

Fullerton House School

Independent Special School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	3716011
Unique Reference Number	106817
URN for social care	SC035687
Inspection number	331306
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI
Social care inspector	Russell Shackford

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).

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



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

Fullerton House is a residential special school. It is one of a small group of similar schools owned and run by its parent company, The Hesley Group. The school provides residential education for up to 46 pupils aged 8 to 19 years with autism, severe and complex learning difficulties and who exhibit challenging behaviours. The majority of pupils are boys and there are 10 girls on roll. All pupils have statements of special educational need and are funded by local authorities from across the United Kingdom. The 18 students in the post-16 group spend some of their time studying at the Hesley Village College for some courses.

Fullerton House's mission statement is: 'to enhance the lives of the individuals entrusted to them by focusing on their specific needs, capabilities and aspirations in order that all pupils reach their full potential.'

Evaluation of the school

Fullerton House School successfully meets its aims. It provides a good quality of education for all of its pupils and students that is well tailored to their individual needs. As a result of the good curriculum, good teaching and high staffing levels, pupils and students make good progress from their starting points. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for promoting appropriate behaviour is good. Provision for welfare, health and safety is satisfactory overall although there are some shortcomings related to the management of behaviour.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good because individuals and their needs are at the heart of the school's work through what they describe as their 'person centred' approach. The good curriculum effectively meets the needs of all pupils and students by focussing effectively on their individual needs. There is a clear focus on developing

the basic skills of English and mathematics. The development of communication skills is a priority with planned opportunities for promoting spoken language, signing and the use of picture exchange symbols. The broad and balanced curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and National Strategy Guidance, and is well adapted to meet the needs and interests of pupils. There are appropriate policies in place for all subjects and teachers endeavour to make activities as practical as possible in order to interest and motivate pupils. There is a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education (PSHE), along with encouraging pupils to be more flexible in their thinking.

Curriculum planning is good overall with particular strengths in the attention that is paid to make sure that each lesson is linked to individual learning plans (ILPs), which identify the very small steps of learning planned for every pupil. These take full account of information from a pupil's statement of special educational need and are used to 'tailor' activities within subject lessons for each pupil. There are good arrangements for undertaking annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational need. The focus on individuals and the school's 'person centred approach' ensures that all pupils are able to contribute to their reviews, for example by selecting photographs to show their achievements.

Post-16 students have access to a good range of courses that they are able to select from, including horticulture, woodcraft, art and design and forestry. These are taught at the Hesley Village College site, a purpose built village setting offering a wide range of facilities. This provides students with very relevant real life experiences including shops, post office and a restaurant within a controlled and safe environment. It provides an opportunity that contributes effectively to preparing students for their futures beyond the school. Where appropriate work experiences are arranged in partnership with employers and the local business and enterprise service.

Good use is made of the school's resources including access to a mini bus for travel off the school site. Visits out of school are a particular strength. They have included trips to local places of interest as well as some further a field to Germany and London. Pupils indicate that they enjoy these varied experiences which contribute effectively to their knowledge of the world and link to areas that are being studied in lessons. However, the planning of some visits is underdeveloped in ensuring maximum benefit from the full range of trips provided. Resources for practical subjects are good, particularly in art and design and technology. Recent improvements in information and communication technology (ICT) resources are of high quality and are enjoyed by all pupils. For example, very effective use is made of digital cameras to record the work and successes of individuals rapidly, allowing images to be shared with the whole class, thereby interesting pupils and improving the self esteem of individuals.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and as a consequence, pupils across the school make good progress from their starting points. Teachers and support staff know pupils well and establish good relationships and clear routines to support pupils' learning. Improvements since the previous inspection mean that there are now good systems in place for assessing, monitoring and recording pupils' progress

in their learning and acquisition of skills. The school effectively assesses individual pupils' progress in communications and social development and in how well they are responding to gradual changes to combat their rigidity of thought, a major feature of their condition. Where appropriate, students are entered for national 'entrance level' qualifications. During the previous academic year a good number of students gained success in these qualifications, and this represented a considerable achievement for them.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils overall with particular strengths in social and cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted through assemblies and good lessons which give them the opportunity to think about stories and other people. For example, in an assembly, pupils' work was celebrated which encouraged them to think about the achievement of others, and in their own ways, to appreciate others.

