

# Farrow House Educational Centre

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	815/6036
Unique Reference Number	134660
Inspection number	330028
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Martyn Groucutt

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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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, the purpose of which is 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

Farrow House Education Centre is an independent special school in Scarborough. It is part of the Continuum Group and makes educational provision for young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are currently 14 enrolled students, of whom 12 have a statement of special educational needs and five are looked after by their local authority. All pupils speak English as their principal language. They have joined Farrow House after failure in mainstream and other specialist educational provision.

The centre admitted its first students in September 2003 and its last inspection was in February 2005.

## Evaluation of the school

The standard of education at Farrow House Education Centre is good and students make good educational, social and emotional progress, often from a very low baseline. The curriculum is good, and individualised to reflect the learning objectives in individual education plans and statements. The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Much of the teaching is good but current tracking systems, while containing much relevant information, are barely satisfactory. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for promoting positive behaviour is good. All staff show empathy with the students, whose behaviour can sometimes be very challenging, working hard to enable them to address the challenges they face. Nearly all regulations are met, except for three pertaining to accommodation, of which the school is aware and seeking to remedy.

## Quality of education

The overall quality of education is good. The curriculum, based clearly on the requirements of the National Curriculum, is good. It is set out in writing and schemes of work are supported by detailed long-, medium- and short-term planning. In order to better meet students' needs by creating opportunities for more sustained work in areas which interest and involve them, the curriculum is starting to become more thematic in nature. While it is too early in this transition to gauge its success, it is clear that staff have taken great care with curriculum mapping. This ensures that students still have access to the relevant areas of learning experiences, including

personal, social and health education. Since the majority of students have very broken prior education histories, with consequent gaps in core knowledge, the Centre places an emphasis on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Students also acquire increasing confidence in speaking and listening. This enables them to make good progress. Care is taken to ensure that provision contained in statements of special needs is delivered and individual education plans are reviewed regularly. Every individual lesson plan contains details of how the lesson will address individual need, supporting effective learning pitched at the correct level for each student. There is very good support from a dedicated Connexions officer and careers education features as a discrete element in the curriculum. The recent introduction of link courses, effectively supported by Centre and college staff, supports enhanced vocational education and promotes preparation for life post-school and into adulthood.

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Much teaching is good and none less than satisfactory, very well supported by the learning support assistants. As a result, students acquire new knowledge and make good progress, gaining confidence and social skills together with academic knowledge. Lessons are planned with care, addressing the needs of individuals, encouraging participation and using time available to good effect. Teachers know their students very well and through a combination of regular assessments and the collection of samples of work they are able to monitor progress. However, this process is currently very 'paper heavy' and it is not easy to see 'at a glance' progress across different subject areas, either for individuals or for the school as a whole. As a result, staff do not have a clear picture of the progress and achievement of individual students or of the cohort as a whole. Students' work is assessed regularly and, at its best, marking gives good help and advice on how work might be improved. Rooms and stairways display students' work, supporting the creation of a positive learning environment.

Teachers demonstrate appropriate subject knowledge, coupled with commitment and dedication to the school and its students, with whom they show a good level of empathy. As a result students are able to grow socially and emotionally as well as academically, while staff give very good support and encouragement in addressing their individual needs and behaving responsibly.

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

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A very real strength is the way in which the school supports its students, so that over time they demonstrate increasing elements of self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. There is a stress on encouraging students to take responsibility for their behaviour and understanding the consequences of their actions. This includes promoting an ability to distinguish right from wrong and understanding why it is necessary to obey rules and laws. This is sometimes not easy for students who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, but staff persist and their patient yet determined approach helps students to make good progress in these areas. Citizenship

education, including knowledge of public institutions and services, is covered within the curriculum. Opportunities are taken to help students gain knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures. Assemblies provide an effective focal point for discussions that involve the whole school community, creating an effective avenue for positive discussion. For example, each Thursday each student contributes their thoughts on some aspect of how they have participated in an activity linked to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.

Students say they enjoy attending the Centre and that they gain an increasing understanding of the ways in which it supports their development. This includes supporting their future economic well-being and their ability to make a positive contribution, both in the Centre and in the wider community. For example, students respond positively to opportunities to participate in charity events such as 'Children In Need'.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for welfare, health and safety is good and a range of written policies are implemented. Where appropriate the Centre is supported by the expertise of the Continuum Group. Clear procedures seek to deter bullying and to safeguard students through the careful recruitment of staff, both areas taking the latest advice of the Department for Children, Schools and Families into account. There is a current fire certificate, equipment is checked regularly and a log maintained of practice evacuations. First aid procedures and policy are published and meet requirements, including details for administering medicines, which are properly maintained in a locked cabinet. There are qualified first-aiders on the staff. When outside visits are arranged there are clear procedures for undertaking risk assessments of the venue and for the students involved, which are logged.

The head teacher is also the child protection coordinator. She has recently updated her training, as have all the staff. The importance of child protection is covered in the well-planned staff induction, as are procedures for restraint which is sometimes used as a last resort. All such incidents, as well as incidents when sanctions are imposed, are recorded. Students are always supervised closely because of the nature of their difficulties, though this is done in a positive and friendly way that encourages good relationships between adults and young people.

The school has prepared the required three year plan under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 to improve access to the premises.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Continuum Care, as the proprietor, meets all the regulations. The effective single central register includes enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, confirmation of identity, the right to work, employment history, medical fitness, character references

and qualifications. Only when all these have been satisfactorily confirmed are staff allowed to work with students.

## School's premises and accommodation

While the current premises in a large centrally sited town house are satisfactory, the Education Centre has been looking for new accommodation that will enable it to extend its range of provision, particularly for delivering vocational education courses. While there are specialist rooms for art and for information and communication technology, with other classrooms being of a satisfactory size for general lessons, there are wider difficulties. The current premises do not have on-site provision of play space or facilities for physical education so the school has to make off-site provision, which is not always easy or satisfactory. While this search has gone on, standards of decoration and flooring have deteriorated and there is a realisation that if a move cannot be made in the near future that steps will have to be taken to address them. Regulations except those pertaining to these issues and to play space are all met.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The Education Centre meets all the regulations and has close and effective relationships with placing authorities and parents. As well as outlining the provision and support that is available, the Centre's brochure also establishes that published policies are available on request.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures meet the regulations and are available on request.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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

- upgrade the current standard and maintenance of decoration (paragraph 5(q))
- improve the condition of some floor covering (paragraph 5(s))
- make appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for students to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- devise more effective ways of demonstrating the progress and achievement of individual students and the whole school across all subject areas and over time
- continue to seek alternative premises that might better support curriculum developments, particularly for vocational courses and physical education.

## Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

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

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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## School details

Name of school	Farrow House Educational Centre		
DCSF number	815/6036		
Unique reference number	134660		
Type of school	Special day school for pupils with severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1 September 2003		
Age range of pupils	9-16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll	Boys: 11	Girls: 3	Total: 14
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 10	Girls: 2	Total: 12
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 4	Girls: 1	Total: 5
Annual fees	£31,917 - £36,552		
Address of school	19 Alma Square Scarborough North Yorkshire YO11 1JR		
Telephone number	01723 350750		
Fax number	01723 350750		
Email address	Anne.wood@farrowhouse.co.uk		
Headteacher	Ms Anne Wood		
Proprietor	The Continuum Group		
Reporting inspector	Martyn Groucutt		
Dates of inspection	13–14 November 2008		