

Lambs Grange School

Independent school progress report

DCSF registration number	875/6028
Unique reference number	131792
Inspection number	345582
Inspection dates	19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

Age group: 14 - 19

Published: 07 December 2009

Reference no: 345582

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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 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005².

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

Lambs Grange is an independent residential special school that caters for students aged 14-19 years with autism. Several students also have medical needs and challenging behaviour. The school opened in 1998 and is also registered as a children's home to provide daily, weekly, termly and 52-week placements. Almost all students are residential with a very small number attending daily. There are ten boys and one girl on roll and all have statements of special educational need. The site includes a large manor house, teaching blocks and a lodge situated in 10 acres. Residential accommodation is mainly situated in the manor house.

Context of the visit

The school's educational provision was last inspected on 12-13 July 2007. The school has residential provision and this was reported on separately. The education inspection in 2007 judged that several regulations were not met. The school was required to produce an action plan to address these failures in meeting regulations. The school submitted an action plan but it was deemed not to meet all requirements and the school was asked to submit an amended action plan. The Department for Children, Schools and Families states that it did not receive the amended plan. The amended plan was made available on site for this monitoring visit. This inspection visit evaluated the progress made by the school against the amended action plan.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The school has made satisfactory progress as it has implemented almost all the improvements detailed in its amended action plan.

At the time of the last inspection the school was judged to provide a satisfactory standard of education. However, the school did not meet a number of regulations relating to students' welfare, health and safety and as a result the arrangements for

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

welfare health and safety were judged to be inadequate. In addition, a number of other requirements were not met.

At the time of the last inspection the quality and quantity of educational resources were unsatisfactory and materials were not always suited to the ages of the students. Additional materials have been purchased and the resources are now adequate. The school designates a specified amount of money each year for staff to purchase educational resources. In particular, the school has made a number of purchases of resources for information and communication technology to improve the quality of learning for students. These include interactive whiteboards and laptops. Staff recognise that there have been significant improvements in resources since the last inspection, although they are correct in their assertion that there is room for further improvement, particularly in more practical 'hands-on' learning materials. The available resources are used in an effective manner and they are appropriate to the ages and needs of the students.

The main weaknesses at the last inspection centred on students' welfare, health and safety. Almost all of these issues have been remedied. The school now maintains a single central record that shows that all staff are appropriately checked before their appointment and that all adults working at the school have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosures. The school has made the required amendments to the sanctions policy and records so that there is a clear definition of what constitutes a serious disciplinary offence and greater rigour in recording any sanctions that are imposed. The admission register now meets requirements because students are listed alphabetically and the register distinguishes between day and residential placements. The procedures relating to fire alarms and fire drills have been improved since the last inspection. The school's logbook of fire alarms and drills shows that fire alarms are tested on a weekly basis and that fire drills and evacuations are carried out on a regular basis. Although the school has improved the way in which it carries out risk assessments for students' visits off the school site, procedures do not fully meet the requirements. The school carries out individual risk assessments for each student before embarking on any trip off site and complies with the risk assessments carried out by venues and businesses they visit or which students attend on work experience. The school has devised an appropriate format for general risk assessments to be prepared on all venues visited away from the school. However, this form is not utilised for all visits.

Shortcomings identified at the last inspection relating to the premises have nearly all been remedied. The school buildings are in a sound state of repair and are maintained appropriately. Roofing problems in one of the classrooms have been dealt with. There is now an adequate number of washrooms because the number of students has decreased since the last inspection. The school regularly checks the temperature of water at different facilities around the school. These are all meticulously recorded. However, these records indicate that there is still one sink facility where the temperature exceeds the recommended level. Plans are in hand to purchase a thermostat to better regulate the temperature at this facility but at the time of this visit the thermostat was not in place.

At the time of the last inspection some regulations were not met with regard to the provision of information to parents, carers and others and in respect of procedures for handling complaints. These shortfalls have all been addressed. Revisions to the school prospectus provide the appropriate information relating to exclusions and now alert parents to the fact that they can request policies on anti-bullying and health and safety. The school provides a detailed financial breakdown of income and expenditure for individual students to the local authorities funding their placement. The procedures for handling complaints now specify that all correspondence and recommendations from any complaints will be made available to all relevant parties and that all correspondence and statements from such procedures will be kept confidential.

The school has devised an appropriate three-year accessibility plan to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002.

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 2003³ as amended ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- ensure that the recently introduced format for carrying out risk assessments for student visits off the school site is implemented for all visits (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- ensure that the water temperature does not exceed the recommended levels anywhere in school and that the school fully meets the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(a)).

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

⁸ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/19990002.htm

School details

Name of school	Lambs Grange School		
DCSF number	875/6028		
Unique reference number	131792		
Type of school	Residential special school for students with autism		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1998		
Age range of pupils	14-19 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 10	Girls: 1	Total: 11
Number of boarders	Boys: 9	Girls: 1	Total: 10
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 10	Girls: 1	Total: 11
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 6	Girls: 1	Total: 7
Annual fees (day pupils)	£69,854 - £78,993		
Annual fees (boarders)	£117,729 - £215,110		
Address of school	Forest Road Cuddington Northwich Cheshire CW8 2EH		
Telephone number	01606 301514		
Fax number	01606 301516		
Email address	enquiries@lambs-group.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Wilkins		
Proprietor	Mr Simon Lovelock		
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell		
Dates of inspection	19 November 2009		