

# The Ryes School

Independent school progress report

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DCSF registration number	881/6033
Unique reference number	115427
URN for social care	SC381386
Inspection number	346193
Inspection dates	21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	George Derby
Social care inspectors	Clive Lucas and Kay Mehrtens

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. The inspection of boarding was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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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. 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.

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

The Ryes School, owned by The Ryes School Organisation Ltd, is located near Sudbury in Suffolk. It opened in 1983 and is a special school registered for up to 31 students, aged seven to 16 who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). At the time of this visit there were 14 students registered at the school between the ages of 13 and 16.

As well as providing education, the school has a strong emphasis on developing positive relationships through a therapeutic approach. All students have a statement of special educational needs. Some students have learning difficulties, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism. The majority of the children are looked after by local authorities which fund the students' places at the school and the registered children's homes.

The school aims to reintegrate students into the community through developing their ability to make successful choices and decisions, to take responsibility and to move towards independence from a secure and stable base.

Significant changes to the staffing and management have taken place since the last progress monitoring visit in July 2009. A new board of directors was formed in November 2009, a new headteacher started at the school at the beginning of December and there is a new head of care. One new teacher commenced work in September, another has moved to the Ryes from the company's other school which has temporarily closed and another teacher is due to start soon.

## Context of the visit

The school was inspected in July 2005 when it was found to be inadequate. Visits were then made to judge the school's progress in relation to its plans for improvement. These showed that inadequate progress was being made. It was inspected again in April 2008 when it was again judged inadequate. Since then two visits have taken place, in February and July 2009, to monitor the school's progress; both of these judged progress to be inadequate. This is the third visit.

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

The progress made in implementing the school's action plan is inadequate. Since the last visit some of the regulations have now been met, while others remain unmet. In addition, some regulations which were met previously, have now been failed.

The new management team has a clear determination to improve the quality of education and its members are seeking advice from a range of professional consultants. However, as yet, the quality of teaching has not been monitored to check its effectiveness, and staff identify that students' difficult behaviour remains a major area to improve. It is clear, though, that the school does have success with a few individual students which leads to some notable achievements; these are often related to individual projects or specifically designed programmes. Two students were invited recently to the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) awards because of their high quality work on a short film project. A Year 11 student has just sat two GCSEs and is near to completing an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) portfolio for a Gold Award. The school's work with the small number of students with complex learning needs is satisfactory and they make sound progress. However, the school still struggles to meet the needs of students with severe behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties.

Most curriculum regulations remain met because the school does have well designed schemes of work, as evaluated in the last monitoring visit report. At present, it is not implementing these in their entirety as the curriculum for this half term has been adjusted to provide greater emphasis on personal, social and health education and citizenship in order to build a sense of community and team work. This is acceptable in the short term. However since the last visit, students with a statement of special educational needs have still not had their full entitlement to the National Curriculum. Analysis of students' work from last term shows that a number of subjects have not been consistently taught to some students, including science, information and communication technology (ICT) and humanities.

The analysis of students' work, together with the observations of lessons show that students make inadequate progress overall. Teaching fails to engage students because the methods used to interest and involve them are too limited; there is too much talk by staff and too little use of ICT or other visual material. Lesson planning is weak and does not clearly identify what each student will learn; it is not made clear on plans how staff will know how students have been successful in their learning. In addition, information on individual education plans and behaviour plans has similar weaknesses and so it is difficult for staff to fully assess the progress that students make. Support staff are not always clear on what they are expected to do and how to respond to students and there is little time for teachers to plan with staff. There are insufficient strategies to manage difficult behaviour and this is inconsistently tackled. Swearing and inappropriate remarks were prolific during the visit, yet staff had few ways of dealing with these. Students are often late to lessons, or leave lessons early because they take time out to smoke. While there has been

some response by the school in relation to improvements in health planning and support for cessation, the impact has been limited because lessons are still being disrupted. Some staff do challenge students more vigorously but strategies to reward good behaviour are far from systematic. Students do not have regular feedback about how well they are doing, are not aware of any targets and are not actively working towards improvement. Some say they do not want to improve. Where sanctions or restraints are employed to deal with difficult behaviour, records are always completed with the reason given. However, they are not fully analysed and do not always show what led up to an incident. Staff do not know, therefore, if the methods they use and the sanctions given are effective. In recent months, the number of physical restraints has increased significantly. At the time of the last visit, there were concerns about the lack of response from the school when racist remarks were made by students. This has not improved and does not promote harmony and tolerance between different groups and traditions.

All the required checks are made on staff when they are appointed, although a new director undertook work in the school/home before a Criminal Records Bureau check was completed. The procedures for making risk assessments, and ensuring that all aspects of an educational visit have been planned, have now been strengthened and are adequate. The policies and procedures show a clear awareness of the safeguards that are required when students go on trips. A new person has been appointed as a school's designated safeguarding officer. Training for this role is planned in the next few months, although the person does not have up to date training currently. The directors are aware of the function of the new Independent Safeguarding Authority and are clear when referrals should be made to it.

## 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 where students have a statement of special educational needs, the education provided fulfils its requirements (paragraph 1(2)(e))
- ensure that the teaching enables students to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 1(3)(a))
- provide lessons that are well planned, use effective teaching methods and suitable activities and ensure that class time is managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c))

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

- ensure that teaching utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encourages students to act responsibly (paragraph 1(3)(h))
- enable students to develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence (paragraph 2(a))
- encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and understand how they can contribute to community life (paragraph 2(c))
- assist students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions (paragraph 2(e))
- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst students that sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of students misbehaving (paragraph 3(2)(d))
- have adequate regard to the DCSF guidance Health and safety: responsibilities and powers (DCSF 0803/2001) (paragraph 3(4))
- ensure that each member of the proprietorial body of directors has an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check before they have direct and regular contact with students in the school (paragraph 4B(4) and (5)).

## School details

Name of school	The Ryes School		
DCSF number	881/6033		
Unique reference number	115427		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent residential special school		
Date school opened	1983		
Age range of students	7 - 16		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 11	Girls: 3	Total: 14
Number of boarders	Boys: 11	Girls: 3	Total: 14
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 11	Girls: 3	Total: 14
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 11	Girls: 3	Total: 14
Annual fees (boarders)	£250,000		
Address of school	Ryes lane Little Henny Sudbury Suffolk CO10 7EA		
Telephone number	01787 374998		
Fax number	01787 371995		
Email address	fiona.hyndman@theryesschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Fiona Hyndman		
Proprietor	The Ryes School Organisation		
Reporting inspector	George Derby		
Dates of inspection	21 January 2009		