

Gloucester – Green Corns

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	354/6025
Unique Reference Number (URN)	131436
URN for registered social care	SC064294
Inspection number	344443
Inspection dates	3-4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell
Social care inspector	Jacqui Malcolm

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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

Gloucester Green Corns is an independent special school and children's home. It makes provision for one student between 11 and 18 years of age. Students have a history of disrupted education and failed placements in local authority homes and in fostering. The proprietors are Green Corns Ltd, part of the Continuum Education Group. The school opened in 2006. It is located in a detached house on a residential housing estate and provides 24 hour care. Education is provided by a regular tutor and a team of visiting teachers, and additionally supported by linked vocational courses attended locally. Students can have a statement of special educational needs (SEN). The school aims to offer an 'unconditional and positive regard' through its care and to help students to achieve 'measurable and demonstrably positive outcomes by putting them at the centre of everything.' The school has been subject to major restructuring and change of management during the last three years. Its social care provision was last inspected in March 2009. Educational provision was last inspected in June 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Gloucester Green Corns is successful at meeting its aims. The quality of education is good and students make good progress, supported by good teaching. It has made good progress since the last inspection and now meets all of the regulatory requirements for independent schools. Provision for care is good as is the overall effectiveness of boarding. The curriculum is well planned to meet students' individual learning needs, interests and aptitudes. As a result students, for the most part, enjoy their educational experiences. Welfare, health and safety arrangements are good and safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully in place. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good; the school has particular success in developing students' self-esteem and self-confidence.

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

The quality of education is good. The curriculum is good, well planned and meets the learning needs of individual students effectively. The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to learn and make progress. It is well matched to the requirements of their statement of special educational needs. It is supported by a wide range of schemes of work and documentation which are used effectively to support teachers' planning. Students currently spend two days each week taking courses in English, mathematics, science, art, food technology, personal social and health education (PSHE), citizenship and physical education (PE) at the school. On the remaining three days they attend a local vocational training centre where they study an accredited foundation course in motor vehicle maintenance. This arrangement is designed to build on the students' aptitudes and interests and to provide the potential for future further vocational qualifications. Effective planning ensures that the key skills relating to literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening are carefully built into curriculum and lesson planning. Information and communication technology is used well throughout students' learning.

Opportunities for PSHE are clearly identified throughout the curriculum and within teachers' planning. Both PSHE and citizenship are well supported through a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities; these are further enhanced by a good range of activities provided by social care staff. The resources available for PE in the school's large garden are supplemented by weekly visits to a local sports centre. Careers education is well served by a specialist education liaison officer.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and as a result students make good progress. This teaching is firmly based on well informed high expectations set by teachers on what the students can achieve and the positive relationships developed in lessons. Teachers show good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Individual education plans are appropriately detailed and regularly up-dated. Teachers are careful to build on students' interests and aptitudes in their lesson planning. As a result students show interest in their learning activities. Lessons make good use of the resources available. Students' interests and aptitudes are further supported by a good range of additional resources, including constructional materials, used by the students during their leisure time.

Teachers use questioning very effectively to draw students' into learning. This challenges them to think independently, for example in an English lesson where students were required to express their views about the successful aspects of a particular aspect of advertising. In the same lesson questioning was effectively used to improve spelling and to develop vocabulary. Management of behaviour is good and supports students' positive responses and personal development.

The school has good strategies for assessing and recording the progress made by students. Guidelines are clearly set out in an assessment policy which reflects the school's expectations for assessment. Work in National Curriculum subjects is securely linked to National Curriculum levels. The procedures for recording students'

progress are reflected in the good quality monthly reports to parents, carers and placing authorities. These set out clearly what the students have achieved in each subject and set targets for improvement. Internal weekly reports which are used for internal monitoring of student progress are similarly well prepared and informative.

The quality of the curriculum and teaching and assessment has improved since the last inspection.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The school makes good provision for the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this shows improvement since the last inspection. It successfully supports students' developing self-esteem and self-confidence, through using every opportunity to emphasise students' strengths through the curriculum and through teachers' use of positive encouragement. It is reinforced through the sensitive support provided by care staff, who play a major role in each students' personal development. As a result of the support they receive, which they recognise, students say that they enjoy being at the school. School planning and guidance recognises the need to encourage students to accept constructive criticism and this is well supported by teachers and care staff.

Students' general experience at the school encourages them to develop an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The school has good procedures in place to encourage students to be responsible for their own behaviour, which is good. Teachers and care staff have clear expectations with regard to behaviour and acceptable conduct. Specific aspects of moral development and respect for the law are embedded in the curriculum through PSHE, citizenship and through a course in 'rights and responsibilities'. Attendance is good and shows significant improvement over the relatively short period students have been at the school.

Students are expected to make a positive contribution to the day-to-day life of the school and care community. They are responsible for some cleaning, preparation of meals and doing their own laundry. They are made aware of the wider world community, for example by contributing to developing world charities such as the 'shoe box' collection. Through citizenship and visits to the town hall, fire station and similar places students are encouraged to develop an understanding of public institutions and services in England. They are encouraged through specific projects to develop positive attitudes in relation to other cultures and to develop tolerant attitudes to other traditions. As a result of the good guidance and range of learning experiences, both within the school and through their care support, students are well prepared for their future lives and economic well-being.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The quality of provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good in both the school and care provision. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has all the required policies in place, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, and these are appropriately implemented. Appropriate systems to ensure student's safety are well established. Staff have clearly defined responsibilities relating to safeguarding and appropriate and recent training has been undertaken. Suitable policies are in place and training has been completed by all staff with respect to first aid. Procedures for undertaking risk assessments for visits made by students out of school are thorough. Policies and expectations with respect to the promotion of good behaviour and prevention of bullying are clear and understood by students. Supervision is good and records of sanctions appropriately maintained. Every effort is made to encourage the students to eat a healthy diet and they have good opportunities for physical exercise. The school has a clear statement relating to access and meets the expectations of Disability Discrimination Act. Registers, including that relating to admissions, are now appropriately maintained.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school undertakes thorough checks on all staff and these are recorded in an appropriate single central register. Supported by the managing company, the school demonstrates a good understanding of the required procedures.

School's premises and accommodation

The school building provides a homely, safe and effective environment for students' work and relaxation. It is comfortable, well maintained and decorated. Boarding facilities are good and fully meet the standards required. The accommodation meets all the requirements for independent school registration, including with respect to issues relating to access and fire evacuation. Classroom space is relatively limited but given the number of students and the nature of the curriculum, it is suitable. Occasionally students' concentration can be disturbed in lessons by the movement of staff when classroom doors are left open. Furniture and fittings are good both in the school and care provision.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

All the required information, from the care and education provision is given for parents, carers and local authorities. It is up to date and provided in a clear and accessible form through the school prospectus and other available documentation. Reports relating to students' academic and personal progress are very regular. Monthly reports on students' academic progress are notably helpful documents which set out clearly what has been achieved.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints are set out clearly and meet the requirements in all respect.

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').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Ensure that the organisation of the household always considers the need to support students' concentration in lessons.

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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The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision		✓		
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School details

Name of school	Gloucester – Green Corns		
DCSF number	354/6025		
Unique reference number (URN)	131436		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	March 2006		
Age range of students	11-18 years		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of boarders	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (boarders)	£257,400		
Telephone number	01706 644471 (Company office)		
Email address	info@continuumgroup.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Norris-Heyes		
Proprietor	Green Corns Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell		
Dates of inspection	3-4 February 2010		