

Hopewell School (Harmony House)

Independent special school inspection report

DCSF registration number	301/6002
Unique Reference Number (URN)	134388
Inspection number	301535
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

Published:

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2009



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.

Information about the school

Hopewell School (Harmony House), is an independent day special school which opened in November 2006 and is registered for 25 students aged from 11 to 18 years. There are currently eight students at the school aged between 13 and 16 years and three are looked after by their local authority. These three students reside in the children's homes that belong to Holibrook House which is the parent company for the school. Six students have a statement of special educational needs and all the students are placed by their local authority because of their various levels of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is held in Harmony House, Dagenham, which is a resource and conference centre. Harmony House is a charitable project of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary which provides services to the local community and refugees. The first inspection of the school was in 2007 when it was located in different premises. At this time it was registered as a residential special school.

The school's vision is 'restoring hope, releasing potential and rebuilding lives.'

Evaluation of the school

Hopewell School (Harmony House) provides a good quality of education and is successful in achieving its aims. It has successfully reintroduced students to the world of education using an innovative curriculum and good teaching in a nurturing, caring environment. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the welfare, health and safety of the students are good. The school's procedures for safeguarding the students are rigorous. The school has improved since the last inspection and has addressed all the previous regulatory failures. It now meets all the regulations for registration.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of the students. It is based on a tripartite model called the TAV model (therapeutic, academic and vocational) which has been devised by the headteacher. English,

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

mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), humanities including religious education, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and the Award Scheme and Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN) are taught in the mornings. During the afternoons the students take part in a multi-sensory, cross-curricular therapeutic programme beginning each Monday in a controlled sensory environment. The school plans this session to help to re-engage the students in an educational environment after the weekend. Students then go to a local farm and help in animal care; they take part in physical education activities such as canoeing, archery and climbing at an outdoor activities centre and have art therapy with a specialist during the rest of the week. The school day begins with breakfast, which is followed by an intensive reading programme. The day ends with a short reflective session where students have the opportunity to discuss their achievements. This is the first cohort of students to be entered for the GCSE examinations in English and mathematics, CLAIT for ICT examinations and the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA examinations board (OCR) entry level in literacy and numeracy. The school has established a close liaison with Barking and Dagenham Flexible Learning Team and some Year 11 students have begun a flexi-learning programme. The school works very closely with Connexions service to prepare the students for the next stage of their education. The school plans to extend the number of GCSE examination options that students can take. Students who have a statement of special education needs are provided with a wide range of curricular opportunities, which match the requirements of their statement.

The curriculum is enhanced through a range of visits, which have recently included Colchester Zoo, a residential visit to an outdoor activity centre in Kent, the Science Museum and a trip to the coast. Visitors to the school include members of the drug advisory service, the community development officer and the police.

Teaching and assessment are good. The students are taught in age-related groups in small classes. There is a high ratio of staff to students. Lesson planning is of a high standard with clear, achievable lesson objectives to meet the different learning needs of the students. Most are delivered at a brisk pace. Staff ensure that the students understand the aims of the lessons and check that the students have achieved the planned goals during and at the end of the lesson. Teaching engages most students well. Some pupils find it difficult to maintain their concentration, become distracted and disengage with the lesson. The staff then adopt safe and sensitive methods of behaviour management, and are usually successful in reintroducing the students to the classroom as soon as possible. Staff mostly succeed, avoiding possible student disengagement through planned changes of activity and the encouragement to focus on a short achievable task. For example, during one lesson students produced a short PowerPoint presentation on racial discrimination.

