seven separate house bases, where they are extremely well cared for by dedicated staff teams. Students have keys to their rooms and their privacy is respected.

The school has established extremely effective systems for identifying and addressing the varied and complex needs of individual students. There is excellent provision for promoting the health and well-being of students. The physical, emotional, and mental needs of students are extremely well met by a qualified therapy team, a registered nurse, a number of staff who are first aid qualified, and visiting health professionals. There are excellent relationships with the local health services and very effective liaison with professionals in the students' home areas. There are exceptional systems in place for the management and administration of medication which are overseen by the school's nurse, and include staff who undertake specific training. Students benefit from a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education; they are provided with a nutritious and well balanced diet, and there are numerous and regular opportunities to participate in physical activities both on and off site. The school has achieved and is maintaining the 'Enhanced Healthy School Award'.

Staff at the school possess an acute awareness of safeguarding matters and receive initial, and ongoing training in relation to child protection. The school has two senior staff who are nominated Child Protection Liaison Officers, both of whom have undertaken training specific to the role. Supporting policies and procedures accord with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, and the school liaises extremely well with students' placing authorities. Excellent systems are in place for monitoring concerns relating to student welfare and the school follows procedures rigorously when child protection incidents are identified. The school also provides a safe physical environment within which there are excellent systems in place for

managing risk. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and health and safety audits take place annually.

Students 'feel safe' at the school. Bullying is not a significant issue, but does occur. There is a high awareness across the school of bullying as an issue, and a range of resources and creative strategies are employed to prevent incidents occurring, and address them if they do. Staff work extremely successfully in supporting students to develop positive behaviours, build their confidence, and acquire social skills. All staff at the school are trained in a behaviour management approach which emphasises prevention and de-escalation techniques. The frequency of physical interventions with students has been continually reduced through close monitoring. Students feel fairly treated within the school. There are clear rules and boundaries; sanctions are used infrequently and the general behaviour of students is of a very high standard.

There is excellent provision at the school for consulting with and seeking the views of students. This is integral to how the school operates. The school council operates effectively; there are house meetings and circle times held on alternating weeks within all house bases, individual key worker sessions take place weekly for all students, and students attend and contribute to their annual reviews. In addition the school regularly surveys the views of boarders on specific subjects, with bullying and food being two examples. Relationships between students and staff are extremely positive, with students being able to talk to a wide range of people across the school. This includes the independent persons who visit monthly and members of the school therapy team, to whom students can self-refer.

Staffing arrangements at the school are outstanding. All staff undertake a comprehensive induction process, there is a structured training programme overseen by a dedicated training officer, and excellent support for specific training identified by staff. The therapy team provide ongoing training for staff and hold workshops on specific topics. Staff receive regular supervision and are subject to annual appraisal. There are excellent systems across the school which facilitate communication between departments. The residential staff at the school are fully involved in implementing students' Individual Education Plan targets and play an integral and invaluable role in supporting students to develop their social skills, and in acquiring life skills.

The school operates extremely efficiently and effectively. There are established systems which support and promote good practice, and excellent processes which ensure the effective monitoring of student welfare and the school's overall operation. The school's senior management team is exceptionally experienced and well qualified, and displays a professional and committed approach to ensure the quality of care and education provided at the school is of a very high standard. In addition there is an acute awareness of the needs of students at the school, and a continuing drive to develop and improve how the school operates.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

The school meets the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools and associated regulations.

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:

- Forge links with national bodies or universities to undertake joint research projects to further increase the knowledge and understanding of Asperger's Syndrome and maintain the high standards in the school.
- Enable day students to be included in more of the out of school activities which resident students enjoy.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

| | | | |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

The quality of education

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Overall quality of education | ✓ | | | |
| How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of students | ✓ | | | |
| How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs | ✓ | | | |
| How well students make progress in their learning | ✓ | | | |

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | ✓ | | | |
| The behaviour of students | ✓ | | | |

Welfare, health and safety of students

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| The overall welfare, health and safety of students | ✓ | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|

The quality of boarding provision

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Evaluation of boarding provision | ✓ | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|

School details

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------|-----------|
| Name of school | Grateley House School | | |
| DCSF number | 850/6058 | | |
| Unique reference number | 116588 | | |
| Type of school | Residential special school for students with Asperger's Syndrome and related autistic spectrum disorders | | |
| Status | Independent | | |
| Date school opened | 1986 | | |
| Age range of students | 9-19 years | | |
| Gender of students | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll (full-time students) | Boys: 38 | Girls: 15 | Total: 53 |
| Number of boarders | Boys: 34 | Girls: 14 | Total: 48 |
| Number of students with a statement of special educational need | Boys: 38 | Girls: 15 | Total: 53 |
| Annual fees (day students) | £61,331 | | |
| Annual fees (boarders) | £122,663 | | |
| Address of school | Pond Lane Grateley Andover Hampshire SP11 8TA | | |
| Telephone number | 01264 889751 | | |
| Fax number | 01264 889212 | | |
| Email address | sue.king@cambiagroup.com | | |
| Headteacher | Mrs S King | | |
| Proprietor | Cambian Education Services | | |
| Reporting inspector | Thomas Smith | | |
| Dates of inspection | 4–5 March 2009 | | |