

Coxlease School

Independent Special School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	850/6017
Unique Reference Number	116586
URN for social care	SC038539
Inspection number	333828
Inspection dates	27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton
Social care inspector	Roy Bega SCI

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 interim inspection of the boarding provision was also carried out by a Social Care Inspector. The interim inspection looked at the progress the residential provision has made with the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection.

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

Coxlease School is an independent approved residential special school in the New Forest, Hampshire. It provides placements for up to 55 boys aged between 9 and 18 years. The boys' social, emotional and behavioural difficulties arise from a range of syndromes, including autistic spectrum, language and conduct disorders. These difficulties are of a severity that renders it impossible for them to be placed in mainstream schools or in most special schools. The school offers term time and 52 week placements. There are currently 55 students, 11 of whom are day students. There are 23 students in the 'looked after' category. The school aims through an integrated approach to education, care and therapy to give the young people the opportunity to make positive changes to their lives and achieve their full potential.

The last inspection was in 2006 and shortly afterwards the school became part of Priory Education Services.

Evaluation of the school

Coxlease School is successful in meeting its aims and overall provides a good quality of education. Through using a varied and good curriculum and sympathetic approaches, the school successfully engages the students in learning, all of whom have had a history of disrupted education. They make good progress. The provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school meets all of the independent school regulations, as it did at the time of the last inspection. The provision for boarders is good and all regulations are met.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and meets the particular needs of the students. The school provides consistent, personalised and structured learning opportunities throughout the school day, which are complemented by the activities programme provided by the care staff for students during the evenings and weekends. Time is spent on National Curriculum subjects with the addition of a significant amount of time on pastoral support and a wide range of therapies, such as psychotherapy, counselling, art, play, colour, holistic and movement and drama. The timetable is structured to provide a balance between the more academic subjects and a very wide range of practical activities. The core subjects, humanities and Key Stage 4 options are taught in the morning and the practical afternoon activities vary according to the season and availability of staff and resources. During these afternoon sessions, the students have experience of the practical, creative and physical aspects of the curriculum. There is a strong emphasis during this time on developing the students' physical capacities through games. This approach contributes positively to their self-esteem, sense of well-being and self-confidence.

Most students take GCSE mathematics and science and a few take English and additional subjects. Some Years 10 and 11 students have the opportunity to attend local colleges to have access to short vocational taster courses and two-year General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses. Post-16 students attend a range of courses in local colleges. There have recently been improvements to the curriculum, with increased amounts of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and additional tutor time for the students. A range of visits outside school further extends the curriculum and students have the opportunity to attend a residential facility in Wales. Careers guidance is available to students with an emphasis on working with advisors in the host area and student's home area. The school has identified through its development plan the importance of giving the students greater responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. Following training, staff have begun to give students greater responsibility for managing every aspect of their lives at the school.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory, with several good features. The teaching staff are calm, consistent and encourage the students to engage in learning. Where the lessons are good, the teachers' planning clearly identifies what the students will learn and gives them opportunities for both group and independent activities. These well planned and taught lessons successfully engage the students, who make good use of the time and make good progress in their learning. In a minority of less purposeful lessons, there is too much emphasis on teacher led activities, where the teaching tends to dominate the discussions and does not involve the students sufficiently in their own learning. Although the class groups are generally small, not all lessons are sufficiently well planned to meet the specific learning needs of the students, as identified in their individual education plans (IEPs). As a result, some students rapidly lose interest and then exhibit unacceptable behaviour. This is dealt with in a consistent manner with staff understanding the need to avoid direct confrontation. Students are given a short time out of the classrooms, accompanied by support staff, which works for most of them. The teaching assistants give

sympathetic support where needed and the students relate well to them. Students have good individual support in numeracy and literacy, but teachers do not consistently give support staff specific direction as to their role during other lessons.

Students overall make good gains in their learning over time when set against their starting points. This is evident because the assessment of students' progress is systematic and thorough. Assessments encompass the students' basic skill acquisition and their attitudes to learning. The IEPs are clear, they are reviewed regularly and are based on each student's statement of educational need. However, this information is not always reflected in the planning of lessons. Staff make use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, but sometimes they provide too much information, which takes the emphasis of enquiry away from the pupils. Parents have two detailed written reports sent to them each year. The school undertakes a detailed annual review for each student with the placing authorities.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good. The students' behaviour is satisfactory with some individuals behaving well. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and generally respond well. This is due to the structured environment and positive procedures in place that reinforce appropriate behaviour. These help ensure that students develop the social skills necessary to get on well with each other and contribute to the school community. However, although some students quickly become verbally abusive towards each other and staff, incidents are dealt with calmly. The school provides a variety of counselling and therapy services to promote further their good social and emotional development, with opportunities for discussion on both an individual and group basis. There is additional pastoral support available in school time for students facing particular difficulties. Students are encouraged to enjoy their rural environment. Some commented that they wanted to learn but other students could be distracting in lessons. However, students are generally uncertain about taking on roles of responsibility and using their initiative because their behaviour and attitudes vary so much. High staffing levels ensure that physical bullying is kept to a minimum and there are robust policies in place to reinforce this. Staff work well together to ensure that there is consistency between residential and school environments. The school runs team-building events each term, which help develop positive relationships between staff and students.

Students are well prepared for the next steps in their lives, as work experience is well planned with good links to local colleges offering participation in 'taster' courses for a variety of vocations. Those students over 16 years are encouraged to budget by organising their own finances. Students' understanding of public institutions and services is successfully developed through visits from the local fire brigade and police. Students participate in a nationally acclaimed activity known as 'Prison? Me? No way!' They become involved in the community through fund raising for local charities. The school council is increasingly effective and is beginning to provide a

platform for students to take part in decision making. Students make very good use of the opportunities offered by the local rural environment, with a very varied programme of outdoor activities to support good health and social development. There are visits to theatres and other public venues, which help enable them to assimilate into society. Students are well prepared for living in a multi-cultural society through studying and celebrating a variety of cultures, such as the week devoted to the food, music and art of India. The staff encourage the students to be tolerant of each other and promote a harmonious community.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety.

The provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school takes all reasonable steps to minimise risks to students' welfare, health and safety and provides an outstanding level of care for them. The students respond well to the school's provision for keeping them safe and healthy. All required policies are in place and are effectively implemented. There are robust recruiting procedures in place for all staff. The arrangements for checking their suitability to work with young people meet requirements, with a single central register in place recording all the necessary checks that have been made. There is a very high level of staff training in safeguarding and first aid with very careful recording of all necessary information. The school is vigilant about fire safety and holds regular, documented evacuation drills. There is a good awareness of disability and the school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The residential provision was judged to be good and National Minimum Standards were met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005. The school meets the National Minimum Standards for a Registered Children's Home.

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:

- ensure that all lessons are planned to make full use of the assessment information and targets identified for individual students to better meet their needs
- ensure closer liaison between staff and teaching assistants to ensure the right degree and kind of support is given during lessons
- continue to implement the school's development plan target for giving students greater responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.

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	Coxlease School
DCSF number	850/6017
Unique reference number	116586
Type of school	Special residential school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1982
Age range of pupils	9-18 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	55
Number of boarders	44
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	55
Number of pupils who are looked after	23
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,653
Annual fees (boarders)	From £101,489
Address of school	High Coxlease House Clayhill Lyndhurst Hampshire SO43 7DE
Telephone number	023 8028 3633
Fax number	023 8028 2515
Email address	Coxleaseschool@priorygroup.com
Principal	Mr Paul Donkersloot
Proprietor	Priory Education Services
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton
Dates of inspection	27 January 2009