

Lime Meadows

Independent Special School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	357/6056
Unique Reference Number	130913
URN for Social Care	SC069176
Inspection number	331305
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Frances Gander
Social care inspector	David Martin

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.

An inspection of the boarding provision was also carried out. The full report on this provision is not published but may be obtained from Ofsted by telephoning 08456 404040.

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

Lime Meadows provides education for up to six students between the ages of 14 and 18 years who board for 52 weeks a year in a small residential provision. The school was opened in September 2001 and was previously inspected in 2006. Currently there are five students between the ages of 15 and 18 years attending the school, two of whom have a statement of special educational need. One of the five students also attends a local college of further education for three days a week. The students are placed at Lime Meadows by different local authorities. Some students have had periods in the past when they have not attended school or have been excluded from education.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides good quality education. Students make good progress and by the time they leave they have achieved a range of external accreditation. Students have excellent attitudes to learning and work independently on their examination courses. Students' behaviour and attendance are excellent. Teaching is good but the formal assessment and monitoring of progress and attainment does not always provide the information necessary for the next steps in learning. Attention to safeguarding is good. The school has addressed all the issues from the last inspection. However, many of the school's policies have not been reviewed and updated since the last inspection. The school meets all but four of the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the education is good. The curriculum, teaching and assessment are good but not as good as the school's judgement of outstanding. The educational provision is not being sufficiently monitored by senior education managers to ensure it is keeping up-to-date with national changes and that their evaluations of the school are based on secure evidence.

The school prepares the present students well for their future in society. The curriculum opportunities for students over the age of 16 are good. The school, with support of the residential provision, provides students with access to local college courses where they continue to increase their qualifications. All students have a personalised curriculum that is relevant and matched to their needs. It provides a range of external accreditation, such as General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and Entry Level Certificates (ELCs). Most subjects of the National Curriculum are taught with the exception of physical education. This is catered for in the residential provision where a higher supervision level ensures safety. However, students say they would like more opportunities to take exercise during the school day. The school has long and medium term planning provided by the ELC or GCSE syllabus. However, there are no policies for each subject or how the school would ensure a broad and balanced curriculum for younger students.

Great emphasis is placed on citizenship and personal independence and this is well supported by the residential provision. The Certificate in Preparation for Working Life prepares students for working life, but the school has no responsibility for organising or supervising their work experience placements. This is carried out by staff in the residential provision. Consequently, a range of work related learning, such as enterprise initiatives or work shadowing, is missing from the curriculum.

Teaching is good and ensures that students make good progress in gaining external accreditation. Work is well planned for individual students based on the staff's very good knowledge of their capabilities and learning difficulties. There are lots of opportunities for problem solving. A 'college type' learning environment is created where students use information and communication technology (ICT) for independent learning and recording of work. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and there is mutual respect. Teamwork between teacher and support teacher is very good. Both bring different qualities that broaden the curriculum effectively such as expertise in art, music and ICT. Students' behaviour, motivation and eagerness to complete work are excellent.

The GCSE and ELC units of work used to plan lessons provide clear learning outcomes but these are not being used in every lesson, which leads to some weakness in identifying and recording students' progress. In addition, because the school does not now create a baseline assessment or assess students against National Curriculum levels, it is unable to monitor progress effectively. Consequently, precise information about each student's progress is missing from school reports to their parents.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

This is good but not as good as the school's judgement of outstanding. The school promotes very positive attitudes to learning so students achieve well. Students are self-confident and they are proud of their achievements. They develop into independent learners and enjoy school. This is reflected in their 100% attendance.

Students are constantly helped to see things from each others' perspectives and are frequently challenged with moral dilemmas and choices.

There are excellent systems to support them in improving their behaviour and this is applied consistently in school and the residential provision. This is the result of the very positive relationships that exist between staff and students, and the support and encouragement from their residential provision. This helps students to work towards making the right moral choices. There is good preparation for life after school with a strong emphasis on students managing independently in the community. The school has limited evidence showing that students' awareness of and positive regard for people of different race, culture and beliefs is developed effectively.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good but not as good as the school's own judgement of outstanding. Many of the policies for the school are out-of-date and have not been reviewed as regularly as those governing the residential provision. They need reviewing to ensure the practices are still relevant. The exception to this is the child protection policy, which is up-to-date and matches the policy applicable to residential provision. Risk assessments for each student and for the activities they take part in have been made, and these are applied as well to the residential provision. Health and safety procedures, including fire risks are thorough.

The school's safeguarding procedures are good. The school has a single central register of staff but it does not meet all of the requirements with regard to recording the date when each check was completed. Systems for recruitment are carried out in line with company policy, which meets safeguarding requirements. The school registers are kept largely in accordance with the regulations, but the admission's register has some information missing.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The residential provision was judged to be outstanding 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 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:

- establish a system whereby students' attainment and progress in relation to National Curriculum levels is measured, recorded and monitored (paragraph 1(4)).

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

- maintain an admission's register that contains all the necessary information and in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- In relation to each member of staff in post on or after 1 August 2007 ensure the register includes the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(2 and 3))
- In relation to supply staff, ensure the register shows the date when written notification of their suitability from the employment business was received (paragraph 4C(4 and 5))
- In relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor in post on or after 1 August 2007, ensure the register shows the date on which any check was completed (paragraph 4C(6 and 7)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide parents with an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered student in the main subject areas taught that includes an evaluation by national norms (paragraph 6(5)).

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:

- Improve teaching by stating the expected learning outcomes in all lesson plans and use these to evaluate students' progress at the end of each lesson in order to provide staff and students with a clear view of what has been learnt.
- Review and update all policies so they reflect the current provision.
- Produce a policy on community cohesion.

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	Lime Meadows	
DCSF number	357/6056	
Unique reference number	130913	
Type of school	Special	
Status	Independent	
Date school opened	September 2001	
Age range of pupils	14 - 18	
Gender of pupils	Boys	
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Total: 5
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 5	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Total: 2
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 3	Total: 3
Annual fees (boarders)	£171,600	
Headteacher	Ms Karen Barber	
Proprietor	Northern Care Limited	
Reporting inspector	Frances Gander	
Dates of inspection	10–11 March 2009	