

# Sketchley Horizon

Independent school inspection report

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DCSF registration number	855/6026
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135217
Inspection number	348807
Inspection dates	30 June to 01 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne 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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Sketchley Horizon is an independent special day school which opened in April 2007 and is owned by The Priory Group. The school operates from a former manor house with its own grounds in a village location. It has provision for up to 25 pupils aged between eight and 16 years, who have autism. There are currently 15 pupils on roll across the full age range and all have statements for their special educational needs. Local authorities place pupils at Sketchley Horizon often following disrupted educational experiences in mainstream school. The school aims to provide the best facilities for the pupils in their care and "to raise standards in the education of young people with autism and help them lead meaningful, fulfilling, happy lives". This is the school's first published Ofsted inspection report.

## Evaluation of the school

Sketchley Horizon School provides a good quality of education. The broad curriculum is planned carefully around pupils' individual needs and interests. The school takes outstanding care of its pupils because the whole staff team are committed to pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff are highly skilled in meeting the needs of pupils with autism, successfully building their self esteem and improving their attendance and behaviour. Structure and routines are very well established. The school meets all of the regulations, including safeguarding requirements, and successfully meets its aims.

## Quality of education

The quality of education has further improved since the last inspection and is now good, as is the extent to which the curriculum meets the needs of pupils. There is a multi-disciplinary approach to education including therapies and life skills out in the community. A significant percentage of the curriculum is based around pupils developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. Staff make the most of opportunities for these in all other areas of the curriculum. However, they recognise that expectations for writing are not consistent throughout the other curriculum areas. All pupils have access to a full range of National Curriculum subjects which are modified

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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)

to their individual needs and interests. There is emphasis on physical education and healthy living as well as other life skills, including coping with stressful situations and personal safety. With a view to the imminent application to extend the age range to include post-16 and to cover the Key Stage 4 curriculum from September 2010, pupils are already beginning to undertake preparation towards vocational college courses and the world of work. For example, those interested in media, horticulture and catering have opportunities to extend their interests through the current curriculum. Pupils are already offered accredited courses and are working well towards these in mathematics and science. The coursework for English poses more of a challenge. The school ensures full access to the curriculum for all pupils by adapting the curriculum effectively and providing all of the necessary support. It makes the most of the specialist knowledge of the staff group to extend the curriculum to art and design technology, horticulture and food technology. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology to aid their learning, often with stunning results, for example in film making.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall, although the monitoring of this is fairly informal. The new method of planning this academic year is working well. It provides a good guide to staff, is very focused on pupils' individual needs and ensures there are clear learning objectives. Staff are not yet consistently evaluating their plans to inform future planning, although there is evidence of this improving. There is much good teaching to be shared throughout the school. Music therapy makes an outstanding contribution to teaching and assessment. A highly skilled team of support staff complement the teaching. Some make a highly effective contribution to particular subject areas. Staff extend their knowledge by making good use of extensive Priory Group modular training programmes. All staff are trained to ensure that interventions and the handling of pupils is appropriate and least disruptive to learning. Work is assessed to standardised levels, although no moderation of this has yet taken place to check for accuracy. Marking is thorough although does not follow a whole school policy, so there is some variation. Marking is sometimes overly detailed for pupils to understand themselves.

Each pupil's progress is monitored on an ongoing basis and they receive a comprehensive annual assessment. Overall, pupils' progress is judged to be good. All pupils have made significant progress in their personal and social development and communication skills. The majority now enjoy school, some for the first time in their education. Over time the pupils are gradually becoming more and more settled and they are now engaging positively in the learning opportunities prepared for them. Pupils are all progressing well towards their individual education targets, some in small steps and some to a greater extent. The school monitors any slowing of progress carefully.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Their spiritual development is promoted through the carefully chosen activities and experiences and they are encouraged to be reflective. Stimuli such as the 'living eggs', a visiting baby

and growing vegetables provoke awe and wonder. Pupils are developing a sense of self and the world about them, continually encouraged to participate in new experiences. Major world faiths are studied in religious education and pupils are taught to be tolerant and supportive of each other. Their cultural development links to this through visits into the community, studying art and listening to music in assemblies. There is a thorough personal, social and health education programme which includes bullying; sex education and relationships; citizenship; and global issues, such as pollution and the importance of recycling and self sufficiency. This programme encourages teamwork and being part of a group.

