

# The Grange Therapeutic School

Independent school inspection report

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Inspection number 342536  
Inspection dates 8-9 December 2009  
Reporting inspector Peter McKenzie  
Social care inspector Christian Wannop

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.

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Age group: 8-16

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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.<sup>1</sup>

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000<sup>2</sup> having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.

## Information about the school

The Grange School is an independent residential special school, established in 1976 for up to 85 boys aged between eight and 16 years of age. There are currently 78 pupils on the roll of the school, of whom 62 are boarders. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs to address their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many pupils have additional learning difficulties. Acorn Care and Education acquired the school in January 2005. Most of the school's facilities are situated at Knossington, a rural setting in Leicestershire. There are also residential facilities, and teaching of life skills for Key Stage 4 students, in Oakham. The school aims to promote the healthy physical and emotional development of all pupils through a balanced, progressive and responsive approach to education, care and therapy. The school was last inspected in 2007. The Social Care was last inspected in March 2009.

## Evaluation of the school

The Grange Therapeutic School provides a good and improving quality of education and meets its aims well. It provides a good quality of care, characterised by its integrated 24-hour care and education provision. The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection, most notably in that it now meets all the regulations. The school has comprehensive and thorough arrangements in place for the safeguarding of pupils. The development of the quality of the curriculum and assessment is of particular note as both are now outstanding.

## Quality of education

The outstanding curriculum is based on a strong curriculum policy supported by appropriate schemes of work. The curriculum is extensive and is based on a wide

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga\\_20000014\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000014_en_1)

range of accreditation which enables all students to progress and to fulfil the requirements of their statements. It places emphasis on progress in the core skills of English, mathematics and science. In Key Stage 4, students follow guided pathways which can include working in partnership with a local school and a number of colleges where they study hair and beauty, horticulture, horse care, catering, sport, construction and preparation for a career in the uniformed services. Learning partnerships are also in place with other schools in the Acorn group. There is extra-curricular and extension provision of a very high quality which develops students' self confidence, team work and behaviour. The lifeskills programme, in which all students take an entry level qualification, includes community enterprise, team building and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

From a variety of very low starting points, as the result of learning difficulties and/or disengagement with educational provision, pupils make good progress because of the good educational and care provision they receive. They make the best progress in their last two years as the full impact of the school's work takes effect. They do particularly well in core subjects and in 2010, current tracking shows that almost all students expect to gain A\*-G in at least one core subject, in many cases more. The highest attainer is on track to meet the national expectation of 5 A\*-C including English and mathematics. Progress in most lessons is also good. In a numeracy lesson, pupils made good progress in understanding number patterns and sequences because work was focused on individuals from the very start. Higher attainers made immediate progress and responded well when the teacher increased the challenge.

Good progress is the result of good teaching and outstanding assessment. Teachers use high quality medium term and weekly planning and the most effective lessons ensure progress for all students based on thorough knowledge of their prior attainment and tasks which match their ability and concentration span. In the small minority of lessons where teachers talk for too long and/or provide some inappropriate tasks, progress is satisfactory. Students thrive on success in short focused tasks and in independence in their learning. As a result of class groupings and small classes, teachers know their students well and form strong relationships which lead to good learning and progress recognised by one student who said, 'I class some of the teachers as close friends'. The work of teaching assistants (TA) is outstanding. They move swiftly and effectively to support pupils who are seen to lose concentration or become disengaged from the lesson. Their action brings students back on task and ensures progress. Students greatly value their support and one said, 'TAs' will always come and help you.' Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning across the curriculum. The school has recently installed a number of interactive white boards (IWB) but their use is underdeveloped and, in particular, students do not use them. Management of behaviour is particularly good, achieving a balance of a good atmosphere for learning and giving students the opportunity to work with others and to express themselves.

