

Flying High

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	893/6097
Unique Reference Number	131033
Inspection number	332451
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI

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, the purpose of which is 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

Flying High is an independent day special school for boys and girls aged 7 to 14 years. It provides education for young people who have experienced severe trauma and have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many have experienced disrupted education. Most of the pupils have statements of special education needs. The school's mission statement is *'to improve outcomes for traumatised children through the delivery of specialist education'*.

The school is located on the outskirts of Shrewsbury in Shropshire and is owned by the SACCS group. The school is currently registered for six pupils. However, as there are currently ten full-time pupils on roll, the school is in the process of applying to the Department for Children, Schools and Families to increase the number that it is registered to take. Since the last inspection the school has undergone considerable changes, including moving to a new building on a different site. A new head of education was appointed in January 2009. All the pupils are accommodated in a number of residential care homes which are also owned by the SACCS group. These care homes are registered separately with Ofsted. Pupils attend Life Story and therapy sessions during the school day. The school was last inspected in May 2006.

Evaluation of the school

Flying High provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. It is successful in re-engaging pupils in their learning. Pupils are well cared for, feel valued and enjoy their education. The school has made a number of improvements since the last inspection and now meets the majority of regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is based on a core curriculum covering English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Schemes of work take due regard of the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, curriculum planning for mathematics is currently being reviewed and is less well structured. The core curriculum is personalised to meet the needs of the individual pupils. Provision for PSHE is satisfactory and covers citizenship, lifestyle, responsibility, respect and relationships. The good links between education and care staff ensure that pupils'

personal development can be built on effectively in care settings. Although elements of careers education are provided through the PSHE programme, pupils at Key Stage 3 are not currently receiving sufficient careers guidance. The school complements the curriculum with off-site visits. For example, pupils have recently visited Dudley Castle and Zoo, and Ironbridge Gorge. Provision for physical education (PE) meets regulations but is limited. Pupils have access to a small hard surfaced area where small games can be played. Occasional opportunities are provided to go swimming and use the facilities of the local leisure centre.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory and the pupils make satisfactory progress. Lesson planning varies in quality. The best examples include clear learning objectives, key points for learning and assessment criteria. Tasks set in lessons are generally the same for all pupils. However, pupils are able to make satisfactory progress as a result of the high levels of support they receive. Individual discussions with teachers help to ensure that activities are meaningful and that the pupils' interests are maintained throughout each session. The pupils benefit from being taught in small groups, where they have satisfactory opportunities to develop their basic skills, including speaking and listening. On occasion, the pace of learning slows when lesson planning does not accurately meet the needs of all the pupils. Pupils' work is regularly marked but opportunities are frequently missed to provide guidance for improving their work. The school has an adequate number of computers and a satisfactory range of reading books. However, other teaching materials, such as practical apparatus for teaching mathematics and science, are more limited.

Relationships between staff and pupils are good. When the pupils join the school they undergo a detailed induction process which takes account of the care and educational needs of each pupil. This includes a range of assessments. However, information derived from assessment is not always used consistently well to plan lessons which meet the needs of all the pupils and to set clear targets for improvement. The school is currently introducing more robust assessment and tracking procedures to improve learning and help demonstrate the effectiveness of their work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Their behaviour is satisfactory and there is a calm atmosphere around the school. Occasionally, some pupils are reluctant and inattentive in lessons and this is a barrier to learning. Break and lunchtimes are pleasant occasions where pupils socialise and generally eat nutritious foods. Most pupils have a sense of right and wrong and respond well to the school's expectations of appropriate behaviour. Some exhibit challenging behaviour on entry to the school, but over time this improves noticeably. For the majority of pupils their attitudes to work and to each other are usually positive.

The school is successful in re-engaging pupils in their learning through the PSHE programme and the good level of care they receive. This work helps to prepare pupils for the future through teaching them about the risks of substance misuse, safety and personal finance. Pupils' improved attendance, compared to their previous settings, indicates they are starting to enjoy learning more. They make a satisfactory contribution to the wider community, for example through fund-raising for charity. They are given a broad understanding of public institutions and services through the PSHE programme. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their own cultures. The curriculum helps to promote pupils' understanding of different cultures and backgrounds, including through religious education, Aboriginal art and learning about daily life in France as part of French lessons.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for welfare, health and safety of the pupils is satisfactory. The pupils are very well supervised in school and when they go out into the local community. Pupils report that they feel safe and are confident that staff will deal with any problems that may arise. The designated person for child protection is currently updating their training and all staff have undertaken child protection basic awareness training. The school's robust policy with regard to safeguarding ensures that staff understand what to do if they become aware of a child protection issue. All the pupils access good advice and support from the therapeutic and support services staff. Very effective links between the school staff and the pupils' care provision ensure that their needs are met. The school undertakes routine checks of fire systems and completes regular risk assessments. Pupils are taught to be aware of potential hazards and how to be safe in lessons. Routine checks are made on electrical equipment and fire drills are practised regularly. There are effective procedures for first aid and staff are appropriately trained. The school has drawn up a three-year accessibility plan and fully complies with its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has appropriate procedures in place relating to the checks it makes on prospective employees regarding their identity, qualifications, medical fitness and suitability to work with children. Details of checks are maintained in a suitable register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed in a converted barn which has been recently modernised to a good standard. The buildings have been appropriately adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. The classrooms vary in size and are adequate for the small teaching groups. Specialist teaching rooms on site include an ICT room and a room designated for art and science. There is a small kitchen area which is used for food technology lessons. The buildings are clean and generally tidy, although a lack of storage facilities means that some non-teaching areas are not as well organised. The

pupils have access to a small outdoor play area which is sufficient for small games activities. The school does not currently have appropriate facilities for pupils who may become ill.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has established strong links with carers, outside agencies and local authorities. Carers are kept informed about their child's progress through regular telephone contact, informal conversations and detailed monthly reports. These reports are a helpful summary of what each pupil has covered in lessons, their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning. These reports do not always include clear information about what the pupils need to do to improve further and how much progress they have made. The prospectus does not currently include information regarding academic performance during the preceding school year.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clearly written and fair complaints procedure which meets the requirements.

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 the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- establish and provide appropriate careers guidance for all secondary age pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g))
- establish a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from these assessments to plan lessons (paragraph 1(3)(g))
- establish a framework by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims and/or by national norms (paragraph 1(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

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

- make it clear that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils may request from the school particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- ensure that all curriculum planning, particularly mathematics, is completed to an equally high standard
- provide a wider range of activities for pupils to develop their PE skills
- make more effective use of assessment data to track the progress of individual pupils
- enhance resources for practical mathematics and science lessons.

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	Flying High		
DCSF number	893/6097		
Unique reference number	131033		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2002		
Age range of pupils	7–14		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 6	Total: 10
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 4	Girls: 4	Total: 8
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 4	Girls: 6	Total: 10
Annual fees (full residential)	£4,500 per week		
Address of school	The Oaks Business Park		
	Shepherds Lane		
	Bicton		
	Shrewsbury		
	Shropshire		
	SY3 8BT		
Telephone number	01743 850840		
Email address	alistairc@saccs.co.uk		
Head of Education	Mr Alistair Craib		
Proprietor	Mr Rob McKay		
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI		
Dates of inspection	18–19 March 2009		