

# Springboard Education Junior

Independent special school inspection report

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DCSF registration number	846/6050
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135180
Inspection number	348792
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey HMI

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Springboard Education Junior in Brighton opened in December 2005 and provides special school education for pupils from Key Stages 2 and 3 who are difficult to place in local authority educational provision. All those on roll are of White British backgrounds. They have statements of special educational needs for learning difficulties, and for emotional, social and behavioural issues. Pupils are funded by two local authorities, West Sussex, and Brighton and Hove.

The school seeks to provide specialist therapeutic learning environments aimed at nurturing positive growth. It has six boys on roll aged between 9 and 13 years who are taught in two discrete groups, one for the juniors (9–11 year olds) and one for the seniors (11–13 year olds). The school occupies the top floor of a building which was once a church hall. At the time of the last inspection in September 2007, the school was judged to be satisfactory and complied with nearly all of the regulations.

## Evaluation of the school

Springboard Education Junior meets its aims and provides a good quality of education so that pupils make good progress and eventually move to another school or setting. The good teaching and curriculum mean that most pupils enjoy being at school and learn relevant basic skills. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. However, provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate, as the school does not meet all the regulations for staff checks prior to appointment and hence the secure safeguarding of pupils is not as rigorous as it should be. The school does not have suitable facilities for treating pupils who are ill, nor does it have a suitable washroom for staff as required; these issues were raised at the last inspection.

## Quality of education

The quality of education is good, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The good curriculum has a strong emphasis on developing basic skills for life and for supporting pupils' learning and behaviour difficulties. It is sufficiently

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

pitched at their assessed level of learning. Pupils develop good skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). Teaching sessions are well planned and appropriately short so that pupils can concentrate better. School visits and activities attempt to promote keenness in learning, and topics are chosen to ensure that there is a combination of good learning and a sense of fun to what pupils do, including studying French. The topic of light and shadow produced a range of activities such as making pin-hole cameras and shadow puppets which delighted the pupils when they were finished. There was some very good art work on display. However, the restrictions of the site and the potential risk to the pupils of leaving the school hamper their physical education and learning in an outdoor environment.

Teaching and assessment are good, and in particular the good teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are below average but most make good progress in these core skills. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan discrete activities which motivate the pupils. Strong relationships with adults help pupils to engage with learning after an often difficult start at the school. Most pupils agree that the school is a good environment in which to learn, that teachers explain things well and that the school helps them to be healthy.

Teachers have a very good understanding of the individual needs of pupils and keep good ongoing and detailed records of each pupil. There is good adult support in lessons, and classroom assistants work well with the qualified teacher to support learning. Any unsatisfactory behaviour is managed very effectively.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils study different faiths and cultures and this aspect of their development is good. However, pupils' moral and social development is more limited because of their poor past experiences of working with adults and other pupils. Pupils' behaviour is, on the whole, satisfactory but there are ongoing incidents almost every day involving some pupils. Overall, most pupils are developing better attitudes to learning and many say that they enjoy coming to school.

Attendance is close to the national average and is much better for most pupils than it has been in the past. The strategies used to reinforce good behaviour and attitudes, including the use of rewards, are having a marked impact. Pupils are prepared for their future life by being taught how to behave well and to react appropriately in social settings and public places. They are also improving their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Pupils have only limited contact with the local community because the risk to their safety is, at times, too high. The school is uncertain whether it can rely on the good behaviour of pupils at all times and thorough risk assessments are completed on any activity outside the school.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of pupils are inadequate because of important weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements that relate to the appointment of staff. The day-to-day organisation of the school and the provision of small groups with high adult to pupil ratios mostly promote a safe and purposeful learning environment. The school has produced policies and procedures on welfare, health and safety, including a child protection policy, which are appropriate, although some, for example the behaviour policy, lack up-to-date review. Pupils are encouraged to eat fresh food and drink water, and for physical exercise they walk to the park at break times, although not all pupils go out every day. Pupils take part in sporting activities outside school and they use the local swimming pool and sports facilities.

The school site is supervised effectively and pupils are always accompanied by an adult. All members of staff have received recent first aid training and the high commitment of staff ensures that all pupils are as safe as they can be. There is one designated child protection officer and staff have undertaken appropriate training. Fire checks are carried out and the school tests the fire escape procedures regularly. The school fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended 2001. The school has planned well to increase accessibility and will be drawing up an additional plan to review the possibility of further improving access.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has established procedures to ensure that, prior to taking up their appointment, all teaching and non-teaching staff are checked for their suitability to work with children and young people. However, it has not made appropriate checks on staff appointed since 2003 about their medical fitness to work with children, or whether staff appointed since 1 May 2007 who have worked and lived abroad are suitable to work in school. The school maintains a single central register of the checks it carries out. However, this is incomplete because it does not contain details of checks on the right to work in the UK, as required.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school's accommodation is maintained to a good standard and it meets the needs of the pupils and staff generally well. There is no outside area, other hard-surfaced areas, hall or a large space for physical recreation which means that members of staff accompany pupils every day to a local park where they can exercise regularly. Classrooms are suitable for small group work. They are well organised, tidy and clean and ensure that pupils are safe and that learning is good. The school does not have appropriate facilities for those who become ill or a separate staff washroom. However, the privacy of the pupils who currently attend is not compromised, given that staff and visitors use the facilities currently available for

girls. There are currently no girls on roll. Disability access is appropriate but there is no specialist disabled washroom.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents receive an annual report of their children's progress and levels of attainment. They routinely meet staff through the regular reviews of statements of special education need. Information for parents and carers is clear, accurate and is available through a website and prospectus although some policies, such as the behaviour policy, have not been updated recently. Parents are made aware of the complaints procedures when they register their children at the school but this is not available on the website, although it is available in the prospectus. The local authority regularly receives updates and financial statements on the pupils it has placed at the school.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has appropriate procedures for handling complaints. These are available on request and are referred to in the prospectus.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of the proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out on the medical fitness of all staff prior to the confirmation of their appointment (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- ensure that for all appointments from 1 May 2007, appropriate checks have been carried out to assess the suitability of staff to work in school if they have lived and worked abroad (paragraphs 4(2)(a), 4(2)(c) and 4C(2) and (3)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide sufficient washrooms for staff, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

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<sup>3</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm)

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- Ensure that all school policies are regularly updated.
- Make reasonable adjustments to increase accessibility at the site by drawing up an additional plan to review the possibility of improving access.
- Continue to pursue the use of some adjacent outside area to improve access to learning and exercising in an outdoor environment.

# 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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## School details

Name of school	Springboard Education Junior		
DCSF number	846/6050		
Unique reference number (URN)	135180		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	December 2005		
Age range of pupils	7–13		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,237–£25,956		
Address of school	St Wilfred's Upper Hall 39 Wipperingham Road Brighton BN2 3PF		
Telephone number	01273 885109		
Fax number	01273 885109		
Email address	springboard.brighton@ntlworld.com		
Headteacher	Elizabeth Freeman		
Proprietor	Mr Jeremy Stuart Cross		
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey HMI		
Dates of inspection	15–16 June 2010		