

Wings School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	901/6053
Unique Reference Number	134191
Inspection number	330029
Inspection dates	24 - 25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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.

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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 Wings School is a secondary-aged residential school for boys and girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school, which is part of Wings Educational Limited, is located in Whasset, Cumbria on a 24 acre site that is being developed further to include a new indoor sports facility and improved residential accommodation for older pupils. The school opened in April 2003 and currently has 43 pupils on roll, 35 of whom have a statement of special educational need. The pupils come from local authorities covering almost all geographical parts of the United Kingdom. It currently provides full-time 52 weeks residential care for 34 of its children. The school's ethos is to create a centre of excellence for the education, care and personal development of young people with emotional, behaviour and social difficulties. The school's educational provision was last inspected in June 2004.

Evaluation of the school

Wings is providing an overall good quality of education, with a number of outstanding features. Pupils make good progress in their learning, but achieve outstanding progress overall in their all-round personal development. The vast majority of pupils benefit from working with dedicated and caring staff, all of whom respond very positively to the varying needs of the pupils. The quality of this support is helping the pupils to develop their self-esteem and self worth, and many are achieving well in relation to their prior achievements in their previous schools. The school has made excellent progress since the previous inspection and now meets all regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good overall, with some outstanding features. The school's curriculum policy outlines a clear rationale for the range of expected National Curriculum subjects at both key stages. Time allocations are appropriate, and there is a good overall balance to the range of subjects taught throughout the school. There is good coverage of basic literacy and numeracy skills, which is helping the pupils to improve their reading, writing and spelling and is contributing to the good progress in their learning. There are good links with a number of external partners, including Connexions personal advisers and other organisations, which enable the pupils to develop and appreciate the world of work and aspects of life

outside of school. The range of additional activities, particularly in sport, greatly enhances the learning experiences and achievements of the pupils. Leisure activities in the residences are planned to meet the needs of the young people and involve links with community groups such as cadets, local football teams and horse riding. Staff are appropriately aiming to develop these activities as unsupervised out of residence events, as an aid to developing the greater independence of the children.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment are good. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good in all lessons because of the very effective management and organisation of the pupils. The use of additional in-class adult support works extremely well, and ensures that there is always an adult who can respond quickly to any queries or questions posed by the pupils. Teachers' planning is satisfactory overall. There is a general consistency to the planning format used by teachers, but the range and quality of this varies in its usefulness to aid effective teaching. Where it is most effective, teachers' planning indicates clearly what will be taught and what individual pupils will be expected to learn. In these lessons, teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is most accurate because of the clarity in learning outcomes. However, not all lesson plans contain this level of detail, especially in relation to what pupils will learn, or what personal behavioural or social skills they need to develop in order to overcome some of their learning difficulties. Consequently, the accurate measurement of progress in those lessons becomes more difficult for the teachers. Post-lesson evaluation of the impact of the lesson on pupils' learning also varies in quality and helpfulness as an aid to future planning and provision. Schemes of work are satisfactory, but some give too much emphasis to what the teacher will do rather than what the pupils will learn in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers are regularly collecting information about the pupils' attitudes and general behaviour in lessons, which is shared as an aid to motivating the pupils. More formal methods of collecting periodic assessment data are used effectively to monitor the progress of the pupils during their time at the school.

Although the standards achieved by the pupils are below those seen nationally, relative to the pupils' starting attainment at the school the overall academic progress is good for the vast majority; for the children in care it is outstanding. However, when combined with improved attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning, pupils are making outstanding progress in their all-round personal development during their time at the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is outstanding. Attendance, for example, is outstanding, with very little recorded unauthorised absence.

Pupils' moral and social development is developed positively through the work of the school, particularly in the way that pupil achievement is seen in terms of good work

and effort, and good behaviour. Pupil rewards include accreditation in basic skills and other learning areas, which helps to develop a sense of positive self-esteem and personal worth. These also help to integrate the pupils into school by encouraging a sense of achievement in all that they do. This system of recognising and celebrating individual success is well understood and appreciated by the vast majority of pupils. The pupils know very clearly what is expected of them in lessons, and when moving about the school and the residential site more generally. Staff are skilled in using a range of strategies to engage the pupils in lessons. A calm and consistent approach to behaviour management, together with the pupils' understanding and acceptance of school rules, contributes to the outstanding behaviour shown by the overwhelming majority in school and in the residential accommodation. Such creditable behaviour is best seen in the manner and attitudes displayed when given independent learning tasks in lessons, and when moving from the residences to the school at the start of the day. On those occasions where a pupil's behaviour is inappropriate, the response from staff is prompt and most often successful in resolving the issue and refocusing the young person back on the task at hand. The pupils appreciate the very good adult support provided in lessons, when there is always an adult with whom they can talk about any aspect of their work.

Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good overall. The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for the pupils to appreciate their own and others' cultures through studies in history and religious education. The personal, social and health education programme also makes a good contribution to teaching pupils about aspects of contemporary society, including areas such as sex and relationships, drugs education and family life. The citizenship curriculum is helping the pupils to gain a greater insight into the judiciary, democracy, the media and the system of national government and the law. Together with work-related opportunities in Years 10 and 11, this is helping to give the pupils an appreciation of the world of work and life outside of school.

The overwhelming majority of pupils indicated to inspectors that they enjoy school. The opportunities for greater involvement in decision-making activities has improved since the previous inspection, with further work being targeted through accredited 'independent learning' courses. However, a significant number of students responding to the inspection questionnaire felt that homework was not really contributing enough at this time to their learning in school.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school's measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, including child protection, are good. The overall quality of pupils' personal supervision in lessons, and when moving about the school or the site more generally is very effective; with staff applying well known school rules consistently and fairly.

Throughout the school, adults actively encourage the development of pupils'

physical, emotional and social well-being. The quality of this all-round support is helping the pupils adapt well to the combined demands of school and residential life. Procedures for safeguarding the pupils are well known and well adhered to by all adults who work in the school. All required checks on staff's appropriateness to work with young people conform fully with all statutory requirements. Expectations of appropriate behaviour are clear and suitably informed by school policies and procedures. As a result of consistent actions by staff, the pupils know clearly what is expected of them in respect of their attitudes to other pupils and staff in all aspects of their life at school. Policies on health and safety, bullying, discipline and first aid show sensitivity and awareness of the varying needs of the pupils, all of whom have previously shown difficulties in adapting to the traditions of regular schooling. The school's promotion of healthy living, including curricular work in personal, social and health education is good. There are very good opportunities for pupils of all ages to engage in regular exercise both in and out of school. Safety checks on fire fighting equipment comply fully with requirements, with safety notices and fire exit routes from the school building displayed clearly in all buildings. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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:

- ensure that all teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their lessons in terms of pupils' learning and progress
- develop greater consistency in the quality of lesson planning and ensure that all staff indicate more precisely what pupils will learn in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding.

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	Wings School		
DCSF number	9016053		
Unique reference number	134191		
Type of school	Secondary residential special school for boys and girls with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	April, 2003		
Age range of pupils	11 - 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 22	Girls: 21	Total: 43
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 18	Girls: 17	Total: 35
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 17	Girls: 17	Total: 34
Annual fees (day pupils)	£99054-£137334.		
Address of school	Whassett Milnthorpe Cumbria LA7 7DN		
Telephone number	01539 562006		
Fax number	01539 564811		
Email address	info@wingsschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs P Redican		
Proprietor	Wings Education Limited		
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI		
Dates of inspection	24-25 September 2008		