

# Fell House School

## Independent School

### Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	9096051
Unique Reference Number	133346
URN for registered childcare and social care	SC032838
Inspection number	330031
Inspection dates	12-13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI
Social care inspector	Anne Bannister

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 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 Boarding 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.

## Information about the school

Fell House is a residential special school, situated in the centre of Grange-over-Sands. It is linked to Appletree School under the direction of the Appletree Treatment Centre. The school is registered for eight young people aged 6 to 12 years, both girls and boys. The school provides a care and education programme for pupils with severe educational, emotional and behavioural difficulties whose vulnerability requires an extremely nurturing environment. There are currently five pupils on roll, aged from 10 to 12 years, most of whom have a statement of special educational needs. The majority of pupils have experienced a disrupted education and often attain well below expected levels for their age when they arrive at the school. The school aims to 'support young children, whose lives have been severely disrupted to grow socially, emotionally and learn to cope with school' and 'to return to day schools before they reach their teenage years'. The previous inspection in education was in January 2005 and the last social care inspection was in January 2008.

## Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education. Pupils make good progress because teaching, assessment and the curriculum are good. The quality of care is also good. The school is particularly successful in helping pupils to improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning. This enables most pupils to transfer to mainstream day schools before they reach their teenage years. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in January 2005, particularly in the quality of teaching and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance learning. The information for parents and in respect of complaints procedures have improved and the school now complies with the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

The school meets most of the regulations. Boarding provision is good. The welfare of pupils is good overall. The school meets the required National Minimum Standards and exceeds a number of them.

## Quality of education

The school provides a good curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils, most of whom have statements of special educational needs for educational, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school's main emphasis is on re-engaging pupils in education because most have experienced a disrupted education in previous settings. Pupils are assessed very carefully on entry to the school and as a result, each pupil has a carefully planned personalised learning programme focused on developing basic skills and also confidence and self-esteem. Most pupils have significant gaps in their learning and often perform at a level at least two or three years below their chronological age. Individual support is provided in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that these areas of learning are re-visited to consolidate their understanding and provide a good foundation for future learning.

The school has adopted a thematic approach to learning and pupils enjoy the exciting and stimulating opportunities this provides. Pupils also enjoy opportunities to participate in drama, for example, in one lesson seen during the inspection, the pupils really enjoyed learning about anti-bullying strategies through the use of puppets and role play. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, including opportunities to learn a modern foreign language (MFL). Detailed schemes of work support teachers' planning and promote progression and continuity in learning very effectively. ICT is now taught effectively and used well to support teaching and learning in other subjects. There is a good focus on developing pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship skills, particularly through the social and emotional aspects of learning programme (SEAL) and philosophy for children. This promotes their confidence and self-esteem and provides opportunities to discuss their feelings and develop empathy with others. Outdoor education and physical education programmes are used well to motivate pupils and they particularly enjoy swimming, horse riding, kayaking and camping in the outdoors. These activities encourage pupils to take exercise and develop healthy lifestyles. Several extra-curricular activities are provided by boarding staff and these meet the needs and individual interests of boarders well. They also support with homework, for example in the development of pupils' numeracy skills through playing board games, purchasing toiletries and assisting with pocket money. The curriculum is enhanced well through a wide range of visits and visitors and particularly through involvement in a 'Children and Arts' scheme with a local theatre. This involves the actors visiting school to provide a series of workshops following on from a performance.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. Detailed records are kept of pupils' learning and behaviour and this information is used well by teachers in planning activities for pupils and determining individual learning targets. However, these learning targets are not yet fully understood by all pupils. Pupils' assessment folders include examples of their work and show the gains in their attainment over time. Teachers discuss pieces of work with the pupils and oral feedback is valuable in enabling them to understand how well they have achieved. However, there is little written marking and consequently, there are no visible rewards on each piece of

work indicating where pupils have achieved well. Good reporting systems are in place through termly and annual reports to parents and boarding staff.

Pupils' progress is good overall, bearing in mind the barriers they overcome in terms of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. They make good progress in their personal development because of the consistency of approach provided by both boarding and education staff.

Teaching and learning are consistently good. Learning intentions are shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson so they know what they are going to learn and re-visited at the end of the lesson to see how well they have achieved. There are good opportunities for speaking and listening and pupils are learning to share their views and opinions and listen to those of others through philosophy lessons and assembly times. Pupils sometimes have emotional and behavioural outbursts during lessons and good support from teachers and teaching assistants ensures that they quickly return to their work, resulting in every piece of work being completed within the session. Pupils respond well to good open questions asked by teachers and are sometimes able to maintain concentration for extended periods of time. Although some pupils find writing tasks difficult, nevertheless, they persevere and produce neat, well-presented pieces of work which are shared with boarding staff and celebrated at the end of the school day. Work provided is matched well to the individual needs of the pupils so that they experience success and pupils are encouraged to work independently where possible. Consequently, they make good progress in their learning.