Teaching assistants are very supportive and work in close liaison with the teaching staff. The sessions in which the students made most progress were those when they had individual support from a member of staff. The school is well resourced and equipped with interactive whiteboards. The staff and students work together on

assessing the progress made at the end of the lesson, which helps students to understand what progress they are making. The students make good progress in relation to their starting points. The school has identified the need to make further improvements in its assessment procedures by making better use of the data on students' progress. Each student is given a detailed baseline assessment on entry and the staff maintain detailed records of each student's progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good. The school provides a calm, welcoming environment where the students are taught to respect each other and their environment. The Christian ethos of the school and weekly religious education lessons, together with the art therapy sessions, help to increase the students' spiritual awareness. Students confirmed through the questionnaires and verbally that they wish to be at the school, with some commenting: 'It is okay here', 'It's alright', and 'I like the sport.' Attendance is good, which is an achievement for some students who have previously been out of school for extended periods of time. Overall the behaviour of the students is good. Staff are very good role models and expect high standards from the students both in behaviour and the establishment of appropriate social relationships at the school. Some students have more difficulties in managing their behaviour and the staff are good at talking to them, reminding them about the simple school rules and of the need to show respect for each other. Students respond well to these opportunities to develop a sense of what is right and wrong.

As a result of good behaviour management and a good PSHE programme, students are beginning to gain self-confidence and an awareness of how their actions affect themselves as well as others. Every achievement, however small, is celebrated with rewards for effort and achievement and certificates to show the students' commitment to the task in hand. This is helping to improve their social skills and prepares them well for future employment or further education. They help staff to clear the tables after lunch where all eat together, promoting good manners. The students help to raise money for charities, including for the recent Haiti disaster. They gain an understanding of others through links with a rural school in Kenya, for whom they have raised funds for equipment. They take an active role in community events at Harmony House. Last Christmas, they dramatised the Christmas story and invited an audience of parents and friends. Students gain an understanding of cultural differences through the cultural diversity of the students and staff and through religious education and PSHE lessons. Racial harmony and tolerance is promoted well.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the students and it is a safe place to work and learn. The school has devised and effectively implemented a wide range of policies, which include anti-bullying, the health and

safety of students on educational visits, behaviour and safeguarding. All staff are trained to an appropriate level in safeguarding and the policy reflects current guidance. The staff are vigilant about safety; detailed risk assessments are carried out on all visits outside school and on the premises. Procedures for fire safety are good with well-documented fire risk assessments, regular fire drills, which are documented, and all equipment is regularly maintained. The pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and to take regular exercise. Staff and students are all trained in first aid, accidents are recorded and first-aid boxes are located where needed. The attendance and admission registers are kept according to regulations. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act and has devised a three-year accessibility plan.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school undertakes the full range of required checks to ensure the suitability of staff prior to appointment to work with these highly vulnerable children. The required information is held on a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are suitable and enable the students to learn effectively. The school is held in one part of Harmony House. The school has three main teaching rooms and a central area for recreational and dining use. The premises are well maintained, clean and well decorated. There are suitable facilities for students who become unwell. The students use a small outdoor area and a nearby park for recreational activities and local leisure centre facilities.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents, carers and others with the required information through the prospectus, website, daily communication book and newsletters. The parents confirmed through the pre-inspection questionnaire that they are kept well informed about their child's progress. One parent commented, 'The school is helping my child with issues around his social skills and behaviour.' Information about students' progress is shared at regular intervals with parents, carers and placing authorities.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a set of procedures, which fully meet the regulations. Parents have indicated that they are aware of them.

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 points for development.

- Develop the use of information on students' progress to more accurately map their progress.
- Extend the number of GCSE options available to students.
- Implement the use of ICT more fully in the curriculum.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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		√		
--	--	---	--	--

School details

Name of school	Hopewell School (Harmony House)		
DCSF number	301/6002		
Unique reference number (URN)	134388		
Type of school	Special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	November 2006		
Age range of pupils	11–18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 8	Girls: 0	Total: 8
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,740		
Address of school	Harmony House Baden Powell Road Dagenham RM9 6XN		
Telephone number	0208 593 6610		
Fax number	0208 596 9391		
Email address	Headteacher@hopewellschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Ms Sharina Klaasens		
Proprietor	Mr Herman Allen		
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton		
Dates of inspection	10–11 February 2010		