Assessment, which includes personal and social skills, is based on Acorn's corporate assessment policy, which The Grange has further developed to meet its particular needs. Students are tested on entry to determine a baseline. Progress is tracked from this baseline on an individual basis using P scales, National Curriculum levels and the specific requirements of other courses. Detailed planning is in place to monitor individuals' progress in core subjects, based on key skills. Through half-termly updates, these plans are regularly reviewed. A Tracker is completed for all students and tracks the relationship between outcomes in care and education. Students' individual prior attainment features on lesson plans. Teachers and students complete assessment tasks every lesson. As a result, students recognise their progress and understand how to improve. This is making a major contribution to the progress they are making. Reports to parents and carers are provided every term and assess the student's progress by the school's own performance and attitude measures.

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

The spiritual, moral social and cultural development of students is outstanding because of their excellent response to a wide-ranging provision which gives them personal responsibility to make key decisions. Students are encouraged to know themselves and to take responsibility for their own actions. This is a progressive experience throughout the school based on their personal care plans and the availability of high quality voluntary therapy and counselling which play a significant role in their development.

Preparation for future economic well-being begins with the concentration on basic skills. Almost all students gained qualifications in core subjects in 2009, often from a low baseline. The current Year 11 students are on course to do better. Citizenship, lifeskills and Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) programmes provide a comprehensive background to students' future lives. They include careers education, work experience and qualification as sports leaders.

Teamwork is a by-word of the school's 24-hour care and education. Students learn to live and work together, rely on the support of others and appreciate that they cannot live in a vacuum. This is particularly supported by their outdoor education programme, where teamwork is at a premium. They also take part in young enterprise, school council and recognise the roles of others in teamwork situations such as by baking cakes for soldiers in Afghanistan. They appreciate the world around them and their future roles as citizens. A key part of this is watching the television news every morning (the only television permitted at that time) and discussing the topics.

One student is enjoying considerable success as a football referee; others display great talent as musicians. Others have developed significantly in academic learning. In all these achievements, they are role models for others. Students from a range of cultural heritages live and work together, drawing on creativity and skills in performing arts and, for older students, in literature. Visits, near and far to centres of sporting and cultural interest are a cornerstone of their development.

Students' behaviour is good. Teachers and teaching assistants combine to ensure that students' behaviour is well managed by giving them responsibilities and responding to their needs. They also work together with students to develop an atmosphere of calm and respect. Students say, 'Teachers here deal with [behaviour] better than in other schools.' Students welcome visitors with a handshake and good conversation. They can still exhibit challenging behaviour but the consistent application of the school's policies reduces the impact of such behaviour to a minimum. Attention seekers have no place in this school. The other students have learnt to simply ignore poor behaviour and get on with what they are doing.

Trends in behaviour change positively along with the age of the students and the length of time they have been in school, testifying to the effectiveness of the school's procedures.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good. Students engage in a wide variety of physical activity, based on team games and outdoor pursuits. Some of these activities are provided as rewards for good progress and behaviour. Students themselves have asked for more healthy food to comply with the teaching they have received. They greatly appreciate the support of the school nurse and describe her as 'awesome.'

The school has comprehensive risk assessment policies with regard to the wide range of on- and off-site outdoor activities which form a major part of its curriculum. The school is fully compliant with safeguarding provision in its recruitment of staff, volunteers and contractors. It has recently undertaken a very full risk assessment for fire safety. This contained a significant number of improvements, which the school has already planned to implement and, in some cases, put into practice.

Information for parents and carers contains e-safety guidelines.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The provision for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers fully meets the regulations with a single central record fully in place.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school is based in an impressive Victorian house on a large estate, which provides excellent leisure facilities including lakes for fishing, a BMX track, astroturf playing area and extensive additional open space.

Teaching and accommodation blocks are in a number of locations about the estate and the adjacent village and much teaching accommodation is in temporary buildings.

Fire prevention procedures are fully in place and recorded in a fire log.

The DDA plan is fully in place

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents and carers fully meets the regulations.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures for handling complaints fully meet the regulations.

## Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The quality of residential provision is good, with outstanding features in the outcome areas of enjoying and achieving and economic wellbeing. All five recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. The school meets the majority and exceeds many of the national minimum standards. There are minor shortfalls that the school has already identified, in the area of fire safety and in gathering information about children before admission.

