

Draycott Moor College

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	860/6026
Unique Reference Number	133989
Inspection number	341798
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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 college

Draycott Moor College and Manor House School are registered together as an independent day special school for 36 students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Almost half of students have statements of special educational needs. Both sites are close to Stoke-on-Trent. The college was added to Manor House School and opened in June 2008. Manor House School was first registered in 2002 and was last inspected in September 2006. At present, as there are 24 on roll, all students attend the college and there are none at Manor House School. The college and school are owned by EduCare Adolescent Services Limited. The headteacher resigned very recently and the college is being led temporarily by a consultant headteacher, supported by the education operations manager. There have been several changes of headteacher in the past four years. The consultant headteacher had been in post for nine days at the time of this inspection.

The college aims to be a caring environment where students will learn skills, knowledge, understanding and social responsibility. EduCare Adolescent Services stated belief is that everyone should be enabled to fulfil their academic and personal potential and become valuable and valued citizens.

Evaluation of the college

Draycott College provides an inadequate quality of education because the curriculum, teaching and assessment are ineffective in ensuring the college meets all of its aims. As a result, students' progress is inadequate. The required improvements to the curriculum, teaching and assessment, highlighted at the previous inspection, have not been carried out successfully and the educational provision and students' progress have deteriorated. However, college staff meet students' behavioural, emotional and social needs by offering them good support through positive relationships and good welfare provision.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is inadequate and since the move from Manor School to the college in 2008, this provision has deteriorated. Currently, the curriculum is inadequately planned and implemented to ensure that students are being challenged academically and the learning difficulties they have, are met.

At the time of the previous inspection the curriculum was satisfactory but its further development was under pressure because of staffing difficulties, and, in particular, several changes of headteacher. While there has been improvement in the stability and quality of staffing since then, strong leadership of the curriculum has been lacking.

There has been some, but insufficient, progress on writing and implementing comprehensive curriculum plans for all of the subjects. Planning for English is inadequate as it is based on a number of Assessment and Qualification Alliance's (AQA) unit awards that combine elements of reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, as a curriculum this is neither a comprehensive nor effective plan. There is no clear strategy for students to develop their skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Among the number of students who have statements of special educational needs, learning difficulties and low attainment in relation to literacy are highlighted. In these respects, students' needs are not met. While in a number of ways students are prepared appropriately for leaving college, many are ill-equipped for the future in regard to literacy skills.

Art is planned ineffectively. Mathematics has a good curriculum. While science is in outline form it lacks detail on what is to be taught over time. However, a competent start has been made. In mathematics and science, this is the result of good subject expertise. Personal development provision, which incorporates humanities, personal, social and health education and citizenship, is envisioned well, but it is also at an early stage of development and not yet based on a comprehensive plan. Food technology is planned soundly so that a broad range of knowledge and skills are taught. A large proportion of time for outdoor education and physical education matches most students' interests, promotes a healthy lifestyle and self-esteem, which is reflected in the progress made in personal development.

For accreditation purposes, students pursue the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network's (ASDAN) Bronze Award as well as AQA unit awards. The ASDAN award is managed well and the students entered for this produce good portfolios of work. Students who accumulate enough unit awards can achieve Entry Level Certificates. Students are offered short courses at further education colleges and their outdoor education programme is linked to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. While this range of accreditation is appropriate for some students it is not sufficiently challenging for, in particular, the more able students. Achievement in these awards is not a reliable indicator of students' academic progress. There are good links with Connexions, providing careers advice and planning for each student. This leads most students, when they leave, into college courses or vocational training projects. However, for some students literacy difficulties are a barrier to preferred courses.

The quality of teaching and assessment is inadequate. It is not based securely on the frequent, accurate assessment of students' progress in lessons and over time. There is no satisfactory means to establish each student's attainment when they are first admitted. Assessment was identified as a weakness by the previous inspection.

This means lesson planning seldom takes into consideration students' prior attainments or any learning difficulties that have already been identified in their statements of special educational needs. As a result, students' work is not necessarily challenging or adjusted to support the areas in which they find it most difficult to learn. Their progress is inadequate. It is clear from records of attainment from previous schools that, compared to the standard of current work, little or no progress has been made in English. Progress in mathematics lessons is good because of expert teaching. In science, for similar reasons, progress is beginning to occur in lessons.

