

3 Dimensions

Independent Special School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	933/6207
Unique Reference Number	134909
Inspection number	330282
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Thomas Smith

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.

This was a light touch educational inspection (LTI) which focussed 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

3 Dimensions School, located in rural Somerset near the small town of Chard, is an independent special school that provides for up to five male students, aged 11 to 16, with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It opened in January 2005. There is currently one full-time student on role. The school aims *'to provide a range of opportunities that enable students to make choices that are beneficial to their future lives. The work done in this regard is aimed towards mutual respect and open communication that leads to skills in forming relationships, upon which students can build in later life.'* The school was last inspected in September 2005. Since that time the school has been relocated to a different building on the same site.

Evaluation of the school

3 Dimensions School provides a satisfactory quality of education. The curriculum is good and individually planned to meet the needs of all students; it is further enhanced by a wide range of activities outside of the classroom that contribute to their education and personal development. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has declined and is now satisfactory. However, at the time of this inspection the school was awaiting the arrival of a newly appointed and qualified head teacher. The school has responded well to meet all the regulations identified as unmet by the last inspection, however the procedures for the assessment of students' progress are not as good as they formerly were. In the last 3 years the school has made considerable improvement to the school building as well as the resources available to support learning. The care of students is satisfactory and the provision for their personal and social development is a particular strength. The school successfully meets its aims.

Quality of education

The quality of education is satisfactory. The school provides a good, broad curriculum that is well matched to meet the individual needs of its students, including those with statements of special educational need. The curriculum is further enriched through the provision of outstanding opportunities to undertake

what the school describes as 'enrichment activities'; these include scuba diving and attendance at a local forest school where environmental projects are undertaken. The activities are coordinated effectively across all aspects of the provision to ensure that the additional learning consolidates the skills that students learn in the classroom. Considerable effort is made to ensure that students develop basic skills effectively that are then used in other aspects of their learning.

Students' progress is satisfactory. This is achieved from low or very low starting points and disaffection with learning. Progress is particularly good in literacy and numeracy and by the time they leave the school pupils have developed the skills needed for the next phase of their learning or employment. The latest group of students to leave the school gained bronze accreditation within the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned well and include a variety of methods that engage the attention of students, and which enable them to extend their periods of concentration. Relationships between students and staff are outstanding and this accounts, in part, for the progress made by students. Students feel relaxed enough to be able to ask questions about anything they do not understand and this enhances the rate at which they can progress, as well as increasing their self-esteem and confidence.

Assessment of students' performance is undertaken when they are admitted to the school as well as at intervals during their stay. The use of assessment during lessons is a notable feature of the teaching. The recording of the outcomes is not undertaken rigorously and the school is unable to produce statistical evidence to indicate the quality and rate of students' progress. Individual education plans are used to monitor progress, but too often these include evidence that is subjective and which cannot always be substantiated. Marking of students' work is not sufficiently effective in enabling them to improve; much of it does not include comments that enable the students to focus on making the required improvements.

Resources to support learning are very good and have been improved since the last inspection. The school is now housed in a permanent building which has been equipped to a good standard. Included in this are individual computer stations and an interactive whiteboard. Other resources also match this quality. The range of visits that support learning is purposeful and extensive and these result in work within the classroom that utilises all the basic skills that students have effectively learned.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are pleased to be at the school; they are keen to learn, proud of their achievements and their attendance is good. All staff show considerable care and concern for the students and this contributes effectively to their personal development and growing self esteem. The emphasis on mutual respect pervades all

aspects of the school and consequently the behaviour of students is good; this is also a result of the high expectations of the staff.

Students' personal development is a notable feature of the gains they make. Starting, as they do, from a very low base students learn to function within a variety of demanding social settings. Students are taught well in both the school and residence about the value of their pocket money. This and other basic skills they learn, prepare them well for their future lives. Visits away from the school provide students with challenging activities as well as those that require sensitivity to their surroundings. The school actively supports students in community-based activities, such as environmental and charitable projects.

Although all students are given opportunities to reflect on their own circumstances the provision for them to consider other cultures is unsatisfactory. Little work is planned for this aspect of their development.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory, although the seamless and holistic nature of the practice has a number of strengths. Students are looked after in a safe and healthy environment. Staff show considerable concern for the well-being of the students. Policies to safeguard students are well established and used effectively to protect their welfare. All staff receive appropriate training on child protection issues. The site is relatively open, but conscientious supervision by the staff ensures that they know where students are at any time. Risk assessment processes are rigorously implemented during the many visits the students make away from the school. Students indicate they feel safe at the school and that there is an adult to whom they would turn in time of difficulty.

The school is good at promoting healthy living. Along with nutritious meals and knowledge of healthy foods, there are a multitude of opportunities for physical exercise. Students are taught formally about sexual health matters and the dangers of substance abuse. The school has in place a three year plan that meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 and it has already implemented many physical changes to the facilities that will enable access to the building for any physically disabled students or visitors.

Thorough checks are in place for the recruitment of staff and the completion of the single central register is rigorous. Incident records are not maintained in bound books.

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 the curriculum and teaching (standard 1) and must:

- enable teachers to show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- put in place a framework by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms (paragraph 1(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- improve and implement formal planning by which students will gain a knowledge and tolerance of other cultural traditions (paragraph 2(e)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that incident records are kept in bound books (paragraph 3(3)).

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:

- more rigorously record the outcomes to students' learning so that better information about the rate and quality of progress can be gained
- provide written comments on students' work that enable them to understand what they should do in order to improve.

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	3 Dimensions
DCSF number	933/6207
Unique reference number	134909
Type of school	Special, for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
Status	Independent
Date school opened	January 2005
Age range of students	11-16
Gender of pupils	Male
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 1
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 1
Annual fees	£55,000
Address of school	Chardleigh House Chardleigh Green Wadeford Chard Somerset TA20 3AJ
Telephone number	01460 680 55
Fax number	01460 261060
Email address	team@3dimensionscare.co.uk
Headteacher	Post vacant awaiting head teacher designate
Proprietors	Mrs Adele Frost and Mrs Phyllis Gonzalez
Reporting inspector	Thomas Smith
Dates of inspection	23–24 September 2008