Staff make clear their high expectations for behaviour which is clearly understood by pupils and supported by parents. Pupils respond well to praise and positive reinforcement of their good behaviour and they are often settled for sustained periods of time. Pupils' attendance is also good because they generally enjoy coming to school, where they have strong relationships with staff and increasingly with their peers. Their social development continues to improve and this is particularly evident as they take their turns in class or communicate happily at meal times. They respond positively to the clear structure and routines which the school has instilled. Many pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school by helping regularly, for example in the dining hall or to produce the school newsletter. They have a good preparation for leading fulfilling lives by the introduction to some workplace skills and connections with other education providers, such as a local horticultural college. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and are appropriately supported towards this. They are taught to use and apply their newly acquired numeracy skills to solve everyday problems. Links to the community are strong and the school makes good use of its proximity to the local library, shops and, to a lesser degree, other schools.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is outstanding. Staff take very good care of the pupils and consistently follow the schools comprehensive range of policies and procedures. They are equipped to do this by being thoroughly trained, and by their commitment and dedication to their roles. The principal ensures that everyone works to the same high standards. Staff ensure that their child protection training is up-to-date.

Pupils are well supervised and feel safe in school. They know there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. There is exceptionally close liaison between home and school so that any fluctuations in their emotions or levels of anxiety are understood. Staff understand pupils' phobias and compulsive disorders well and take account of these, helping them to overcome these where possible. Pupils learn more about themselves, as do the staff, through the high quality music therapy. Pupils learn about the importance of regular exercise through using the school's swimming pool, school hall and outdoor area. There is an excellent range of well prepared food available at mealtimes to encourage their healthy eating choices.

Staff encourage pupils to develop self-care skills in a highly sensitive and individual way and to reduce embarrassment. There is an effective behaviour management policy in place which is implemented consistently and to considerable success with a significant reduction in the number of incidents. Risk is managed carefully for each pupil on and off site. Records are maintained meticulously and efficiently. The school has regard to the Disability Discrimination Act and has a three year accessibility plan in place. Staff ensure the curriculum is fully accessible to all.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets all the regulations for the appointment of staff and has robust procedures in place. All staff are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau and their references and qualifications are corroborated. All the required information is kept on a single central register, which is easily accessible to the responsible authorities.

## School's premises and accommodation

Sketchley Horizon is a good, safe environment, suitably adapted and equipped for the school's purpose and pupils' needs. All teaching for the lower school takes place on the ground floor and the upper school is taught on the first floor. There is an on-site swimming pool. The school recognises that some modifications to the position of the Calm Room and Food Technology rooms are required to provide appropriate levels of space. These alterations are imminent. One classroom is currently shared for music therapy and art, but staff and pupils overcome the challenge this poses satisfactorily. Staff make the most of the grounds for teaching and learning. The room for pupils who are ill is now fully compliant. The outstanding work of the premises manager and housekeeper ensures that all regulations are met in this area and the school is well maintained with good facilities.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school is committed to involving parents as partners in their children's well-being and learning. Communication levels are high. All of the necessary regulatory information is provided for parents. Parents receive a comprehensive handbook which supplements the school prospectus. They are also provided with current staffing information. School policies are available upon request or from the school's website. The details of pupils' academic performance will be available as pupils undertake accreditation for the first time. The school continues to meet its aims. Parents who expressed their views are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are happy with the education and the levels of support their children are receiving. They recognise that the curriculum is tailored specifically to their children's needs as staff know pupils well as individuals, and that they are making good progress. One parent commented: "Moving my son to Sketchley has been a turning point"

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school's policy and procedures meet requirements. There have been two formal complaints in the previous academic year which were both handled appropriately and were satisfactorily resolved.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- develop procedures for monitoring the quality of planning, teaching and assessment, ensuring that there is complete consistency across the school and all teaching is as the best
- promote systems for using progression guidance and moderating the levelling and marking of pupils work accurately as a team
- ensure that all pupils continue to work hard at their writing skills.

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	Sketchley Horizon		
DCSF number	855/6026		
Unique reference number (URN)	135217		
Type of school	Special school for young people with autism		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2007		
Age range of pupils	8-15		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 15	Girls: 0	Total: 15
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 15	Girls: 0	Total: 15
Annual fees (day pupils)	£67,980–£93,981		
Address of school	Manor Way Sketchley Village Burbage Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3HT		
Telephone number	01455 890023		
Fax number	01455 636282		
Email address	chrisgee@priorygroup.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Chris Gee		
Proprietor	The Priory Group		
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI		
Dates of inspection	30 June – 01 July 2010		