Teaching assistants have been employed recently to support learning. It is too early to evaluate their impact, although without the college having a deeper knowledge of students' needs it is harder to deploy these assistants and focus their support effectively. Teachers have considered ways of structuring lessons effectively to promote learning. However, they often do not accomplish what they intend, for example running out of time to summarise the work at the end of lessons. Relationships in the classroom are positive resulting in students being largely cooperative and well behaved. Often, they are willing to settle straight to work, or need only a little persuasion.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, which is an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be inadequate. This was because there were too few opportunities for students to contribute to the community. Students contribute in college, for example, by helping with the preparation of lunch as part of their food technology work. The move from the Manor School to the college gave students opportunities to meet and engage with local residents. This has helped to calm concerns about having challenging young people in their small community. Students have gone on to contribute produce to the annual fair and have given guided tours of the college to local people. In the past there was a lack of multicultural education, which meant students were not well equipped to live in Britain's culturally diverse society. Provision is improving and is now satisfactory. Art topics include cultural references, such as Chinese masks; in food technology students prepare dishes from different cultures. The personal development curriculum, although it is still at an early stage, provides topics about other cultures and beliefs.

Students enjoy college and most attend satisfactorily because of the support they get from positive relationships and close attention to their personal development. This builds confidence and self-esteem and behaviour is satisfactory. Outdoor education contributes considerably to students' personal development.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Their emotional and social needs are supported effectively by a well-knitted team who are focused consistently on students' welfare. Students' behaviour is managed effectively with close support from the good number of staff who are available throughout the day. This improvement is the result of better consistency of behaviour management. Positive relationships between staff and students encourage cooperation. The incentive to behave well is increased by the college's reward system, which students understand and value. All of this contributes towards students' staying safe. A range of appropriate policies are in place to safeguard students and comprehensive risk assessment practices ensure appropriate measures are taken in college, on trips away from college and in managing potential risks in outdoor activities. Students are kept safe as a result. The college raises students' awareness of a healthy lifestyle and the good range of physical activities promotes this. However, not all students accept the college's good advice and persist in smoking. The college permits this in order to manage it.

The college has an up-to-date policy on increasing access for disabled people, which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All of the required checks are made on the suitability of all adults working with students, ensuring that students are properly safeguarded. Robust procedures are in place for checking the backgrounds of newly appointed staff. All of these checks are recorded clearly in a single central register.

College's premises and accommodation

The premises, which were originally a primary school, are substantial and well suited for purpose. The college has extensive grounds providing a well maintained field, of several acres, that is used for games. There is also a large hard surface which is in good condition and suitable for all-weather games and activities. These complement the college's provision for developing a healthy lifestyle. Classrooms are of a good size for the small groups of students that use them. They are furnished well, bright and in good decorative order and provide pleasant environments in which students can learn. Classrooms are designated for teaching specific subjects and as such have lively displays and good resources related to these. These enable teachers to display students' work that they can value and take pride in. The science room has an interactive whiteboard, which is used effectively by the teacher. There is a well-equipped computer room.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The college has a well designed prospectus containing all of the information parents and others are required to know. Information is set out in an easily accessible form.

Procedures for handling complaints

The college has a written complaints procedure, which meets requirements and which parents are informed is available on request.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The college meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of those listed below.

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- support the curriculum policy with appropriate plans and schemes of work and implement these effectively (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure that subject matter matches closely students' different aptitudes and is appropriately adapted to the learning difficulties that some students have (paragraph 1(2)(b))
- improve the curriculum to ensure all students have good opportunities to acquire skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing (paragraph 1(2)(c))
- where students have a statement of special educational needs, ensure the education provided fulfils its requirements (paragraph 1(2)(e))
- ensure the curriculum is planned effectively to enable each student to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i))
- ensure the curriculum provides students with an adequate preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (paragraph 1(2)(j))
- improve teaching in order that students acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 1(3)(a))

- ensure teaching encourages students to apply intellectual, physical or creative efforts and to show interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 1(3)(b))
- plan effective teaching methods and suitable activities and ensure class time is managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c))
- ensure teachers develop a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- put into place a framework to assess students' work regularly and thoroughly and ensure the information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that students can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g))
- develop a framework by which students' performance can be evaluated by reference to either the college's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms (paragraph 1(4)).

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 students				✓
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs				✓
How well students make progress in their learning				✓

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			✓	
The behaviour of students			✓	

Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students		✓		
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College details

Name of college	Draycott Moor College		
DCSF number	860/6026		
Unique reference number	133989		
Type of college	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date college opened	June 2008		
Age range of students	11–16		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 13	Girls: 6	Total: 19
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 8	Girls: 1	Total: 9
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 4	Girls: 5	Total: 9
Annual fees (day students)	£38,025		
Address of college	Draycott Moor College Draycott Old Road Draycott in the Moors Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST11 9AH		
Telephone number	01782 399849		
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Email address	julie_mullard@yahoo.co.uk		
Education Operations Manager	Ms Julie Mullard		
Proprietor	Mr Brian Scanlon		
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon		
Dates of inspection	1–2 July 2009		