There are clear rules and routines for pupils across the school. The high staffing levels and good relationships between pupils and staff ensure that behaviour is generally good and that pupils develop an understanding of right and wrong and on occasions, accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Given the nature of pupils' specific needs, this good work often takes the form of encouraging pupils to take turns, to help others and to complete short tasks. Despite this good work, there are occasions where the pupils' condition manifests itself as challenging or aggressive behaviour.

Pupils are effectively encouraged to appreciate their own and other cultures through the study of all the major world religions in religious education lessons. All major festivals are marked during the year at the school. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate and enjoy the rich cultural diversity through practical experiences, such as tasting food from around the world, which they enjoy. Art work around the school, and the music which is played in classrooms and in assemblies, reflect a rich cultural diversity. Pupils are taught about a broad range of English institutions through visits to museums, art galleries and places of worship.

Pupils are encouraged to express their feelings and to understand the feelings of others. Those without the use of spoken language or limited signing skills are able to use picture exchange symbols on the 'complaints key ring' if they are unhappy or worried about anything. The good links with local community groups and staff enthusiasm benefit pupils greatly. For example, a number of pupils benefit from attending a scout group and a group of older students take part in the 'Youth Achievement Award Scheme'. Both make a significant contribution to developing their self esteem and their ability to work with others. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities when and where they are able to. For example, some take turns in working in the tuck shop serving drinks and snacks. Their views are effectively sought using written and symbol questionnaires to ensure that all pupils and students are able to make a positive contribution to the school. A small group of older pupils are proud to have been involved with the recruitment of new staff by attending interviews.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Although satisfactory overall there are some clear strengths in the provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety. All pupils have effective plans in place to support them to behave well in a variety of school situations and, within the context of the pupils' difficulties, behaviour is generally good. These plans build on the detailed knowledge that staff have of each individual pupil. They primarily identify the signs of restlessness early and staff implement strategies that stops this restlessness becoming disruptive to others, for example by taking short walks around the playground. However, despite these plans there remain some issues with the management of the very small amount of challenging and aggressive behaviour.

Other strengths include the very good quality of accommodation and space for learning. The very good staffing ratio ensures that supervision of pupils is very good. All staff have first aid qualifications and received regular first aid training. Thorough risk assessments and security procedures are in place. Risk assessments are carried out for all educational indoors and outdoors activities. All staff have been appropriately checked before they take up employment and all receive regular safeguarding training. Pupils indicate that they feel safe and well cared for. They suggest that there is no bullying and that any disagreements which might occur are sorted out promptly by staff. Pupils are given very good advice about how to stay healthy and are able to choose healthy food options at meal and snack times. There is a very good range of break time and after school activities which help pupils to stay healthy, such as swimming and exercise clubs. The school now fulfils its duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The residential provision was judged to be inadequate, and National Minimum Standards were not 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.

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 the planning for its good range of visits out of school in order to maximise the potential benefit to curriculum subjects and pupils' personal development and well-being.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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			✓	
--	--	--	---	--

School details

Name of school	Fullerton House School		
DCSF number	371/6011		
Unique reference number	106817		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1990		
Age range of pupils	8–19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 36	Girls: 10	Total: 46
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 36	Girls: 10	Total: 46
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 36	Girls: 10	Total: 46
Annual fees (day pupils)	£240,000		
Address of school	Off Tickhill Square Denaby Doncaster South Yorkshire DN12 4AR		
Telephone number	01709 861663		
Fax number	01709 869635		
Email address	david.whitehead@hesleygroup.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr David Whitehead		
Proprietor	Mr Stephen Lloyd (Hesley Group)		
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI		
Dates of inspection	21–22 January 2009		