

# Hillcrest Kings Bromley School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	860/6029
Unique Reference Number	131004
Inspection number	334282
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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, 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. 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.

## Information about the school

Hillcrest Kings Bromley School is a small, independent special day school located near Burton on Trent, Staffordshire. It opened in November 2002 and is owned by Hillcrest Care Limited. The school admits some of the most vulnerable pupils in the country. It provides education for boys aged 11 to 16 years. It is registered for eight boys but there are currently six on roll. Most are White British and all have been admitted in the past 12 months. All except one have a statement of special educational needs and all are referred and funded by a number of local authorities. All of the pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and some have specific learning difficulties. All have had a very disrupted education which has severely affected their attainment and self-esteem. Pupils' average stay in school is eight months.

All except one pupil live in residential accommodation next to the school. Boarding provision was inspected by two social care inspectors at the same time as the school's educational provision. The previous inspection of educational provision was in September 2006 and of boarding provision in November 2008.

The school aims to *'provide a curriculum that is balanced and broadly based and provide opportunities for all pupils to enjoy learning and to achieve high standards and develop self-confidence'*.

## Evaluation of the school

Hillcrest Kings Bromley School provides a satisfactory standard of education. The overall quality of boarding is satisfactory. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory and enable pupils to make satisfactory progress in their personal development and basic skills. Lesson planning is not good enough. Assessment information is not being used effectively to ensure work is pitched at the right level. Given the school's context, behaviour is satisfactory. However, an insufficient range of behaviour management strategies and sanctions are used to stop bad behaviour. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Most, but not all, regulatory requirements are met.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. The curriculum policy provides a clear picture of the provision. All of the pupils receive full-time education, which is a marked improvement on the amount of tuition that they have received in past placements. The previous inspection judged that the schemes of work lacked detail. This is no longer the case. Sound schemes of work are in place.

The curriculum is based on an adapted National Curriculum and this ensures there is appropriate breadth and balance. All of the required areas of learning are taught. The older pupils follow GCSE courses in English, mathematics and food technology. If they stay long enough they take entry level examinations in these subjects. In the past, individuals have undertaken valuable vocational courses at local colleges in catering, bricklaying, art and mechanics. Currently no pupils attend such courses.

Computers are used effectively to support learning in a range of subjects. Each pupil has a laptop and they enjoy using them. Most pupils go swimming and they use local sports facilities for cricket, badminton and basketball. An appropriate programme of personal, social and health education is provided, that includes sex and drugs education. Citizenship is now taught. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is enhanced by a suitable range of educational visits to local places of interest. The number of visitors to the school is limited. This said, a careers adviser attends and helps to prepare pupils for life after school.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Provision enables pupils to make satisfactory progress academically and in their personal development. A key strength is that teachers and assistants treat pupils with dignity and sensitivity. They have formed good relationships with pupils and there is some good one-to-one support to improve individuals' basic and interpersonal skills. Good teaching exists but there is not enough of it. Where teaching is effective it is because work is challenging and it engages pupils' interest and motivation, so pupils give of their best. Questioning is good and this helps to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

Lesson planning is not good enough. Not all staff prepare adequate lesson plans to reflect the guidance in schemes of work. This said, staff do take account of the objectives identified in pupils' statements when providing learning activities. There are individuals who do not have a statement who require one as a matter of urgency, so that their needs are fully assessed and properly catered for. Teaching is no better than satisfactory, primarily because assessment information is not being used effectively to properly match work to pupils' differing needs and capabilities. Work is too often organised by task rather than by pupils' ability. There are too many occasions where pupils who do not engage with learning are left to their own devices before attempts are made to re-engage them with the work set.

At times pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory and their conduct is unacceptable. Staff are not doing enough to encourage pupils to behave responsibly. Poor behaviour is

not stamped out quickly enough. An insufficient range of behaviour management strategies and sanctions is used to quell bad behaviour. The sanctions that do exist are not applied robustly enough and this means that pupils are not taught the error of their ways. At times verbal and emotional harassment of vulnerable individuals is not dealt with effectively enough, so that victims suffer and this has an adverse effect on their self-esteem. Currently no homework is provided, so work done in school is not consolidated after school.

Individual education plans are in place and there is satisfactory assessment of pupils' progress towards the objectives identified in their statements. This said, objectives in pupils' individual education plans are not always specific enough in measuring the small steps that must be achieved, particularly in developing pupils' basic skills. The assessment of pupils' attainment on entry is not rigorous enough and pupils' progress is not being tracked effectively. The quality of marking is adequate but inconsistent. There is insufficient comment about what pupils must improve. Not enough attention is being paid to improving pupils' handwriting, spelling and presentation skills. The school does not have policies for the development of these skills.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning range from good to inadequate but both are satisfactory overall, given pupils' severe behavioural difficulties. There are some angry boys in this school. Most have been through extremely challenging life experiences that have left them damaged and disillusioned. Many of the pupils say they do not enjoy school or education and would prefer to be elsewhere. However, it is clear that the school is establishing a stable day-to-day routine, where pupils are suitably cared for. Most pupils have low self-esteem and lack confidence. The school is successfully getting them to re-engage with education and their attendance is satisfactory. Those pupils who have been in school for the past year have improved their self-esteem and self-confidence. However, three newcomers are still settling in and there is much work to do get them to conform to authority. Most pupils do not take sufficient responsibility for their behaviour. This said, pupils are able to distinguish right from wrong as demonstrated by their ability to take care of resources, equipment and the premises.

