

Queens Park – Green Corns

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	354/6019
Unique reference number	131390
URN for registered social care	SC044200
Inspection number	342475
Inspection dates	13-14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Ramesh Kapadia
Social care inspector	Shaun Common

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended. The inspection of boarding was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Age group: 10-18

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², 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 care provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for children's homes. This inspection took place at the same time but the full report is published separately on Ofsted's website and should be read in conjunction with this report which covers the educational registration of the school.

Information about the school

Queens Park School was registered as an independent school in 2006. It makes provision for one pupil aged between 10 and 18 years who is in the care of a placing local authority and experiences severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Queens Park is also registered with Ofsted as a children's home and provides 52-week care as well as education. The length of time a pupil stays at the school varies considerably, from a few weeks to over a year. The school's aim is to provide 'excellence, equality and high achievement for all, by unconditional positive regard for everyone.' There was no pupil registered on the school's roll at the time of this inspection. This is the second inspection of the school since it was registered in 2006. At the time of the last inspection in February 2007, the pupil on roll was not present. The previous social care inspection was on 3 July 2009.

Evaluation of the school

Queens Park School provides a good standard of boarding care for its pupils. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of education because no pupils are presently on roll and no teaching could be observed. However, there are good features with regards to the quality of education provided. There are shared ways of working, as evident in the care and education policies and procedures, for example, in showing an unconditional positive regard for children. At the previous inspection, a significant number of regulations were judged not to have been met. The curriculum has been improved and is now good, as is welfare, health and safety. Safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and regularly reviewed. All the regulations are met and the school is taking effective steps to meet its aims.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

Whilst it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of education because no pupils are presently on roll, the quality of education has good features and has improved since the last inspection. The planned curriculum is good with appropriate range and balance, yet can be adapted to meet the needs of an individual, by providing a personalised and competence based approach. It is based on the National Curriculum and stresses the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, as well as information and communication technology. The approach help pupils catch up on lost ground and build confidence. Other compulsory elements are physical education, citizenship and a course on preparation for life, an important component for pupils admitted to the school to support their future economic well-being. Personal, social and health education is also supported by work undertaken by social care staff. A choice of modern languages is offered, as well as options in history or geography, art and music. Extensive use is made of entry level courses to enable pupils to begin to gain externally recognised accredited qualifications quickly, as a means to building their self-esteem. A distinctive feature is the availability of vocational courses: a course in hair and beauty was taught last year.

Careers education is supported by good links to the Connexions service, which helps pupils to plan for independent living. Appropriate courses are suggested, though not always taken up, and so some pupils do not continue with education or training after reaching school-leaving age. As part of the 24-hour curriculum, trips are undertaken such as to a local theatre or zoo. However, the range of extra-curricular activities is limited, partly because some pupils decide not to participate.

The quality of teaching and assessment could not be judged as there was no teaching at the time of the inspection. Nevertheless, there was evidence of improvements in teaching and assessment since the last inspection. The teaching is undertaken by a team of carefully selected teachers, who have trained in areas such as behaviour management and resilience, which helps them cope with the range of attitudes displayed by pupils. Teaching is on an individual basis; this limits the opportunities pupils are given to learn collaboratively.

The school's evaluation of the quality of teaching, which is carefully undertaken and includes lesson observations, indicates that all the teaching is at least satisfactory and a substantial proportion is good. The evaluation includes a system devised by the school to measure the percentage of time a pupil engages in a lesson: occasionally when there is a substantial reduction overall, this prompts further investigation and discussion with teachers and social care staff to find the underlying reasons. This is good practice. Care is taken by the school to ensure teachers are teaching subjects in which they have appropriate qualifications. Resources have been improved, for example, by purchasing equipment in science, and there is a computer with a printer.