Leadership and management of the school are good. Children benefit from excellent communication between residential and educational staff to support their achievement in education. There are highly effective links over welfare matters such as child protection, behaviour and health. This strong liaison underpins the 24-hour curriculum. A parent commented, 'My son has gone from strength to strength since starting at the Grange.'

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Policy, procedure and good practice help children to know that their individual needs are valued and the service is able to meet their diverse needs in everyday life in the school.

There is good health care for children, through the combined contributions of qualified nursing staff, health planning and good arrangements for safe delivery of medication and first aid. Staff promote active lifestyles through exercise and children learn how to take care of themselves. Children enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary and cultural needs.

There are good systems to promote the safety and welfare of children. Adults respect children's privacy and personal space and handle confidential information appropriately. Formal and informal complaints are well managed and children get a good response to any issues. There are good arrangements for safeguarding children from abuse and all staff are trained and know how to respond to any concerns or allegations. Staff lessen the incidence of bullying on vulnerable children through high levels of supervision and good anti-bullying strategies. Whilst children do occasionally go missing, this is not for long and staff are vigilant in searching for them and working with police to ensure safe return. The school is particularly effective in

helping children to manage and regulate their own behaviours many of which are extremely challenging. Standards of behaviour within the school are good, based on positive relationships and a sense of pride and responsibility to the community of the school. Staff are accomplished and highly sensitive in recognising behavioural issues and in supporting children when they struggle with stress, anxiety and anger.

Children live in a school that is safe and secure because health and safety is well managed. The school generally makes good arrangements for fire safety. However, a recent risk assessment has identified a number of areas for improvement such as making safe all fire doors.

The school's residential provision is outstanding in supporting children's educational progress. Children get excellent holistic support from the care, education and health team and there is an excellent therapeutic psychology and counselling service. They develop confidence and self-esteem through good leisure pursuits in the houses and action and adventure activities for example, fishing, mountain biking, the Duke of Edinburgh's award, outward-bound excursions and holidays abroad.

The school helps children to make a good positive contribution. They are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run through an active school council and daily house meetings. Staff help new children to move in sensitively and prepare them for transition to independence when the time is right. However, staff do not always have sufficient information about children before they move in, in order to plan effective care. A combination of documents make up the plan of care for each child and staff regularly assess progress in children's emotional and behavioural needs carefully. Children spoke of the trust and confidence they have in key staff. There are positive working relationships with families, and staff recognise these are crucial in furthering each child's development. Contact between family and children is encouraged by phone, e-mail and visits, and children appreciate the close communication about their care.

The school provides an outstanding environment for boys to learn and benefit from a residential education. The houses are all different but equally comfortable, warm and welcoming. As children progress through the school towards young adulthood, staff support them to reach their potential. Children are involved with the local community and learn to contribute and play their part as responsible citizens through voluntary work and fundraising.

Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for residential education. A team of staff are passionate and committed to the work they do with children. They are well trained, supported and guided by the experienced, imaginative residential management team. Quality assurance functions are well embedded in care practice and an extensive range of management systems monitors the effectiveness of the whole school provision and the welfare of the children and makes active plans for development.



## Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').
- The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding Schools or residential special schools.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- keep children safe from risk of fire in accordance with fire legislation and guidance by implementing the action required by the 2009 Fire Risk Assessment. i.e.do not use wedges to prop open fire doors (NMS 26.1)
- ensure the school makes reasonable efforts to obtain all necessary information about a child prior to admission, in order to provide residential staff with the information they need to care safely for each child (NMS 11.3)
- raise all teaching to the standard of the best by providing students with the opportunity to learn independently and make increased use of ICT in their learning.

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	The Grange Therapeutic School
DCSF number	855/6010
Unique reference number	120330
Type of school	Special
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1976
Age range of pupils	8 - 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 74
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0
Number of pupils aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 62
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 74
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 14
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55620
Annual fees (boarders)	£66915
Address of school	Knossington Oakham Leicestershire LE15 8LY
Telephone number	016644 54264
Fax number	016644 54234
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@knossington.rutland.sch.uk">office@knossington.rutland.sch.uk</a>
Headteacher	Steve Watt
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Reporting inspector	Peter McKenzie
Dates of inspection	8-9 December 2009