Pupils have a satisfactory appreciation of their own culture but their awareness of cultural diversity is limited. This weakness was identified by the last inspection. Work in citizenship on topics such as the workings of Parliament and political parties helps pupils gain a basic understanding of public institutions and services in England. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are too few opportunities for pupils to be involved in decision making in school or to contribute to life in the local community.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. A sound child protection policy exists and all staff, including the designated person with responsibility for child protection, have been trained at the appropriate level. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and is effectively implemented. Sound risk assessments are now carried out for classroom activities and out-of-school activities. This was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle and there are adequate opportunities for physical education. Individuals are aware that smoking, drugs and alcohol are bad for health and that exercise and eating vegetables are beneficial.

There are written behaviour and anti-bullying policies but they are not implemented effectively. Sanctions are not administered quickly enough in line with the school's agreed protocols. The school is not monitoring behaviour, racist incidents and bullying robustly enough. An insufficient range of sanctions is being used to eliminate bad behaviour and whilst a written record of sanctions is kept, not all sanctions imposed for serious disciplinary offences are recorded. In contrast, thorough physical restraint records are maintained. The very good staff-to-pupil ratio means that pupils are well supervised at all times. Procedures for administering medicines are robust and accidents are appropriately recorded. The admission register does not contain all of the required information. In the modernisation of the premises the school has planned well to increase accessibility. It will be drawing up a three-year plan to review the possibility of further improving access to the premises and the curriculum.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All of the required checks on the suitability of the proprietor and staff have been carried out and these are appropriately recorded in the school's single central register.

## School's premises and accommodation

The accommodation has been extended since the last inspection. The number of teaching areas has increased from three to eight rooms, including two classrooms, a food technology area, music and art rooms. Teaching areas vary in size but are appropriate for the numbers using them. The school is clean and tidy and in good decorative order. There are extensive grounds and hard play areas for educational and recreational use and local amenities are used for sports activities.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The prospectus contains all of the required information for parents, carers and others. The school now submits to each local authority, and on request to the Secretary of State, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred

by the school for those pupils wholly or partly funded by the local authority. This was not done when the school was previously inspected. The school does not always send an annual written report to parents indicating their child's progress and attainment in the main subjects taught.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints procedure meets requirements.

## Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The residential provision was judged to be satisfactory. Three National Minimum Standards were not fully 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 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of teaching and assessment (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that all lessons are well planned and activities are suitably matched to pupils' differing capabilities (paragraph 1(3)(c))
- ensure that all teachers take pupils' needs, aptitudes and prior attainment into account when planning lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- improve marking and the quality of individual education plans and ensure that assessment information is used effectively to plan teaching so that all pupils make sufficient progress (paragraph 1(3)(g))
- ensure teaching encourages pupils to behave responsibly at all times and that effective behaviour management strategies and sanctions are applied when pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory (paragraph 1(3)(h)).

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

- ensure that pupils take more responsibility for their behaviour, and ensure they are more involved in school decision-making and contribute to life in the local community (paragraph 2(c))
- assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of, and respect for, other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different 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:

- improve the quality of the anti-bullying policy by ensuring that a wider range of strategies and sanctions is adopted to prevent bullying, ensure that all incidents of racist behaviour and bullying are formally recorded and that procedures are monitored effectively (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- improve the quality of the behaviour policy by ensuring that a wider range of behaviour management strategies and sanctions are adopted to promote good behaviour, and ensure procedures are implemented and monitored effectively (paragraph 3(2)(d))
- keep a comprehensive written record of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences (paragraph 3(8))
- ensure the admission register is maintained in accordance with the regulations (paragraph 3(9)).

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 report written report of their children's progress and attainment in the main subjects taught (paragraph 6(5)).



## 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	Hillcrest Kings Bromley School
DCSF number	860/6029
Unique reference number	131004
Type of school	Special school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
Status	Independent
Date school opened	November 2002
Age range of pupils	11–16 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils who are looked after	5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£35,100
Telephone number	01543 473772
Fax number	01543 473283
Email address	kingsbromley@hillcrest care.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr Mark Hollinshead
Proprietor	Mr Richard Greenwell
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI
Dates of inspection	6–7 May 2009