Assessment of pupils' prior attainment is undertaken and used to plan suitable lessons. There is a careful framework for assessment. Teachers' logs show that they

keep records of lessons with notes on outcomes and progress. Monitoring of the attainment of targets is undertaken on pupils' individual education plans. Over the last few years, pupils have made at least satisfactory, and sometimes good progress in learning. Pupils can obtain, for example, six passes at A* to G at GCSE and a number of entry level certificates which represents notable achievement after missing a substantial part of education in previous years.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory. Links between the social care and education staff ensure that social development is good. Regular links and monthly monitoring reports ensure that this aspect is well promoted during the time a pupil is in the school. There are also strengths in moral education, but records show that pupils' responses have not always been positive. Pupils are given some opportunities for making a positive contribution to aspects relating to the care and education provided, eliciting satisfactory responses. Self-sufficiency is promoted as far as possible through the use of 'Independence Time', away from the home. This also helps to develop pupils' future economic well-being.

Provision for spiritual development is made but not consistently promoted across the curriculum; visits are occasionally arranged to local places of worship, but religious education is not always taught in Key Stage 4 and there are limited references to spiritual ideas in other subjects. Visits also encourage the pupils' cultural development and there is appropriate provision for equality and diversity within the 24-hour curriculum. Pupils develop an understanding of public institutions and services through a course on citizenship, an improvement since the last inspection when this regulation was not met.

In surveys undertaken by the school, pupils noted that they enjoyed lessons in the school and felt that they were making progress; teachers' logs show that, occasionally, pupils' engagement with lessons varies from high to relatively low. Records show that attendance usually improves over time for pupils in the school. Records also show that pupils' behaviour improves over time and becomes satisfactory after a few months: this represents considerable progress for those pupils who have experienced social difficulties in the past. There have been no exclusions from the school.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good. There are secure arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils. Child protection procedures are in place and given a high priority, with regular training for all staff. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly, including for external educational trips, which was not the case at the last inspection. The positive ethos in the home ensures that pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Healthy and safe living is well promoted by specific sessions in courses such as preparation for life, as well in other subjects such as science and physical education, which is undertaken at a local sports centre. Food technology is available for pupils to take as an option. Pupils are also prompted to adopt a healthy life style by social care staff.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment and undertakes vetting checks carefully, in line with statutory requirements. Files for staff at the school show that all the necessary checks, including medical fitness and identity are undertaken; criminal record checks are renewed every three years.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is set in safe and suitable modern semi-detached premises. There is a small classroom for teaching with reasonable resources. Facilities for teaching practical subjects such as science and art are available but limited. A small rear garden can be used for horticultural purposes and recreation. The school is within walking distance of a leisure centre and local park, which are used for recreation and to ensure the health of its pupils.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

There are well established channels of communication with pupils, their families and local authority placement officers to ensure that information relating to education and care is shared quickly. Monthly education progress reports are completed to support individual education plans for all pupils. The school's brochure includes all the required information, including results of public examinations in the previous year. The school now also provides a statement of income and expenditure relating to pupils funded by a local authority.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school received no complaints in the last year; its complaints policy now complies with the regulations.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The care provision was judged to be good and national minimum standards were met. A full report on the care provision is available on Ofsted's website and should be viewed in conjunction with this report.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

Please see the report on Ofsted's website relating to the care provision in the children's home which should be read in conjunction with this report.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- provide more opportunities for pupils to learn collaboratively
- improve the provision for pupils' spiritual education.

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 *(leave blank if not applicable)*

Evaluation of boarding provision		✓		
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School details

Name of school	Queens Park - Green Corns		
DCSF number	354/6019		
Unique reference number	131390		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	March 2006		
Age range of pupils	10-18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (boarders)	£ 257,400		
Telephone number	01706 644471		
Fax number	01706 715381		
Email address	angela.norris-heyas@greencorns.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs A Norris-Heyas		
Proprietor	Green Corns		
Reporting inspector	Ramesh Kapadia		
Dates of inspection	13-14 January 2010		