

Horton House School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	810/6004
Unique Reference Number (URN)	133640
URN for registered childcare and social care	SC060797
Inspection number	348726
Inspection dates	19 –20 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI
Social care inspector	Simon Morley

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, 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.

This was a light touch educational inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Horton House School occupies two school sites approximately 20 minutes drive apart. There are four sites overall, but only two are providing education. One school site is in the same building as a children's home. One is a large former manor house and the other a farmhouse, with some adjacent, additional classrooms. The school opened in 2002. It provides education for up to 37 boys and girls aged between eight and 19 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include severe social, emotional, educational and behavioural difficulties, some associated with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). There are currently 23 pupils on roll aged between nine and 16 years, and two over the age of 16, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Most are day pupils, but 11 are residential in the children's homes for either 52 weeks or for term-time only. Their places, including those for 10 looked after children, are funded by a number of different local authorities. The vast majority of pupils have experienced disruption to their education prior to admission. The headteacher has been in post since January 2009. The last inspection of the school was in October 2007. The last social care inspection was in January 2010. The school aims to 'promote total education, whereby education and care combine to help children and young people achieve, manage their own behaviour, and secure for themselves a brighter future'.

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

Evaluation of the school

Horton House School provides a good quality of education and successfully meets its aims. The quality of the care provision in the children's home is good. The quality of teaching and assessment are good and enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. The curriculum is good, takes account of the National Curriculum and provides personalised programmes for individual pupils, enabling them to make good academic progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are good. Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils in the school are good; safeguarding arrangements are securely in place and meet all requirements. The school has successfully addressed the issues identified at the last inspection in respect of the information for parents and carers. The school meets all of the regulations for registration as an independent school.

Quality of education

The overall quality of education is good. The good quality of the curriculum is supported by effective subject plans and schemes of work drawn from the National Curriculum modified to meet pupils' individual needs. The curriculum is broad and balanced to provide effectively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in line with the requirements of each individual's statement of special educational needs. There is a strong emphasis on developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy and there are good opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in other subjects across the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in lessons; for example, pupils research topics on the internet and there are sufficient resources for pupils to regularly use ICT in lessons. However, the resources available to deliver practical aspects of science are limited. The provision for personal, social, health (PSHE) and citizenship education and religious education is a strength and does much to promote pupils' personal development and their understanding of other faiths. At Key Stage 4, pupils are able to access unit awards and Entry Level GCSEs. They study the statutory core subjects of English, mathematics and science and a variety of optional subjects including food technology, French, art and design, music, childcare, sport, history, business studies and woodwork.

Post-16 students study a 'Pathway to Independence' programme, which is implemented by both care and education staff, and this prepares them well for their future lives. It is planned to meet the individual needs of students in the key skills of literacy and numeracy as well as self-help, life, work-related, social, behaviour and independence skills. The school has links with a local college to provide pupils with the opportunity to study vocational courses. The 24 hour curriculum is well supported by education and care staff. There are a variety of extra-curricular activities available for pupils during school, in the evenings and at weekends including climbing, riding motor cycles, ice-skating, horse riding and canoeing. Pupils enjoy visits to the local library, restaurants, museums, art galleries and places of

worship with both care and education staff. Joint activities are often planned; for example, themed weeks such as a Mexican week.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment are good and, as a result, pupils make good progress. The relationships between pupils and care and education staff are very good. The use of additional adult support staff in lessons works very well and ensures that there is always an adult to whom each pupil can talk to, if the need arises. Teachers and care staff share information on a daily basis in respect of pupils' needs and these are incorporated into planning. Pupils are encouraged to work independently where possible and they are able to concentrate for extended periods of time. They have positive attitudes towards learning and persevere, even when the work is challenging. This is because teachers take every opportunity to relate work and activities to the needs and interests of individual pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations to pupils about what they are to learn. However, pupils are not always aware of the small steps they need to take to enable them to achieve their learning objective and to assess how well they have achieved in each lesson. Adults manage pupils' behaviour very well using effective and consistent strategies to encourage pupils to work hard and act responsibly. Pupils are assessed shortly after admission and then on a regular basis. There are good systems in place to monitor and record the progress made by individual pupils and the headteacher and senior managers evaluate the individual and overall performance of pupils effectively. Small class sizes ensure that teachers get to know individual pupils very well and assessment information is used effectively by teachers to plan next steps in learning for pupils. Marking identifies what pupils have done well and there are some comments to help pupils improve their work, but this is not always consistent across the school.

Pupils make good progress in relation to their capabilities and starting points. Pupils' work, lessons observed and the school's own data confirm this. Regular reports to parents and carers and placing authorities give good detail on each pupil's academic achievements and personal development.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and behaviour are good. The school promotes good behaviour well through an effective system of rewards and sanctions. Care and education staff work well together to ensure that strategies are consistent for pupils and together they enable pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning and help to prepare them for the future. The attendance of the vast majority of pupils is good because they enjoy coming to school. Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and their cultural development is promoted effectively through the curriculum when they learn about other cultures through geography, art, music, cookery and visits to different types of restaurants. Their spiritual awareness is also promoted effectively through PSHE and religious education, particularly as they show great respect when visiting places of worship, such as a mosque, Hindu temple and local Christian churches. Pupils learn

about public institutions and services in England in citizenship lessons, when they study local government and democracy, and when they have visitors into school, such as the police, fire service and armed forces. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community for example, through recycling for a local cafe and sharing products made in cookery and woodwork lessons. Opportunities to participate in vocational courses and the development of basic skills help to prepare pupils effectively for their future lives.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is good in both the education and care aspects of the school's work. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. All staff have been trained and several members of staff have received enhanced training in child protection. Thorough checks are completed prior to the appointment of new staff, including Criminal Records Bureau checks, to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. There are effective policies and procedures in place for all aspects of health and safety, child protection, first aid and fire safety in addition to appropriate risk assessments covering all aspects of the school's work. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe and there are high levels of staffing in each classroom. The school works effectively with a wide range of agencies to support pupils' welfare, health and safety including, local authorities, social services, health services, the Connexions service, safeguarding children teams, the youth offending team (YOT), health assessment units, speech and language therapists and clinical and educational psychologists. Pupils are carefully monitored and information is shared with parents and carers in order to promote continuity of care between home and school. Pupils say they feel safe and they all have a personal tutor or a member of staff they can turn to if they have a worry or concern. Pupils are aware of how to live healthy lifestyles, choosing healthy foods and participating in a wide range of sports and exercise. Care and education staff effectively promote healthy living. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The care provision was judged to be good but National Minimum Standards were not all 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 January 2005.

Please see the report on Ofsted's website relating to the care provision in the children's home which should be read in conjunction with this report.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Ensure there are sufficient resources to deliver more effectively the practical aspects of science in order to better meet the interests and needs of pupils.
- Ensure that marking and feedback are of a consistent quality across the school.
- Ensure pupils are aware of the small steps they need to take to enable them to achieve their learning objective and to assess how well they have achieved in each lesson.

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 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		√		
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The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision		√		
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School details

Name of school	Horton House School		
DCSF number	810/6004		
Unique Reference Number (URN)	133640		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2002		
Age range of pupils	8-19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 20	Girls: 5	Total: 25
Number of boarders	Boys: 7	Girls: 4	Total: 11
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 20	Girls: 5	Total: 25
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 7	Girls: 3	Total: 10
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,000		
Annual fees (boarders)	£180,000		
Email address	matthew@hortonest.karoo.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Stubbins		
Proprietor	Mrs Joan Appleby		
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI		
Dates of inspection	19 – 20 May 2010		