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

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures, for example through religious education and opportunities to celebrate different festivals, such as Diwali. Pupils were also involved in an Indonesian Gamelan musical concert and drama workshop and thoroughly enjoyed the training sessions leading to their performance to members of the community. Pupils develop good social skills through opportunities to engage in joint activities with Appletree School, arranged by school and boarding staff, including running a mile to raise money for 'Sports Relief'. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is promoted well through assemblies, including opportunities for reflection. Their work in citizenship and visits from the police and the fire service develop their insight into the work of public institutions well. Pupils make good progress in their personal development, often from very disaffected and challenging starting points, and this is because of the high level of focus on their personal needs from both boarding and education staff. Attendance is very good, although on some occasions, pupils experience emotional difficulties which impede their ability to engage in their learning. Pupils respond very well to the structured system of rewards and 'golden time' at the end of each day is greatly valued. Behaviour in school is good overall because of the very good strategies in place to

support pupils which are consistent between school and boarding staff. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through opportunities for fundraising, for example participating in 'Children in Need' and through their activities in recycling, leading towards accreditation for the bronze 'Eco' award. They also grow their own vegetables in the garden which are then used to provide healthy meals. Pupils are prepared well for their future lives through the development of their basic skills and through the way in which they develop their self-esteem and overcome some of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. This enables them to transfer into mainstream schools.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. All the required policies and procedures are in place including those for anti-bullying, child protection and health and safety. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out including those for educational visits. There is an effective policy to deal with any allegations of bullying and these are dealt with appropriately by staff. Staff receive relevant training in child protection, fire safety procedures and first aid.

Pupils gain a good understanding and awareness of healthy lifestyles through good opportunities for exercise, for example in swimming lessons and outdoor adventurous activities, and through choosing healthy options at mealtimes. Pupils are developing their understanding of how to stay safe and avoid unnecessary dangers. Many display unsafe behaviours on entry to the school but these are managed well by staff.

The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has the majority of safeguards in place to ensure appropriate procedures for the appointment of staff. However, in respect of two boarding staff from overseas, although they have CRB checks completed by an agency, the school was unable to provide evidence during the inspection that they held evidence of their right to work in the United Kingdom and police clearance certificates from their home country. Consequently, regulations in respect of these are not currently met although the school has taken action to ensure this issue is addressed immediately.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are good. There are two good sized classrooms and additional individual teaching areas for the number of pupils on roll. The teachers and teaching assistants make good use of all the available space and there are bright and stimulating displays of pupils' achievements and work as well as other useful information to support learning. There are appropriate spaces for therapists, the educational psychologist and other professionals to use to ensure privacy and comfort for pupils. There is appropriate provision to cater for pupils who are ill during the school day. The premises are well maintained and in good decorative order. The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils.

There is limited space for outdoor play with a small hard surfaced area and a small garden. However, good use is made of local facilities and play areas including a local church hall for physical education.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and local authorities is good and meets all requirements. The school maintains good contact with parents, carers and local authorities through regular telephone calls, informative termly newsletters, review meetings and termly and annual reports on pupils' progress. The annual reviews of pupils' statements of special education needs are good.

The school has a good website, shared with its sister school, Appletree School, and is a source of valuable information. There is a good prospectus and an attractive induction booklet for pupils and families which describe the provision in a child-friendly way.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints policy and procedures for handling complaints are clearly understood and meet requirements. There is an additional policy for pupils. The school has received one formal written complaint in the last year which was successfully resolved.

## Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The residential provision was judged to be good, and National Minimum Standards were met. A full report on this provision is available on application to Ofsted.

## 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 suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that police clearance certificates and evidence for the right to work in the United Kingdom (UK) for staff having lived overseas are obtained to ensure their suitability to work in a school and recorded in the single central register of staff checks (paragraphs 4(2)(a), 4(2)(c), 4(2)(e) and 4C(2 and 3)).

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve marking and pupils' understanding of their individual targets to ensure that pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their work.



# 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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## The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision		√		
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## School details

Name of school	Fell House School		
DCSF number	9096051		
Unique reference number	133346		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 2001		
Age range of pupils	6-12		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 3	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 3	Total: 4
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 2	Girls: 3	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£125,670 - £133,290		
Telephone number	01539560253		
Email address	admin@appletreeschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Rob Davies		
Proprietor	Appletree Treatment Centre Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI		
Dates of inspection	12-13 November 2008		