

Independent school progress report

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DCSF registration number	937/6104
Unique reference number	134614
Inspection number	345520
Inspection dates	1 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Mick Megee

This inspection visit to the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 at the request of the registering authority for independent schools.

Age group: 11-16

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## Purpose and scope of the visit

This inspection visit was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002.

The visit was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

## Information about the school

Wathen School offers day provision for a maximum of 40 students ages 11 to 16 with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The school operates on two sites. The original buildings in Leamington Spa, which opened in September 2000, have a tutorial unit for three students who have severe emotional difficulties and who require 1:1 tuition. The main site was established some 25 miles away in Mancetter near Atherstone in 2007. The site currently has 22 students on roll. Most of the pupils currently come from Leicester City and Leicestershire. The school aims to prepare its students for social challenges, economic independence and the demands of adulthood. It also aims to offer a curriculum that broadly follows the National Curriculum whilst incorporating an appropriate range of knowledge, skills and experiences beyond the classroom situation. The school fosters partnerships with carers and other professionals who are significant in students' lives and to promote positive relationships with all students. The headteacher has been absent since September 2009, and the newly appointed deputy headteacher has assumed the overall leadership responsibilities. She is supported in this role by the school improvement partner, a behaviour consultant and a consultant headteacher.

## Context of the visit

Ofsted last inspected the school in May 2008. Following this inspection, the school produced an action plan that was accepted by the DCSF in July 2008. This is the school's first monitoring visit since the inspection.

## Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The school has made satisfactory progress in implementing the agreed action plan, although it has yet to meet one requirement.

At the last inspection, the school did not provide a scheme of work for all subject areas so that effective planning and teaching could take place. The school has ensured that schemes of work are now in place for all subjects, and teachers' planning accurately reflects the schemes. Almost all students attend for 25 hours per week, although there is a small number of students whose emotional difficulties are too severe for this to be possible. The school sensibly adapts nationally recognised schemes of work, such as those from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

(OCA), to meet the needs of the students. There is a strong emphasis on art and music, especially in the regular themed weeks. There is a good curriculum for personal, social and health education that supports students' personal development well. The curriculum is enriched well by activities such as bike skills, bike maintenance and fishing. The school's action is sufficient to meet this requirement.

The last inspection found that the school did not meet all of the requirements specified in the students' statements of special educational needs. The school has appointed a Special Needs Coordinator to ensure that the school complies fully with the requirements. For example, it now provides the full range of National Curriculum subjects and access to therapeutic support where this is necessary. The school now meets this regulation.

The last inspection found that teachers did not have sufficient understanding of students' aptitudes, needs and prior attainment through an effective assessment system. The school has introduced a new assessment framework that is already yielding good information that could be used in planning teaching and in managing behaviour. Baseline information is established when students join the school, and this information is beginning to be used as a benchmark to judge future progress. The school has improved the way in which teachers set and review targets so that underachievement can be identified quickly. The school now makes use of regular reading and spelling tests to support the teaching of basic skills. These are all useful innovations, but many of them are too recent to have a significant impact, and not all teachers are yet equally effective in using assessment information to set work at exactly the right level for each student. The school has made a good start in addressing these issues but the regulations are not yet fully met as students are often not sufficiently challenged by the lesson activities.

The last inspection found that the behaviour policy did not effectively identify sanctions and strategies to manage students' behaviour. The school has revised its positive behaviour policy and put clear procedures in place. All staff have received training on the new policy and procedures. Staff are beginning to implement the policy consistently, and this has brought about good improvements in students' behaviour. Students say that they understand the system and feel that staff use it fairly. Lesson observations show that staff manage difficult behaviour well, although they are not yet as skilled in preventing difficult behaviour from arising. Students have individual behaviour plans, although the targets in the plans are not always as precise as they could be. This makes it difficult to judge failure and success. Despite this, the school's action is sufficient for it to meet the regulation.

The last inspection found that the Mancetter site did not offer facilities for students who are ill and some aspects of the accommodation were unsafe. These included windows which lacked safety catches to prevent students from falling out, an uneven surface in the playground and the school's fire alarm could not be heard clearly inside the art room and workshops. The school has addressed all these issues effectively. A room with washing facilities is now available for students who are ill, adjacent to a toilet. All windows have restrainers or safety catches. The playground has been levelled and the fire alarm has been extended to include all the teaching

accommodation. The alarm was tested during the visit to demonstrate its effectiveness. The school has responded well to these issues and meets the relevant regulations.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection visit, the school must take action to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003<sup>1</sup> as amended ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- ensure that information from assessment is utilised effectively to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm)

## School details

Name of school	Wathen Grange School		
DCSF number	937/6104		
Unique reference number	134614		
Type of school	Special for students with BESD		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2000		
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 22	Girls: 0	Total: 22
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys:	Girls:	Total:
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 22	Girls: 0	Total: 22
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 7	Girls: 0	Total: 7
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38000-£41000		
Address of school	Lillington Road Leamington Road Leamington Spa Warwickshire CV32 5YY and  Church Walk Mancetter Nr Atherstone Warwickshire CV9 1PZ		
Telephone number	01827 714454		
Fax number	01827 716509		
Email address	<a href="mailto:wathen.grange@completecare-warks.co.uk">wathen.grange@completecare-warks.co.uk</a>		
Headteacher	Chris Nock		
Proprietor	Mr Steve Shinner, Mr Mike Finnie, Mr Viron Mangat and Mr Paul Mangat		
Reporting inspector	Mick Megee		
Date of inspection	1 December 2009		